

# THRESHOLD

The Mystara Magazine

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## Return to Dread

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The fourth issue of Mystara's premier magazine, featuring more articles on the Sea of Dread ! History of the Islands, the Raft City, Advice to Traders , and much more!

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# THRESHOLD

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*“I must go down to the sea again...”*

Who would have known we could come up with so much material on a single subject? Certainly not the Editor in Chief of the past two issues of *Threshold*! He was nearly swept off the deck of his ship by the sheer amount of artistry that our contributors have supplied. A cornucopia of material that crashed upon our computer screens like the waves of the Sea of Dread crash upon the shores of Karamaikos!

Honestly, I began this process with a lot of excitement, and more than a little trepidation. I've been a contributor to the *Vaults* for a long time (first through the MML, MMB, and finally now at the *Piazza*), and have contributed to other fan based products as well (most notably the *Mystara Almanacs*, and the *Tome of Mystara*), but I've never really been on this end of the editing process. I was extremely lucky that the editors of the previous issues of *Threshold* (Giampaolo Agosta and Andrew Theisen) both already had some experience in this venue, and I was able to learn a lot by watching them go through the process before me.

Despite this, nothing could have prepared me for the sheer amount of material that came flooding in on the Sea of Dread. I went from fearing that we would receive no articles, to fearing that we had received too many... so many in fact that we had to split the Sea of Dread topic into two issues - and I think i was still nearly overwhelming!

I'm really proud of the quality of the work that lies before you, especially given the quantity of it all. But I'm also more than a little tired. Serving as Editor in Chief of these past two issues has been a dream come true for me, but I'm ready to pass the torch onto the next brave soul. I'm going to find a beach, sip some rum, and quietly return to the other side of the editor's table to pen a few articles of my own... at least for a while.

Having said all of that, I'm very excited about what we have to present you with in Issue #4 - there is going to be some truly epic material within these electronic pages! Set your eyes on the horizon as we prepare to Return to the Sea of Dread!

*John Calvin (Chimpman)*  
 Editor-in-chief, *Threshold* Issue #4





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

The aims of *Threshold* magazine:

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



Issues #1 to #3 of THRESHOLD - the Mystara Magazine, is available for download from the [Vaults of Pandius website](#).

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



## This Issue's CONTRIBUTORS

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

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

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

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

**Michele "LoZompatore" C.** played BECMI for most of his life, starting way back in 1987. He most of all likes mixing and matching canon and fanon material about Mystara to see how

many new adventure hooks can be churned out. In the little spare time away from Mystara he helps other guys in designing oil and gas pipelines around the (real) world.

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

**David Keyser** has run four long-term campaigns set in Mystara since the 1980s, using published adventure and support materials as much as possible. He denies having any creative talent himself. It's just that if you put him with a group of friends who are willing to work with him to provide an evening of entertainment, there's a momentary spark like the scratch of flint on steel...and then something magical happens.

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

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

THE HISTORY OF

# Ierendi and Minrothad

## Part Two: *From the Lycanthropic Plague to the Ierendian Independence*

by Simone Neri (Zendrolion)

### THE FIFTH CENTURY

The 5<sup>th</sup> century AC is remembered in the Known World and surrounding regions as the century in which the dreadful plagues of lycanthropy and vampirism hit with unprecedented virulence the population of the coastal countries. Those regions which had more frequent contacts with the outside world – coastal countries with trade ties to eastern lands, like the Colony Islands and Thyatis – took the brunt of the plague spread. Werereatures and vampires sprung up among the human population, sowing panic in the cities and towns, terrorizing villages and hamlets, and ultimately finding places to hide in the borderland and wilderness areas; at the same time, the demihuman realms closed their borders to avoid the contagion of a plague which could erase their races from the face of the Outer World<sup>1</sup>.

The spread of the “modern” strains of lycanthropy and vampirism began around AC 400 in the Alphatian mainland, following the experiments in shapeshifting of some Alphatian wizards<sup>2</sup>. What they were

experimenting with, unfortunately, got out of their hands, and caused the development of dozens of lycanthropy strains which killed thousands of people and affected thousands more in their homeland. Traders from the Known World, in particular Minrothian ones - who were some of the most far-ranging merchants of this age, and some of the few to trade directly with the Alphatian homeland - unknowingly brought the plague to the Sea of Dread region, from where it then spread into the surrounding countries.

Modern historians trace back the first cases of “Alphatian” lycanthropy in the Known World to AC 410, when some Minrothian ships came back to Harbortown from the ports of mainland Alphatia, carrying on board someone affected by the curse. The Minrothians’ wide-ranging trade network also contributed to introduce the disease in many other regions they traded with. Strains of bat, fox, bear, wolf, boar, tiger, and giant hawk lycanthropy spread in the Colony Islands, which by AC 450 hosted a sizeable number of werereatures; wererats also appeared at the

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by other canon references (like the background of Orcus in Wrath of the Immortals), lycanthropy did already exist in the past, so the one originating in Alphatia around AC 400 has to be considered only one of the sources of this plague.

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<sup>1</sup> As known, lycanthropy is deadly to demihumans.

<sup>2</sup> This is the origin of the curse told in PC4 *Night Howlers*; however, as it can be guessed

same time in great numbers in Thyatis. The underwater realms of the Sunlit Sea did not pass this age unharmed, either: in AC 415 weresharks appeared among the merrow and triton populations, and this lycanthropic strain spread underwater to an extent not unlike that of the land strains.

While the spread of lycanthropy affected the history of most coastal nations of the Known World, it had a deeper impact on the society of the Colony Islands, triggering the events which would later upset the old balance which saw the humans as the main race of the archipelago, and led to the rise of the elves. It is ironical that this dramatic turn of events happened right in middle of the age of greater prosperity, wealth, and trading influence which the Colony Islands' elven-human alliance had ever enjoyed until now.

## The Colony Islands in the Fifth Century

At the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century AC, the trading combine formed by Harbortown, New Alphatia, and Alfeisle's water and wood elves was one of the most wealthy realms of the Sea of Dread. The combine's merchant ships ranged from the Serpent Peninsula to the west, to the Darokinian and Traladaran ports to the north, to the Alatian Islands and Alphatian mainland to the east, selling there the products of the wood elves' and New Alphatians' fine crafts and bringing back to the Colony Islands luxuries from those exotic places. The combine's ships were among the most swift and seaworthy of the Known World, thanks to the lucky combination of the water elves' weather magic, shipbuilding skills, and seamanship, to the wood elves' ability to grow and work quality timber, and to New Alphatians' water magic. The combine allowed

the three parties to exchange developments, techniques, and lore, thus making any advancement available to each one of them. The Minrothians of Harbortown were among the richest members of the combine: they profited not only thanks to the trade routes, but also to the financial loans they ensured to the Thyatian Empire and to favorable agreements which had allowed them to enter the Thyatian Empire's trade system.

### Harbortown's Dominance and the First Traladaran War

Despite the existence of the combine, the Minrothians' fortunes were greatly envied by the New Alphatians and by the elves. Indeed, Harbortown also prospered thanks to the practice of slave trade: trading in ethnic Alphatian peoples had been forbidden to them since a treaty of AC 284, but in the last decades the Minrothians had largely ignored that old treaty, and with a sort of tacit agreement with their allies in the combine, the Minrothians had managed to continue their slave trade undisturbed by obtaining from the Thyatian Empire limited access to its markets for New Alphatia and Alfeisle.

Money which ended up in the coffers of New Alphatia was enough to make them favorable to the current state of things; in fact, New Alphatia was more and more politically dominated by Harbortown's elites from AC 400 on, effectively being reduced to a vassal of the most powerful nearby city. The elves did not comply with the situation in the same way, and continued to make pressure - albeit without success - on Harbortown's government regarding the ceasing of the slave trade and also the Minrothians' custom - borrowed from the Thyatians - to use slaves for themselves, to carry on domestic duties or to work in plantations. Nevertheless



Harbortown was by far the most opulent city of the archipelago in this age, with thousands of halfling slaves working for their Minrothian masters both in the city and in surrounding plantations.

Harbortown's trading power and her link with the Thyatian Empire allowed her to defend her sphere of influence much more aggressively than before. In AC 412 a new player threatened to upset the Minrothians' influence over trade in Traladara, as the King of Darokin, Corwyn VIII, had reduced to vassal status many noble clans of the northern region of that country through a swift military campaign. Fearing that the Darokinian conquest of Traladara might oust them from that region's markets, Harbortown and New Alphatia financed the southern Traladaran clans' attempt to assassinate the king to get rid of this threat. The plan was carried on successfully in the same year AC 412, when Corwyn VIII was poisoned. The assassination, however, made the son of the last Darokinian king, Corwyn IX, eager to take revenge on the Traladarans; the new king then decided to spark the First Traladaran War (AC 412-417)<sup>3</sup> by declaring war on the southern Tradaladaran clans. At first, Harbortown and New Alphatia only sent money to finance the allied clans' resistance against the Darokinian armies, then (AC 415) they had to intervene directly in the war in order to make the tide of the conflict turn against the invaders. King Corwyn IX died in battle in AC 415, and his son was forced to sign with the allies the Peace of Marilenev (AC 417), relinquishing all claims on Darokin's Traladaran holdings. The Minrothians had

<sup>3</sup> For further details about this conflict, see [A Karameikos Companion](#) (by G. Agosta), [Rulers of Darokin](#) (by A. Nowack), and *The History of Karameikos*, in "Threshold" issue no. 1.

successfully defended their influence over trade in Traladara, which further increased in the following years.

### The Spread of Lycanthropy



Meanwhile, the Minrothians had to cope with a much greater threat than Darokin. Lycanthropy and vampirism had begun to spread too much to be further ignored by Trader's Isle Minrothian and New Alphatian authorities, mostly because clerical countermeasures they had taken proved to be of limited effect in fighting these diseases.

Unrest burst out among the halfling slaves of Trader's Isle, who – differently from the humans – began to die when the disease affected them; despite this, the Minrothians brutally quelled any unrest from the halflings. The same concern matured among Alfeisle's elves, who in AC 416 drastically decided to

close their borders to anyone coming from the outside world, only opening a single port to foreign trade, and began to strictly patrol the waters around their island to discover and ruthlessly destroy any trespasser. All the while, the Minrothians blamed the New Alphatians for the spread of the disease, while the New Alphatians accused Harbortown authorities to be unable to deal with the problem. Panic was beginning to spread in the archipelago.

In AC 423 mortality in Harbortown among the halfling slaves ran so high that a violent uprising took place and the government had to call in the army and put it down bloodily with the force of arms. A commission devoted to find a solution to the continued spread of this disease was installed, but its work proceeded slowly. People did not know that this slowness was caused by the fact that some of the commission's members had relatives affected by lycanthropy, and they feared that – if it was discovered that a proper cure did not exist at all – the final decision may fall on extermination of all the afflicted; thus they tried to delay the commission's works as much as possible.

Eventually, in AC 429, dramatic rise of lycanthropy cases forced Harbortown's government to enact an extreme solution, instituting under the urging of Alfeisle's elves a special military unit to fight the disease; as it had been feared, the unit is tasked with the extermination of any afflicted individual discovered. The measure was strongly opposed by a minority of Harbortown's and New Alphatia's elites, and at the end it was approved only in Harbortown. Many people there were executed in the first weeks, and some more fled to other lands beyond the grasp of Harbortown's special unit. For a couple of years the spread of lycanthropy

seemed to stop and the disease appeared to be in check, but thereafter new cases sprung up again on Trader's Isle, and the special unit became increasingly unable to track the afflicted ones and hunt them down. As it would become apparent later, that was because some members of Harbortown's government were lycanthropes themselves, and set things in order to avoid drawing attention on themselves and other afflicted individuals who were their friends or relatives.

Again, many people began voicing against the government's inability to stop the disease, and their number and influence increased as protests were joined by plantation owners and other upper class peoples - who possessed many halfling slaves and were seeing them dying with increasing financial losses for themselves. Gradually, the intransigent faction got the upper hand and, between AC 433 and AC 436, Harbortown's government was purged from lycanthrope members; additional special measures were taken to shield the halfling slaves from the danger of the contagion.

The result of this strict anti-lycanthrope policy in Harbortown was the relocation of many lycanthropes in New Alphatia. The latter town had not approved any special measure, and in the course of the AC 430s had seen a rising number of lycanthropes fleeing from the rest of Trader's Isle migrating or hiding within its territory and walls. Moreover, the political elites of New Alphatia - many members of which were lycanthropes - favored the adoption of a humane treatment of the afflicted people, upholding that it was not necessary to kill all the afflicted and that it was sufficient to take measures just to restrain them while in beast form. Thus, the New Alphatian government fiercely opposed the

intransigent policy which Harbortown was carrying on, not letting any special squad or werehunters in her territory. On the other hand, the “restraint measures” advocated by New Alphatia did not decrease death cases and killings due to lycanthropy, nor the spread of the disease; and this hampered the solution of the problem in the whole of Trader’s Isle.

### The Silver Purge



By AC 440, Trader’s Isle had become again the home of a substantial number of werereatures, a vast concentration of which was found in New Alphatia and in the surrounding countryside. The combine’s trade and wealth had suffered a steep decline in the recent decades, because of the trouble with the disease and the unrest at home, the closure of Alfeisle’s ports to humans and alleged disease-carriers, and the strict limitations on trade with Minrothians and New Alphatians imposed by many mainland ports which feared they might bring a further spread of the disease in their own lands.

As trade continued to decline and the number of lycanthropes on Trader’s Isle to increase,

an informal group of elven hunters called “The Beastslayers” appeared on Trader’s Isle, with the goal to do what the human governments were unable to carry on: the slaying of all lycanthropes. It was led by a young wood elf, Ruaidhri, whose family had been exterminated by a group of bloody werewhaws some years before. Harbortown’s and New Alphatia’s authorities fiercely protested against the group’s violent actions, which they considered illegal. In AC 442, one of the Beastslayers was indeed captured by New Alphatia’s guards and held responsible for homicide; he was swiftly executed.

Ruaidhri went back to Alfeisle and spoke in front of the elven clanmasters: he told the elven elders what he had seen on Trader’s Isle, and succeeded in persuading them that it was only a matter of time before the disease spread with pandemic proportions to the whole human population of the Known World, thus inevitably sealing also the elves’ fate. Their trade in decline, their trust in the future of the combine broken, the water and wood elven clanmasters ultimately decided to gather their forces to put an end to the threat of lycanthropy once and for all with a drastic and ruthless action. They gathered hundreds of silver-armed elven warriors, put them under the leadership of Ruaidhri himself, and sent such a strike force against Trader’s Isle in AC 443. The Silver Purge had begun<sup>4</sup>.

Trader’s Isle fell into anarchy as part of the human population sided with the elves in order to get rid of the lycanthropes. Both human governments of the isle fell into chaos. The conflict, which was a true civil war, lasted

<sup>4</sup> Among lycanthropes, this event is known as the Great Persecution (see *PC4 Night Howlers*, DM’s Guide, page 4).

two years. Lycanthrope attacks became fiercer and more desperate, because they knew their only alternative was death. On their part, the elves were even too zealous in pursuing their goal, for they were guilty of slaughtering helpless human families and people who were only suspected of being lycanthropes. After a bloody internal civil war, the faction favorable to the Silver Purge took the lead in Harbortown and tried to help the elves carry on the extermination of lycanthropes, but mostly had to cope with the reestablishment of order in its territory and undertook only limited actions.



The war reached a climax in AC 445, when the elves attacked New Alphatia, where a high number of lycanthropes was known to have hidden. The city was besieged while the elven fleet killed anyone seeking to escape through the sea. When the elven army finally breached through the city's defenses, the elven general ordered to put the city to flames to avoid any of the lycanthropes escaping. Many thousands of innocent people died in the torching of New Alphatia, which was left as a blackened ruin to remember the fate of the lycanthropes on Trader's Isle. Fightings continued for some months, but at the end of AC 445 the elven force had rid the island of most werereatures. A few of them survived though, hiding in the deep forests and mountains, always on the run to avoid being tracked down by elven rangers and hunters<sup>5</sup>.

Other islands of the Colony archipelago under Harbortown's control were scarcely affected by the Purge. Fortress, Blackrock, and Fire islands were nearly uninhabited, while the few cases of lycanthropy affliction which were discovered on Open Isle, North Island, and Terentias had been swiftly dealt with. Nevertheless, in AC 444 an unusually high number of afflictions was discovered on the island of Terentias - likely caused by lycanthropes who had managed to evade the

<sup>5</sup> In particular, it may be worth noting that Ruaidhri continued his extermination of werewolves up to total accomplishment, in AC 582, when the elf slaughtered the last recorded members of this strain in a "tiny island of the Sea of Dread" (PC4 Night Holwers, DM's Guide, page 4). The haven of the last werewolves might have been one of the myriad lesser islands not featured on 8-miles per hex poster maps of Minrothad and Ierendi, or one of the lesser, more distant atolls and keys of the Sea of Dread (see *The Minor Islands of the Sea of Dread*, in "Threshold" issue no. 3).

elves' blockade around Trader's Isle. The water elf minority living in Terentias was favorable to call in the aid of Alfeisle's elves to carry on the Silver Purge in the island, but the human majority feared more the excesses perpetrated by the elves on Trader's Isle than the lycanthropes. When rumors spread that a brigade of elven werewarriors was about to set sail to Terentias, the human leaders of the town of Crossbones decided to petition the Thyatian Empire for protection against the elves' wrath. The water elf minority was forced to accept this development, and in AC 445 Thyatian cohorts landed on Terentias and on North Island to "protect" those places<sup>6</sup>; the empire ensured the elves that it would have taken care to dispose of the lycanthropy-afflicted population - without excessive bloodshed. The elves complied, still keeping alert for further cases of affliction, and still watching closely their borders.

It is worth noting that the war against the werewarriors did not leave the Sunlit Sea untouched, either. The spread of lycanthropy among tritons and merrows had threatened to overrun the whole underwater realms with the foul werewarriors. Moreover, the spread of the plague had opened a rift in Undersea's triton society, with two factions accusing each other of hosting werewarriors within its ranks. Informed by the Aquarendi elves of what was happening above the surface, the tritons and merrows started their own werewarrior hunt in AC 443, with what is known as the "Night of Long Knives"<sup>7</sup>. Thousands of tritons and merrows

died during this two years' purge, which was prevented from escalating into a full civil war only through Aquarendi mediation. Nevertheless, the annihilation of lycanthropes in Undersea did nothing to heal the hates and enmities which the purge had created in the triton society - and which to some extent still endure today.

### The Purge's Aftermath

At the end of the Purge, Harbortown's power was broken, and New Alphatia was no more. The elves' economy had suffered as well, due to the breakup of their trading combine with the humans - even if they were able to make up for some of the losses substituting their own influence to Harbortown's vanished one in some of the mainland markets, it was the Thyatian Empire's trade network which mostly benefited from the decline of the Minrothians. With Trader's Isle's political and trade power disrupted, in the next forty years (also thanks to a time of relative peace in the relations of their empire with Alphatia) Thyatian merchants exploited the gap opened by the formers' demise, seizing the slave trade in the western sea routes and pushing themselves up to the Serpent Peninsula and even to the Green Coast of Davania<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> This passage of Terentias under Thyatian control was borrowed from [History of the Thyatian People](#) (by J. Ruhland); I tried to make it fit within the context of the Silver Purge, also adding the extension of Thyatian control over North Island.

<sup>7</sup> See PC3 *The Sea People, The Sea People Book*, page 42.

<sup>8</sup> Thyatian expansion in the western Sea of Dread and in Davania draws on this passage found in *Champions of Mystara boxed set, Explorer's Manual*, p53: "The stretch of Davania's coast closest to Yavdlom is inhabited by scattered city-states, the remnants of Thyatian and other nations' colonies that have since lost ties with their mother countries". A similar statement is found in *Poor Wizard's Almanac II & III* (in the "Davania" entry). The fate of the Thyatian expansion in the western Sea of Dread and in the Green Coast of Davania will be hinted at in the subsequent paragraph and chapters of this article.

Afterwards, the Thyatian Empire and the clanmasters of Alfeisle signed a treaty in Pilion (AC 446), under which Thyatis got control of Terentias, North Island, and the atoll of Fire Island, while the elves assumed control over Open Isle - something they seemingly coveted for some unknown purpose. The treaty ruled that the rest of the archipelago - the whole Trader's Isle, and the two minor and nearly uninhabited Fortress and Blackrock islands - were put under the rule of a Guardianship Council seated in Harbortown, whose members were jointly selected by the elven clanmasters and by the Thyatian Empire; all local government of Trader's Isle - including Harbortown's - had to submit to the authority of the Guardianship Council. The Treaty of Pilion stated that the purpose of the Council was to ease the restoration of social peace, order, and prosperity in Trader's Isle after the Silver Purge, thus its rule was planned as temporary and lasting ten years, after which Harbortown's government should ideally take care of itself again.

### **The Halflings' Uprising**

The situation on Trader's Isle, however, was still tense. Unrest had dominated the halfling slave population during the Silver Purge, and their wish to be freed could be only barely controlled now that the island's political leadership was in turmoil. Numerous slave uprisings occurred, but the Guardianship Council was divided over the issue: pro-Thyatian members wanted to keep halflings as slaves or at best as indentured servants, while pro-Alfeisle ones wanted them free. Meanwhile, many Minrothian landowners, in front of the Council's inability to decide the fate of the halflings, decided to use mercenaries and their own armed guards to put down those uprisings with force. Troops,

however, were sent by the Council to disarm those forces, because it feared that social tensions and disorder may allow again for a spread of lycanthropy. Some landowners responsible for the violence against the halfling slaves, and some of the uprisings' slave leaders were imprisoned or executed, further exasperating the discontent both of the Minrothian landowners and of the halfling slaves.

The elves of Alfeisle had always hated slavery, had fully realized that the Thyatians would have never allowed the formal freeing of the halflings (Thyatis' economy was centered on slave labor, after all), and were unable to tolerate the halflings' slavery in their archipelago anymore, most of all in the wretched conditions they had to suffer. Since the time of the Treaty of Pilion, they had come up with their own plan, and had assumed control of Open Isle just for this purpose. They had selected one free halfling, Malf Quickhand, born in Harbortown from slave parents who had died before the Silver Purge. During the Purge, Malf had helped defend and free groups of former halfling slaves who had fled from the plantations or were seeking shelter from lycanthrope attacks. Malf was wanted by Harbortown's authorities after the Silver Purge, so he accepted the elves' offer to hide him on Alfeisle. There, he was educated to elven and mainland culture - including that of his own people in the Shires - and trained in seamanship, combat, trade, and administration. The elven clanmasters wanted to make him the instrument to bring about the end of the halfling slavery on Trader's Isle, and Malf was more than happy to play this role.

In AC 449, Malf and the elves agreed upon the details of a plan for a great halfling

uprising on Trader's Isle, and then traveled again to Harbortown. He spent some months making contacts with various slave groups and with their leaders, putting together the plans for an uprising. Then, in AC 450, the rebellion broke out as planned in the city of Harbortown itself; Malf took immediately the leadership of the uprising, which saw the contemporary rise of halfling slaves in many plantations, and the formation of an halfling army which marched on Harbortown, freeing any halfling slave found on its route. Weapons secretly shipped to them by the elves gave the rebel army the necessary tools to achieve victory.

Harbortown's government fled from the town, fearing slaughter, while the Guardianship Council was still too much divided between pro-Thyatian and pro-elves to act. The rebel army occupied the city and, under the leadership of Malf, took possession of a series of disused ships found in Harbortown's harbor. Using some special tackle provided by the elves, the halflings managed to embark on those ships, set sail, and take the sea undisturbed. As Malf had agreed with the elven clanmasters, the halfling flotilla was to land on Open Isle, which the elves had previously secured for themselves at Pilion in order to make it the former slaves' new homeland.

On Open Isle, Malf and the other halfling leaders met with representatives of Alfeisle's clanmasters, and the Pacts of Highston were signed in a village along the banks of the isle's main river. The Pacts recognized the halflings as an independent people, and gave them the full possession of Open Isle, over which the elves relinquished control; as a free people, the halflings would decide autonomously the best way to rule themselves; also, the Pacts established a new trading combine between the elves of Alfeisle and the halflings of Open

Isle, and established a steady flow of elven aid which would have allowed the building of infrastructures, villages, and the start of manufacturing activities.

### **The Decades of the Thyatian Protectorate**

Malf's uprising had left Trader's Isle further damaged from an economic and social point of view; demographic and economic decline had crippled many activities and businesses, many of which had fallen directly or indirectly into the hands of foreign people, mostly Thyatians and elves from Alfeisle. Many members of the Minrothian and New Alphatian aristocracy had to sell their lands due to the loss of halfling manpower, or had seen their merchant activities disrupted; they began to marry into well-off, non-noble families in order to join fortunes together and restore the wealth of their clans. This gradually blurred the identity of the old merchant and land owning aristocracies, and opened the social landscape to the rise of new families from the middle classes. Moreover, the following decades saw the gradual blending of the two main ethnic groups of Trader's Isle - the more numerous Minrothians, and the much depleted New Alphatians - who slowly began to think of themselves as a single people.

Harbortown's authorities regain control of their territory, but in the Guardianship Council accusations run high between the pro-Thyatian members who denounced the elves' direction of the slave uprising behind the scenes, and the pro-Alfeisle members who saw what had happened positively and wanted to carry it further on to total abolition of slavery on the isle.



*During the Decades of the Thyatian Protectorate*

The Thyatian Empire had not taken too kindly the hit scored by the elves. In the previous years following the Silver Purge, Thyatian moneylenders had invested considerable sums of money in the support of Harbortown's economy, lending funds to help damaged landowners to rebuild their plantations and local governments and aristocracy to repair infrastructures in villages and towns; Thyatian money had also helped Harbortown government to restore order and trade through recruitment of a Thyatian mercenary force, repairing of the city's shipyards, and rebuilding of a merchant fleet. In sum, the empire had tried to keep Trader's Isle under its own influence while elven presence on it was mostly focused on tracking the last lycanthropes hidden in the wilderness. After the elves had staged the halfling uprising, however, Thyatis feared that Alfeisle's clanmasters were trying to oust the empire from the isle.

Thus, the Thyatian government protested against the Pacts of Highston, demanding reparations to Harbortown's damaged families, and foreshadowing the use of force to bring the halflings back under Minrothian rule. The elves, on the other hand, did not wish to make war against the empire - most of all because they were unlikely to resist the full might of the empire - and managed to bargain the halflings' new status with control over Trader's Isle, bringing Thyatis to an agreement. According to this paper, the empire recognized Open Isle's independence, the halflings' control over the island, the ceasing of halfling slave trade, and the right guaranteed to halflings still left on Trader's Isle to migrate to Open Isle. In exchange, the elves allowed Thyatis to keep troops on Trader's Isle, and to lend advisors and administrative personnel to Harbortown's government, also after the end of the Guardianship Council's mandate in AC 456.



The agreement effectively allowed Thyatis to establish a protectorate over Trader's Isle<sup>9</sup>. Already deeply involved in the isle's economic rebuilding and in Harbortown's government, when the Guardianship Council was dismissed in AC 456, the Thyatian Empire was able to persuade the local aristocracy to accept the installment of an imperial legate to oversee the government of the whole island. This is considered by historians the de facto beginning of the Thyatian protectorate over Trader's Isle, which was to last until AC 488.

Most of the human families of Trader's Isle were favorable to receive the aid of Thyatis to rebuild their wealth; in the years prior to AC 456, Thyatis had been shrewd to establish strong financial links with many major families of Harbortown, which were not willing to trade independence with the loss of those funds at the time. Some other, in particular those of New Alphantian descent, were opposed to this development, but had not enough strength to challenge the Thyatian protectorate.

Trader's Isle's economy was quickly rebuilt in the following years, and integrated into the empire's trading network; however, Thyatians and elves continued, for the most part, to control the island's main economic activities. Many towns and villages were rebuilt and repopulated, and population losses suffered during the Silver Purge began to slowly recover through a demographic raise and some

immigration from the mainland. Thyatis helped reorganize the isle's local governments around assemblies formed by representatives of the wealthier noble and merchant families from the countryside and the towns, respectively. Many nobles also began to take titles borrowed from those of the Thyatian nobility, like "baron" and "lord".

Harbortown formally continued to be a sovereign nation, even if general trade and foreign policies were strictly overseen by the imperial legate. For example, Thyatis opposed the inclusion of Harbortown in the Alfeisle-Open Isle trading combine, as proposed by the elves, and subsequently hampered direct intervention in Traladara when Duke Demara of Vaion proclaimed himself King of Traladara (AC 474) - with the result that only some private families of Harbortown with interests in Traladaran trade lent money to the local clans to fight this umpteenth hegemonic attempt<sup>10</sup>.

#### **Alfeisle and the Other Islands in the Latter Half of the Fifth Century**

Terentias saw a great development under Thyatian rule, and was fully integrated into the empire's administration; however the other small island attached to Terentias, North Island, saw only very limited development under Thyatian rule - a few coastal villages and lighthouses, and a fort - while the volcanic atoll of Fire Island was left uninhabited. The other small and unproductive islands under Harbortown's formal control - Fortress and Blackrock islands - received scarce development as well.

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<sup>9</sup> The Thyatian protectorate over Trader's Isle has been included mostly to explain a number of sea battles featured on the 8-miles per hex poster map of the Sunlit Sea in PC3 The Sea People, taking place in AC 500 around the Colony Islands; Thyatian interest seemed to me the best way to explain a conflict in the archipelago. The battles and the events which will lead to them are detailed further on.

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<sup>10</sup> Again, see [A Karameikan Companion](#) (by G. Agosta) and *The History of Karameikos* in "Threshold" issue no. 1 for additional info about this character and his deeds.

On Open Isle, the Minrothian families who lived there had to submit to the rule of their former slaves, being subject to some discrimination by the halflings and being kept out of local government. Malf Quickhand imposed a swift "Hinization" of the island, adopting a government structure reminiscent of that of the Five Shires, with shires and sheriffs, and renaming many geographical features of the island, such as its main river which became the Quickhand River. The island remained a rural country, however, where the halflings began to grow spices and other agricultural products, the surplus of which they traded mostly with Alfeisle's elves. Despite this, Open Isle saw a relevant immigration from Trader's Isle as the last halflings abandoned the place of their former slavery to join their free kin.

Alfeisle's trade prospered again in those decades, as the elves gradually reopened their borders to foreign traders and again began visiting ports abroad in the Thyatian and Alpathian empires. Their trade mostly concentrated on the eastern regions, because growing Thyatian interest in trade routes opened to the Serpent Peninsula led the empire to discourage the penetration of foreign merchants in those regions. Elven and halfling trade with Trader's Isle was not as limited, and the elves controlled many local businesses and guilds in the island, which brought sizeable sums of money in the clanmasters' chests. Shipbuilding activity and trade in precious timber and quality woodcraft also spurred the aloof wood elves to establish their own port town to trade with foreign merchants, the way the water elves had done almost two centuries before; thus, the town of Verdon was born in AC 475.

### **The Struggle for Independence**

In the latter decades of the 5<sup>th</sup> century AC, however, due to the growth of their mercantile interests and to the overall prosperity of the island, many Harbortown families began to perceive the Thyatian protectorate as an excessive restraint to the region's further economic development. Inclusion in the Thyatian trade network benefited largely a small number of local noble families who had rebuilt their fortunes thanks to Thyatian money, but on the other hand it hampered the rise of new families. As many of the traditional trades were now controlled by Thyatians and elves, and chance to emerge in new trade areas was hampered by Thyatian trade limitations, new families had little hope to raise their fortunes.

The latter began opposing the amount of trade limitations, tariffs, and dues imposed by the Thyatians on Trader's Isle trade routes and products. The presence of Thyatian troops and bureaucrats on the island, paid through local taxation, was an additional reason of discontent, further heated by the fact that the Thyatians controlled many key offices of the government, directly or through proxies. The elves of Alfeisle and their halfling allies of Open Isle, who resented prolonged Thyatian control over Trader's Isle and imperial limitations on trade as well, were supporting behind the scenes this growing opposition to the Thyatian protectorate.

In AC 485 - after a quarrel between local nobles and Thyatian mercenaries in Harbortown had degenerated into a street riot, which had been quelled by the imperial troops with some deaths among the noblemen - a delegation of Trader's Isle nobles led by Hadric Corser, a wealthy Harbortown nobleman and merchant,

reached the imperial capital and asked the Thyatian emperor to loosen the trade limitations and open access to a larger number of the island's natives to government duties and charges. The emperor agreed to think about the issue but preferred to take time, in the meantime removing the legate responsible for quelling the riot. Emboldened by this success, Corser and his allied nobles then asked for the fulfillment of their requests, also adding in the abolition of taxation to support Thyatian troops on the island. But the Thyatian throne ultimately rejected all the requests. The noblemen were divided between a powerful but small minority which supported the continuation of the Thyatian protectorate, and a larger number of nobles who opposed it.

At the following noblemen's assembly in Harbortown, the opposing faction presented a petition asking for the removal of all Thyatian troops from the island, and protests against the legate were so loud that neither he nor anyone of the supporting faction were allowed to speak to the assembly; the legate had to be escorted to his residence by the troops, under fear of being attacked. It was evident that the majority of the noblemen favored the end of the protectorate, but Thyatis was not willing to give up Trader's Isle, mostly because of the financial interests which some important Thyatian families had there.

At the beginning of AC 486, the imperial Senate authorized the legate to use force to suppress any uprising, if necessary. Unrest began as many noblemen, adhering to the proposal of Hadric Corser, stopped paying taxes to the central government in Harbortown. Skirmishes broke out in the countryside and in the city as the Thyatian troops were sent to arrest those wrongdoers; some were captured and confined in a recently-built prison on

Blackrock Island. But weeks later Hadric Corser, who had escaped imprisonment, with the secret aid of Alfeisle's elves, led a daring naval action against the prison, freeing the confined noblemen and razing the place to the ground. The group of rebellious nobles thus went to the sea, using hidden bays and coves on the most uninhabited islands (as well as halfling and elven hospitality on their islands), and began hitting with swift piratical raids the vessels of the Thyatian Empire and of Trader's Isle families who supported it.

The situation was degenerating, but the Thyatian naval patrols did not manage to locate the rebels' hidden hideouts easily, so skirmishes went on both on the sea and on land. At the end of AC 487, despite Thyatian military presence on Trader's Isle, most of the land was beyond the reach of Thyatian-controlled government in Harbortown; a reform of the protectorate, loosening imperial control over the island and abolishing taxes to support the troops came too late to win back some support for the government. Thus, barring outright military conquest, it seemed impossible to the Thyatians to restore order on the island, and even the island's families who supported Thyatis began to pressure for an agreement with the rebels. Moreover, the successor to the Thyatian imperial throne was utterly opposed to continued imperial commitment on the isle to further the interests of a bunch of senatorial families. Road was paved toward an agreement which put an end to the undeclared war.

#### **The Reform of the "Great Uniter"**

At the beginning of AC 488, a delegation of Trader's Isle noblemen led by Hadric Corser met with Thyatian diplomats in Seahome, where the elves mediated the agreement.

Thyatis consented to quit its protectorate over Trader's Isle, withdrawing most of the troops and administration personnel, to recognize the country's effective sovereignty, to avoid prosecuting any individual responsible for the pirate actions or the uprisings, and to establish new trade relations to allow Trader's Isle merchants to preserve access to some of the empire's markets; in exchange, Thyatis wanted the new government to compensate the loss of Thyatian families' interests in the island through payment of an indemnity. After some quarrels, thanks to the elves it was agreed that the payment was to be done in installments for the next twenty years, and that the empire was allowed to keep garrisons in Harbortown and in a couple of other strongholds as guarantee.



*Bust of Hadric Corser*

At home, Corser was hailed as a hero. Despite the payment due to Thyatis and the continued presence of the imperial garrisons, Trader's Island now considered herself an independent nation. Striking deals with the most important noble and merchant families of the island, Corser laid the foundations of a new, federal and united government of Trader's Isle. Under Corser's reform, each domain and district in which Trader's Isle was divided would have its own hereditary noble ruler or elected representative, and an assembly representing its most important families; in turn, delegates from each of those assemblies, called "Provincial Estates", took part in the federal assembly, the "General Estates". The system ensured a seat in local government and possibly in the federal ones even to families who had opposed the rebel faction, so the reform was quite popular among the whole elite class of the island.

Still in AC 488, as part of his reform bill, Corser decreed the foundation of a new capital city of the island, as seat of the General Estates and symbol of the recovered unity of its inhabitants. He laid the first foundation stone of the new city in the Alphatian Caldera, on the site where the city of New Alphatia stood only fifty years before. The new capital was called Minrothad - that is, "Minroth's Home" in local tongue, to remember the ancient mythic hero who had first settled the island and whose return was still awaited by the people who worshipped him as Immortal. After the foundation of the new city, the united people born from the union between the Minrothians and the New Alphatians began calling themselves "Minrothaddans".

One of the first acts of the new government was to sign agreements with the elves of Alfeisle to become part of the trading

combine together with the halflings of Open Isle. An important consequence of this - and something that the elves and the halflings had strongly required - was the total abolition of slavery in Trader's Isle. Corser and most families were willing to allow this, because, even if they owned lands and kept some slaves, the number of servile manpower had been decreasing in the past decades, and the island's elite felt it better to let slavery go if this meant inclusion in the trading combine and thus access to more profitable markets to sell their lands' produces.

Due to his successes, the General Estates decreed to confer Hadric Corser the honorific appellation of "Great Uniter". But despite those good omens, Corser's rule had yet to face some tough tests, as Thyatian interference in Trader's Isle inner matters was not still ended.

### **The Trading Combine in the Middle of Imperial Struggles**

After the reform of AC 488, order was restored on Trader's Isle and peaceful - if wary - relations with the Thyatian Empire were established. The Thyatians, seeing that payment of the indemnity was steady during the course of the years, slowly disbanded their garrisons in Trader's Isle, keeping only the one at Harbortown, albeit reduced in size. The independence the Minrothaddans had won from the empire, however, had its downsides. Trader's Isle merchants had until now enjoyed limited access to Thyatian markets, and even if their trade was subject to Thyatian control, the island's economy had somewhat benefited from this.

Now, the Thyatian government did not hesitate to use its own trading power to embarrass and destabilize Corser's new government, carrying

on a protectionist policy against Minrothaddan merchandise, and making it more difficult for its merchants to do business with Trader's Isle ones. To enact this, the empire also pushed for a revision of its trade agreements with the peoples of Alfeisle and Open Isle, bargaining limitations on their trade with imperial assent to Trader's Isle inclusion in the Colony Islands' trade combine.

Thus, in the next few years the inner political and social climate of Trader's Isle improved, but its families' trade did not improved as they expected since the lifting of the Thyatian protectorate. Payments of the indemnity to the empire, moreover, began to be quite burdening for the government in Minrothad as the years passed. As it could be expected, smuggling and infringement of the trade limitations began to be practiced by the most unscrupulous human and elven merchants of the Colony Islands' combine.

By AC 495, Minrothaddan and elven smuggling activities were taking place even on the shores of the Isle of Dawn and Ochalea; the matter could be no longer ignored by Thyatis, which had to spend considerable resources in a campaign to combat smuggling activities, with mixed results as the empire got no collaboration from the combine. In AC 497, on the eve of renewed tensions with Alphatia on the eastern and Alasiyan borders, the Thyatian government decided to persuade the combine to do something against smuggling by doubling the garrison at Harbortown. The decision was followed by sharp protests by the Minrothaddans and the elves, who saw it as an attempt to restore the Thyatian protectorate over the island. Hadric Corser, still the leader of the Minrothad government,

decided to halt payment of the indemnity to the empire (which was still halfway from completion).

Tensions were on the rise; once Thyatis would rid itself of the Alphatian problem on its borders, the combine would have had to comply with the empire's wishes or try resisting alone, and likely fall again under Thyatian domination. Then Corser, together with the elven and halfling clanmasters, decided to play an hazardous card and secretly met Alphatian emissaries who had come to in Minrothad under disguise in AC 498.

Skirmishes in Alasiya had begun between Thyatian colonies, Alphatian colonies and their respective allies since AC 497. The Alphatian Empire was busy in their effort to conquer Norwold<sup>11</sup>, and the likely outbreak of a war against Thyatis both in Alasiya and on the Isle of Dawn would distract too many of their resources from their campaign in the north - where they were encountering some resistance from the local barbarian tribes, elven clans, and dragons. Having an ally who could keep a part of the Thyatian forces busy on the western borders of the empire would have been very useful to the Alphatians - so they

<sup>11</sup> This first (actually second, if Alinor's one has to be considered) Alphatian colonization attempt in Norwold is detailed in the novel *Dragonking of Mystara*, by T. Gunnarsson, second book of the *Dragonlord Trilogy*. I assume that the events of the novel take place around AC 510. For an attempt to reconcile the info found within the novel with the Alphatian colonization of Norwold mentioned in CM3 *The Sabre River* and try them fit in the general history of Norwold, see [Timeline of Norwold](#) (by myself, with contribution of other Italian MMB members). Note that the latter file is somewhat out-to-date regarding many details, and will likely get a revision in one of the next issues of "Threshold".

made contact with the Minrothaddans and the elves led by Hadric Corser.

The result was a military alliance according to which the Alphatians would send a group of seasoned wizards and eventually a fleet to support the Minrothians' and elves' struggle to expel the Thyatian garrison from Harbortown and brake the trading limitations the empire was imposing over them. In exchange, they offered very good trade conditions within their territories to the combine's merchants.

War effectively burst out in AC 499, when intense fighting began on the Isle of Dawn and Alasiya. While the Alphatians committed their forces against the Thyatians, a flying ship filled with a brigade of battle mages sailed from Alasiya to Minrothad, helping local forces to siege and oust the Thyatian garrison in Harbortown from Trader's Isle; elven and Minrothaddan vessels then moved to strike the Thyatian-held islands, Terentias in particular. This move caught the Thyatians off-guard, and forced them to halt their offensive on the Isle of Dawn to send a fleet against the Colony Islands. In the meantime, one of the sons of the Alphatian emperor, Prince Varzathram, led the sizeable Alphatian fleet which, with a daring action, breached through Thyatian defenses in the Strait of Furmenglaive and managed to reach the Colony Islands as promised by the empire's treaty with Corser. As the war raged in the west, on the Isle of Dawn military operations stalled - and this was exactly what the Alphatians had been wishing for, in order to focus their efforts on the Norwold campaign.

The Thyatian counterattack against the Colony Island was led by none less than the son of the Thyatian emperor himself. A series of naval clashes took place in the Colony

Islands during the following year. The Thyatians had planned a twofold strike - from the north and from the east - against Trader's Isle capital, but their intentions were discovered by the Alphatians and their allies, who took countermeasures. Thus, the Thyatian fleet attacking from the east and commanded by the imperial prince, was faced by the combined force of Alfeisle's elves and a half of the Alphatian fleet led by Varzathram; in the ensuing battle, known as the Clash of the Princes (AC 500), both princes met their deaths but the Thyatian fleet did not manage to penetrate into the Colony Islands' waters to carry on its attack on Minrothad; at the same time, the other half of the Alphatian fleet, together with the Minrothaddan navy, defended Minrothad from the fierce assault of the Thyatian fleet in the huge Battle of Minrothad (AC 500), which saw a very large number of vessels employed. After one and a half days of maneuvering and naval actions which saw the Thyatians generally prevailing, the defending fleet - despite heavy losses - managed to prevent the Thyatians from disembarking and attacking the capital directly. When the Thyatian fleet decided to withdraw, units of the Minrothaddan navy, joined by elven vessels, harassed it, managing to isolate a part of the Thyatian convoy and capture it in the Battle of the Storm (AC 500), thanks to the use of the elves' weather magics<sup>12</sup>.

The heavy fighting of AC 500 had depleted the resource of both sides on the western front; the Thyatians had lost many ships in battle and had withdrawn to Terentias, while the

Alphatian supporting fleet had lost its commander and was in disarray, and the native fleets had suffered heavy losses. The Alphatian Empire would have liked the war in the west to continue, but was not able to send additional reinforcements to the Colony Islands' trading combine; so, when the Minrothaddan and elven allies decided to make peace overtures to Thyatis, the Alphatian emissaries had to comply. The Peace of Crossbones was signed in AC 501 in Terentias' capital and put an end to what had been known as the "War of the Princes" (AC 499-501) due to the direct involvement of a Thyatian and an Alphatian prince. Thyatis was willing to make concessions to the trading combine of the Colony Islands, because it hoped to commit its whole resources against the Alphatians in order to break their Norwold campaign and conquer some territories on the Isle of Dawn. So the treaty was basically a Minrothaddan and elven success. The agreement required the Thyatians to definitely recognize Trader's Isle independence and its membership in the Colony Islands' trading combine, to withdraw any troop or garrison from the islands, and to avoid further interference in the combine's internal affairs; on the other hand the allies agreed to cease any alliance with the Alphatian Empire, proclaim perpetual neutrality in the struggle between the two empires, and pay a quarter of what was still left of indemnity due to Thyatis in a single installment, but they also obtained favored access to the Thyatian Empire's markets and special trading conditions within the territories of the empire.

All in all, the War of the Princes had been a costly and hazardous bet on Corser's part, but marked an important turning point in the combine's trading relations with the two

<sup>12</sup> The Clash of the Princes, the Battle of Minrothad, and the Battle of the Storm are the three sea battles featured in the 8-miles per hex of the Sunlit Sea included in PC3 *The Sea People* and mentioned under note 8, above.

major empires of the Known World, as it presented the Colony Islands' combine as a neutral nation interested only in trade and gave the alliance special trading rights in both empires - something which would have determined the rise of the combine's wealth in the very next years. When Hadric Corser died in AC 505, the country he had left was independent, stable, and confident about its future.

## The Ierendi Islands in the 5<sup>th</sup> century

After the disgregation of the Makai Kingdom of Ierendi in the late 4<sup>th</sup> century AC, the Ierendi Islands had undergone a time of troubles, during which warfare between Makai tribes increased, further augmented by the spread of lycanthropy at the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century AC, which brought many werereature refugees from the Colony Islands to hide in the western archipelago, adding to the chaos reigning in those islands.

During the course of the 5<sup>th</sup> century AC, werhunters from the Colony Islands foraged through the Ierendi archipelago, searching for surviving lycanthropes, and often coming into conflict with local Makai tribes, which resented intrusion by such outsiders.

At the end of the century, the islands were again fragmented in a number of small tribal kingdoms and hundreds of independent tribes. The rise of anything like the kingdom of Kapena Ikaika appeared decisively unlikely in the near future<sup>13</sup>. On the other hand, pirates and slavers who had plagued the Ierendi Islands in the past centuries, out of fear of the

lycanthropic contagion, decreased their activities in those islands.

## THE SIXTH CENTURY

The 5<sup>th</sup> century AC had been a time of great political and economical transformations in the Sea of Dread: it had seen the decline of the old trading combine in the Colony Islands, only to see it restored again and strengthened after some decades of Thyatian control; it also had seen the slow expansion of the Thyatian trade network westward, toward the Serpent Peninsula, virtually unchallenged due to the outright trading weakness of eventual competitors - like the Traladaran states, the Kingdom of Darokin, the Five Shires, or the Sindhi realms - and to the decline of the Colony Islands' trading combine due to the Silver Purge and its aftereffects.

Even if now that the Colony Islands' combine had achieved independence and was again becoming a relevant trading competitor for the Thyatian Empire in the east, the 6<sup>th</sup> century AC saw the continued enlargement of the imperial trading interest to the west, with the gradual establishment of political influence over the Five Shires, the control over the Ierendi archipelago, and the expansion of the westernmost trade routes to the Green Coast of Davania, south-west of Thanegia Island. The Ierendi archipelago was at the center of this Thyatian expansion, whose effects would result at the end of the century in the establishment of the second independent island realm of the Sea of Dread.

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<sup>13</sup> About Kapena Ikaika's kingdom, see *The History of Ierendi and Minrothad, Part One*, in "Threshold" issue no. 3.



The Ierendi and Colony Islands during the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Centuries  
 FROM AC 456 to the IERENDIAN INDEPENDENCE (AC 602)



COLONY ISLANDS

- Thyatian Protectorate of Crader's Isle (independent confederation since AC 488)
- Thyatian Province of Cerentias (annexed by the Empire in AC 446)
- Open Isle (under Aifeisle control AC 446-450, independent thereafter)
- Water and wood elven holdings in Aifeisle

IERENDI ISLANDS

- Areas of Utter Island inhabited by the Albino people
- Areas inhabited by the Makai
- Five Shires' cast-off settlements and shipbuilding facilities
- Thyatian Province of the Western Islands (AC 586)

OTHER

- Elven holdings on the mainland (Callarii and Vyalia clans)
- Territories of the Thyatian Empire
- Territories of the Kingdom of Darokin
- Territories of the Atruaghin Clans
- Territories of the Five Shires
- Territories controlled by the Craladaran domains
- Main towns and cities
- X
 Main naval battles



## The Second Rise of the Colony Islands's Combine

The new century opened with great prospects for the Colony Islands' trading combine. The trading allies, thanks to their neutrality between Thyatis and Alphatia, managed to exploit the trading agreement they had signed with the two imperial powers to legally penetrate again into both empires' trade networks, expanding their trades to Ochalea and the Pearl Islands, to the Isle of Dawn, to the Alatian Islands, and most of all to the Alpathian mainland itself. Thanks to them, trade goods coming from those faraway places began to be introduced among the higher classes of other countries of the Known World - the Thyatian markets had been the domain of Thyatian merchants, but the latter had seemed unable or unwilling to further import the eastern trade goods in other countries, so

that definitely became an area of interest of the combine's merchants.

The rise of sea trade by the Colony Islands' trading combine was also due to the intense exchange of discoveries and techniques which was taking place between the combine's members; this allowed the Colony Islands' merchants to often be the most up-to-date in the field of navigation, ship design, shipbuilding techniques, sea and weather magic, trading innovations, and so on. Moreover, the ability to merge together the best results of the Alpathian water magics, and of the water elves' weather and sea magics, allowed them to usually be one step ahead of other countries' merchants.

The 6<sup>th</sup> century AC was an age of internal and external peace for the Colony Islands, something which allowed a positive political climate of stability and dedication to the

expansion of settlements and trade. Trader's Isle, which had suffered much in terms of population loss in the past century, gradually recovered from the demographic decline; important guilds and activities continued to be in the hands of elven families, but the economic importance of many human families rebuilt their fortunes around the lands' agricultural produces and by exploring new areas of trade, such as winemaking, glassblowing, or spice dealing. With the abolition of slavery on the island, many landowners turned to rentiers who leased part of their lands to free farmers, investing the profit in trade; some others, who possessed greater sums, invested them in agriculture, relying on hired labor and introducing some innovative and very productive techniques in this field. Urban life flourished as well; Minrothad, which counted only some thousands of people at the beginning of the century, had risen to become the main and most populous urban center of the archipelago a hundred years after. Some existing towns, like Verdon and Seahome, enlarged, while new ones sprung up - such as Malfton, built in AC 520, which became the main town of Open Isle. In towns and cities, trade and crafts organized themselves around new and old guilds, which became very numerous and came to exert a relevant level of influence on the political stage as well.

Inter-island trade was also swiftly developing in these decades, linking even more the various islands' economic activities among themselves. Close economic ties thus matured and strengthened between the various racial communities, bringing to a gradual suppression the old enmities and hates - such as that between Alphatians and Minrothians,

that between the humans and the elves due to the Silver Purge, and that between the halflings and the humans due to the issue of slavery.

This century of prosperity had two important effects for the future of the Colony Islands. First of all, the growing stronger of economic and trading ties between the various islands gave birth to factions which advocated greater political ties between them as well; this would pave the way for the confederation project carried on by Gregus Verdier in the 7<sup>th</sup> century AC. Second, ever closer connection between peoples who managed the guilds and the peoples who controlled politics in the islands - often they were the same peoples - led to the birth of a quite attached oligarchic block, which began to concentrate in its hand all the real power - political and economical - within the combine.

### **The Settlement of the Ierendi Islands**

While the Minrothaddans and their allies, the elves of Alfeisle and the halflings of Open Isle, were again expanding their trade network in the east thanks to their combine's neutrality between Alphatia and Thyatis, the Ierendi Islands to the west had returned to be a backward place inhabited by quarreling Makai kingdoms and tribes, with few on interest for outsider eyes apart from the most daring merchants and pirates, who occasionally traded with the natives or raided their villages to capture slaves.

In this troubled age, it was the Hin of the Five Shires who first took interest in the islands. According to the legend, around AC 500 the High Sheriff of the Shires sent adrift a large boat carrying about seventy criminals sentenced to death; the Sheriff took this

unusual means of sentencing to death because he unexpectedly discovered that one of the criminals sentenced to death was his own brother - he hoped that this way his relative could have greater chances of survival.

The boat was left in the high seas without food and drink, and many criminals died of starvation or at the hand of their kin. In the third week of drifting in the high seas, a storm carried the boat toward Ierendi Island, where the surviving criminals - 23 individuals (11 humans, 5 elves, 4 halflings, and 3 dwarves), that is less than a third of the original number - landed. In the following years these individuals managed to get along, established a community at the mouth of the Ierendi River, and made friendly contact with the local Makai natives.

Time passed and the former criminals' settlement became a flourishing town which, some years later, attracted the greedy eyes of the Five Shires again. But an expedition sent by the Hin to take control of the town was decisively defeated by the alliance between the criminals and the natives, and the Shires renounced any claim on Ierendi Island from then on<sup>14</sup>.

### Thyatian Influence in the West

As can be expected, the historical truth is quite far from the Ierendians' legends about the founding of their island nation. In fact, it was due to the influence and interference of the Five Shires and of the Thyatian Empire that the Ierendian history entered a new phase.

The 6<sup>th</sup> century AC was an age of renewal, change, and internal conflict for the Thyatian Empire, whose struggle against the rival Alpathian Empire entered a new phase from

AC 500, since the beginning of the wars to control the Alasiyan colonies, wars which later transferred to the Isle of Dawn. It was also an age in which Thyatian influence was felt through many countries to the west of the empire, including the Colony Islands (despite the loss of its protectorate over the archipelago, Thyatian influence was still quite strong there), the southern Traladaran domains, and even the Five Shires, where the Thyatians had forced the High Sheriff to come to terms and open trade with imperial merchants after a failed attempt by the Hin to close their towns to outside traders following the issue of Minrothian halfling slave trade<sup>15</sup>. Thanks to the control the empire exercised over the Five Shires and Ierendi Islands area, Thyatian merchants began to venture abroad, opening trade routes with the Sindhi ports of the Great Waste, with Yavi towns on the coasts of the Serpent Peninsula, and ultimately with the Green Coast in Davania; Thyatian merchantmen sailed inshore and brought back the luxuries of those lands, in particular cocoa, exotic slaves, and local spices<sup>16</sup>.

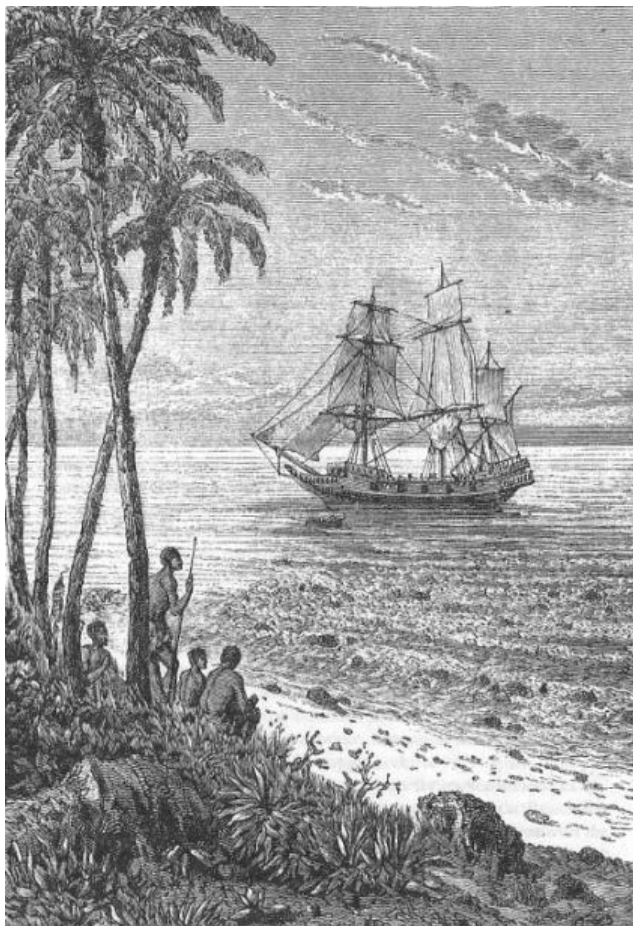
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<sup>15</sup> According to GAZ4, page 4, the Five Shires were "at this time under political influence of Thyatis". I tied this statement with the mention of a "High Sheriff" ruling the Shires in the 6<sup>th</sup> century AC, found in GAZ4, page 3. This story assumes that after the Hin had suffered from slaver raids in the preceding century, they decided to close their borders to sea trade, but the government of the Shires - led by a "High Sheriff" in this age - had to come to terms when the Thyatian Empire forced him to reopen trade with imperial merchants (think of the trade relationship between the US and Japan or between the United Kingdom and China in the 19<sup>th</sup> century).

<sup>16</sup> See note 8, above.

The Thyatians were also backing the High Sheriff's domain over the Five Shires, but his rule was facing strong opposition from various directions, in particular from local Hin merchants whose businesses were declining due to Thyatian trading influence over the country. Smuggling became a sort of national sport of the Hin who tried to bypass trading restrictions imposed by the government. The High Sheriff responded to these violations with an increasing level of repression, backed by the Thyatians. In order to avoid an escalation of discontent from his subjects, transgressors were exiled to the Ierendi Islands.

**The Shires' and Thyatis' Penal Colonies**  
Thus, from AC 550 to AC 570 an increasing number of condemned halflings was exiled to the islands of Elegy, Fletcher, Alcove, and Safari. Sometimes the exiles were enslaved or killed by the Makai, but most often they were welcomed and developed friendly relations with the natives. As the number of condemned halflings increased, it was not long before small Hin settlements began to grow here and there on the coasts. With the passing of years, these exiles - using the Makai canoes - even began to trade with the Five Shires, violating trade restrictions, and to harass Thyatian merchantmen crossing nearby waters.



*Penal Colony*

The High Sheriff, urged at by the Thyatian Empire, tried to establish control over these settlements, sending small detachments of troops and governors to exercise authority over the cast-offs; most of these settlements complied and were subdued, but one on Fletcher Island resisted. The High Sheriff mounted an expedition against this exiles' settlement in AC 568, but the attack was repelled by the cast-offs, helped by native Makai tribesmen; a couple of other villages rebelled against the occupying Hin forces, one even killing the governor sent by the Shires<sup>17</sup>.

The victory of the cast-offs spurred Thyatis to direct action: if the High Sheriff was unable to subdue the cast-offs, then they could have endangered the Thyatian trade routes which led to the Serpent Peninsula and to Davania. When a new settlement was established on the mouth of the Ierendi River by a large

<sup>17</sup> I have tried to include some elements of Ierendi's foundation legend included here; in my opinion the legend is in fact too recent (four centuries) to be totally fictitious.

number of cast-offs coming from the other islands in AC 570 - an event which marked the historical foundation of Ierendi town - the Thyatians decided it was time to act, even if in a subtle way.

In those years the empire itself was experiencing an increase in the number of prisoners, in particular due to the religious and social unrest still raging within its borders. In AC 571, the empire decided to lessen tensions in mainland jails by founding colonies of convicts on the Ierendi Islands, thus using the condemned individuals to exert control over the Ierendi archipelago. Unlike what the High Sheriff had done, the Thyatian program for the Ierendi Islands was carried out rigorously and rationally: convicts were divided in small controllable groups, accompanied by small garrisons, and put under the supervision of imperial officers. The prisoners had to build infrastructures - a manor house or mansion, generally, and homes for themselves - and to plow the land, planting, farming, and working in the plantations which were contemporaneously established. Plots of land were then sold to interested landowners, investors, and rich people in Thyatis<sup>18</sup>.

These “penal colonies” were established at first on the five islands where the cast-offs from the Shires had settled. Thyatis asked the High Sheriff beforehand to subdue the openly rebellious settlements, lending him the help he needed to ensure success. Within AC 571, all unrest by the Hin cast-offs was quelled; the empire established its own colonies on the

islands, in order to watch closely the former cast-off settlements, whose possession was left to the Five Shires.

### **Interest and Tensions in the Ierendi Islands Grow**

The next few years saw a few interesting developments which would prove instrumental for the future of the archipelago. The Five Shires government never imposed strict control over the settlements inhabited by the halfling cast-offs; the High Sheriff was content to send an officer or two there with some troops, but tried not to further raise tensions with the cast-offs and his own subjects, rather handling political prisoners to the Thyatians than sending them among the cast-offs.

At the same time, the government of Shireton - with the Thyatians complying - decided to lessen restrictions over trade in order to decrease internal opposition to the High Sheriff's rule and to his alliance with Thyatis, carried out by the anti-centralist and liberal faction of the Shires' middle classes. This fact also led to the gradual rise of the Hin sea trade, which for the moment was active within the boundaries dictated by the High Sheriff's rule.

The rise of the Hin sea trade was also due to development of an unusually intense shipbuilding activity in the cast-off settlements of the Ierendi Islands. The inhabitants used the plentiful local timber resources to build small, sturdy, round ships which mixed the Hin shipbuilding techniques with the Makai's canoeing and traditional ship design. At first these boats were built and sold on individual basis to single merchants, but within a few years the government of the Shires built shipbuilding facilities in the most

<sup>18</sup> This is akin to what happened in Australia and elsewhere in the real world. This version expands and modifies the reasons behind Thyatian colonization of the Ierendi Islands found in [History of the Thyatian People](#) (by J. Ruhland).

important of the cast-off settlements, and since AC 575 these were used as naval bases year-round, becoming in a short time the main shipbuilding sites of the Five Shires<sup>19</sup>. The High Sheriff's government was not interested in creating a competitive navy for the Shires and preferred to sell the ships to selected Hin merchants in order to bring more money in his coffers. Thus, in the turn of a few years, the halflings' "wallowing turtles" - as human sailors called the small ships of the Hin - began a common sight in the Ierendi waters and along the Shire Coast.

Worse for the Thyatians, the loosening of trade restrictions and the rise of the halflings' shipbuilding craft were reinforcing the faction which, inside the Shires, opposed the High Sheriff's rule. After AC 580, the High Sheriff experienced growing unrest at home by the opposers of his pro-Thyatian and centralist policy, mostly made up of middle-class merchants and craftsmen tired of trade restrictions imposed by the agreements with Thyatis. At the same time the halfling merchants began trading in defiance of restrictions and of agreements between the High Sheriff and Thyatis, often resorting to smuggling and even piracy. With the High Sheriff's government unable to track these trespassers down, the Thyatians had to step in often, capturing and sentencing the criminals. This did not do anything but raise the anti-Thyatian feeling of many Hin. In the

<sup>19</sup> See GAZ8, *Dungeon Master's Booklet*, page 8. Apart from some sparse details in the timeline, GAZ8 is lacking any relevant historical information about the Shires after BC 500; I think there is room to expand the Shires' history - a country not subject to any change for a thousand and a half years is not very believable - as I have tried to do with the story of the High Sheriff mentioned in this part of the article.

following years, the former cast-off settlements (and the wilderness around them) in the Ierendi Islands became the gathering places for underground opposers to the High Sheriff's rule over the Shires, but also shelters safe enough for smugglers, pirates, and political refugees.

At the same time, Thyatian interest in the Ierendi Islands was spurred as well, well beyond the need to keep control over trade routes to the Serpent Peninsula and Davania. In the same years in which the halfling sea trade began to flourish and the former cast-off settlements on the islands were becoming hotbeds of opposition to the High Sheriff's rule, the Thyatians discovered deposits of precious metals (gold and platinum) in the archipelago, as well as plentiful underwater sources of gemstones. Accordingly, many more upper class speculators from Thyatis showed interest in buying properties - lands and mines - on the islands, but their arrival in many cases escalated the conflict with the native Makai people, who resisted what they began to see as a full-fledged invasion of their ancestral lands. In the next few years, powerful individuals with interests in the islands obtained from the Thyatian government further involvement of the imperial military machine and administration in the management, control, and conquest of the islands.

This was further eased by the coup staged by the stepson of the current Thyatian emperor, who killed his predecessor. The new emperor managed to obtain the support of the Senate through bribes, and enacted a campaign of terror to suppress all political opposers to his rule; many of those condemned persons were sent to the Ierendi Islands as convicts. Thus, in the following years, the islands saw

an influx of people from Thyatis, but differently from the past these were not only common criminals, but began to include people of higher social status - senators, noblemen, wealthy merchants - who had fallen on the wrong side of the struggle over the imperial throne. As we will see, their presence will have decisive consequences for the future of the archipelago.

## The Thyatian Conquest of Ierendi

Again, the tense situation in the Shires had repercussions on the Ierendi archipelago. In AC 585, growing discontent of the middle class of many towns against the rule of the High Sheriff, which in the last years had become more corrupt and authoritarian than ever, sparked an armed uprising in the streets of Shireton, which forced the High Sheriff to leave the town; within few days, the Shires were locked in a bitter civil war which saw the few supporters of the High Sheriff - mostly noble clan leaders and landowners - fighting the rebels, who had roots in the merchant classes and were strong in the coastal towns and in the former cast-off colonies established in the Ierendi archipelago.

The uprising could not happen at a worse time for Thyatis: the strength of the imperial fleet had declined in the last years due to internal troubles in the empire, giving way to the penetration of Northman and Alphatian raiders in the Western Sea of Dawn; also, war against the Alphatian Empire broke out in the Alasiyan colonies to the north, as well as on the Isle of Dawn to the east, locking Thyatian forces on many fronts at the same time.

The Thyatians knew the High Sheriff was doomed unless the empire stepped in to aid him consistently, but now it was impossible

to send a military expedition to the Shires. Nevertheless, Thyatis could not afford to risk losing control over the Ierendi Islands due to the hostile presence of a differently-oriented Hin realm to the north. Moreover, the Thyatian government had already begun to commission ships - which were sold to the empire at very favourable prices - to the Shires' shipbuilding facilities in the Ierendi Islands, and intended to increase those commissions in order to cope with losses in the war against Alphatia; now the prospect of losing this shipbuilding resource due to the fall of the High Sheriff was alarming for the Thyatian performance in the ongoing war.

Thus, the Thyatian emperor decided to rely on the treachery his people was famous for. Thyatian emissaries secretly contacted the rebel Hin leaders, signing an agreement with them: Thyatis agreed not to help the High Sheriff in his struggle to hold his sway over the Shires - thus allowing the rebels to move forces from the islands to the mainland - while the rebels agreed to keep out of the trade routes toward the Serpent Peninsula and Davania; both parties agreed to recognize the current division of the Ierendi lands between Thyatis and the Shires, but no agreement was reached over the continuation of Thyatian ship commissions to the shipbuilding facilities in the islands.

But that did not matter, as for the Thyatians the agreement was only a decoy. In AC 586, as most of the rebel forces left the island colonies to help defeat the High Sheriff in the mainland, three Thyatian naval expeditions quickly and suddenly attacked by surprise the few halfling defenders left in the islands and defeated them in the three battles known as the Battle of Ierendi, the War of Fletcher, and the Battle of the Trap, taking control of the



halflings' shipbuilding facilities and towns on the islands<sup>20</sup>. The empire proclaimed the whole ten islands of the Ierendi archipelago a province of Thyatis, sending more troops and a governor to consolidate control over them. Construction of ships to replenish the imperial fleet was immediately started in the former Hin shipbuilding facilities on the islands.

The Hin rebels were shocked by the Thyatian surprise attack, but despite protesting against the Thyatian emissaries they were too engaged in their civil war to try to react directly. In the islands, however, some halfling clans - such as the Caulker and the Longkeel clans<sup>21</sup> - managed to flee in the interior swamps, beginning from there a small-scale guerrilla war against the Thyatian occupants. Neither did Thyatian treachery go unopposed on the

sea, where many halfling sea merchants went pirate and began harassing Thyatian trade routes and isolated ships crossing this sea region. Anyway, getting a little aid from the Kingdom of Darokin, the rebels were able to defeat the High Sheriff later in AC 586; a federal and decentralized government was established, and the new Shires took position against Thyatis in international relations (even if this opposition did not take official forms, besides piracy against Thyatian shipping which was nevertheless denied by the Shires' new government).

### The Thyatian Rule in the Archipelago

The Thyatian domain over the Ierendi Islands turned out to be harsher than even the local convicts thought it to be. The influx of prisoners and convicts from Thyatis continued, as the throne carried on its campaign to suppress any opposition at home. Political prisoners and many more common criminals ended up in the Ierendi convict settlements, where their labor was put to use by local plantation- and mine-owners; many also ended up working in the shipbuilding facilities seized from the halflings, where - under the overseeing of Thyatian shipwrights - they built ships for the Thyatian imperial navy.

The living conditions of the convicts became harder as, in the course of the years, the Thyatian crown resolved to extract as many resources as possible from the archipelago. Thyatian penetration in the interior, which aimed at seizing the most profitable mining sites and at deforesting areas to convert them to farming lands. This indiscriminate invasion of the Makai native lands spurred conflicts between the Thyatian military and some local tribes in the islands of Safari, Utter, and Alcove - resistance of the Makai to the

<sup>20</sup> These three battles are featured on the 8-miles per hex map of the Sunlit Sea included in PC3 The Sea People, where they are also marked as "underwater battles". In fact, the triton Kingdom of Undersea - which at that time also controlled most of the underwater lands stretching around the Ierendi Islands - was worrying about the recklessness of the Ierendian halfling, who had already made some forays into the local merrows' sacred underwater sites in order to get precious pearls and other resources from the bottom of the sea. Foreshadowing a worsening of this behavior should the halflings improve their presence in the Ierendi Islands, the tritons struck a deal with the Thyatian Empire, agreeing to send some triton warriors to help Thyatis seize the halfling settlements in the Ierendi Islands in exchange for the pledge to avoid trespassing into the merrows' sacred places. Thus, the three battles saw also the involvement of small contingents of triton warriors on the Thyatian side.

<sup>21</sup> About these clans, see G. Agosta's *Ierendian Government and Aristocracy*, in "Threshold" issue no. 3.

Thyatian domain was futile and quickly crushed, but rebellious tribes had to be tracked down in the wilderness and in impervious territory, so these “wars” became long series of skirmishes which did nothing but exasperate the conflict, forcing the empire to send more troops and its administrators in the islands to adopt harsher methods to put down unrest and discontent.

An especially vicious guerrilla war was fought intermittently over the course of those years in the interior lands of Ierendi Island, where some Makai tribes had been joined by halfling freedom fighters from clans who had escaped the former cast-off colonies in order to avoid submitting to Thyatian rule, such as the Caulker and Longkeel clans. This contributed to make the interior of the island insecure and forced caravans carrying loads of precious metals, plantation products, and timber to travel under heavy military escort.

As if this was not enough, the emperor of that time, a corrupt and unprincipled man, began cutting corners on the funding destined to the Ierendian colonies and garrisons, diverting them into the hands of his cronies and relatives. As a result, the situation in the Ierendi province grew gradually worse.

In the course of the thirteen years of Thyatian dominion, the imperial garrisons in the archipelago became unusually brutal and callous in their treatment of the native and convict populations. The corruption of the imperial bureaucracy concurred to the picture of an oppressive and ruthless rule under which, in the subjects’ eyes, no decent life was ever possible.

Anyway, the Thyatian owners of plantations and mines in the islands - most of which did not live there and were thus not exposed to

the dangers of wilderness guerrilla and native hostility - were happy to receive high profits from their products, and had only to ask the throne for additional troops and funds to quell occasional disorders and unrest. The throne was satisfied as well, as it received a share from every profit made on goods extracted or produced in the archipelago, and was even able to further enrich itself by diverting in its pockets part of the money destined to the shipbuilding program which was taking place in the Ierendi yards.

Thyatians who had invested in trading enterprises toward the Serpent Peninsula and Davania, however, began to worry about the preservation of those trade routes, because they saw the Ierendian situation as increasingly unstable. Piracy against Thyatian shipping - carried on mostly by the Hin of the Five Shires, and occasionally also by the Minrothaddans - was on the rise, and the imperial navy was not always able to protect Thyatian merchant shipping and to track down the pirates. But the throne and the Senate, despite warnings by some of the wiser Thyatian politicians, were induced by bribes to carry on the interests of powerful potentates, such as that represented by slave traders. Thus, instead of spending funds to fight piracy and improve Thyatian control of western trade routes, the empire mounted an ill fated military expedition - led by General Bronicus Galbanus - against the Atruaghin peoples of the Children of the Turtle and of the Tiger (AC 595-598), which led to the capture of many slaves brought to the Thyatian markets, but which was ultimately repelled and did not bring any lasting territorial gain to the empire<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>22</sup> The idea of a Thyatian expedition against the Atruaghin Clans was borrowed from

### The Rebellion Breaks Out

Situation in the archipelago grew tenser toward the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> century AC. The failure of the Thyatian expedition against the Atruaghin Clans, rising in pirate activity in the Ierendi waters, mismanagement, corruption, and brutality by imperial bureaucracy and military in the Ierendi Islands, growing unrest in Makai and convict population in the ten islands - all these elements were taken into account by those who opposed the Thyatian rule - halfling guerrilla leaders and escaped prisoners, Makai tribal chiefs, pirate captains, and not a few Thyatian political prisoners and former senators or noblemen; slowly their interest in ousting the Thyatian presence from the archipelago intertwined together and they started to plan a coordinated uprising against the imperial rule.

The old enemy of Thyatis, the Alphatian Empire, did not fail to notice the troubles which the rival was experiencing in the west, either. Thus, another war between the two empires started in AC 598; the first skirmishes took place in Alasiya and on the Isle of Dawn, but escalated into a full war in AC 600, when the Thyatian navy was severely defeated by the Alphatian fleet, which had enlisted the aid of Ostlander longships, at the northern end of the Western Sea of Dawn. This defeat opened the Thyatian mainland to sea raids by the Alphatian and Ostlander warships, and threatened supply lines to the troops on the Isle of Dawn<sup>23</sup>.

The Thyatian defeat was the signal the resistance movement in Ierendi was waiting for to spark the rebellion. As news of the naval disaster reached the archipelago, guerrilla

[Atruaghin Clans Revised](#) (by J.W. Biles).

<sup>23</sup> The international picture here follows more or less, [History of the Thyatian People](#) (by J. Ruhland).

warriors led by the Caluker and Longkeel halfling clans and aided by Makai warriors launched an attack against one of the most crowded prison camps of Ierendi Island, inside which a prisoner uprising broke out at the same time. The uprising inside the camp was planned and led by a clever and brutal former Hattian pirate called Mad Creeg<sup>24</sup>, who had earned a certain degree of popularity among the prisoners due to his daring piratical actions before his capture, and to a daring, albeit failed, attempt at evasion. The coordinated attack and uprising was successful and, as a result, a small army of former prisoners, halfling guerrilla warriors, and Makai fighters gathered around Mad Creeg. In the next two weeks, uprising broke out in other places on the islands as well.

The archipelago's situation and Thyatis' problems were not a secret for Creeg. During his years as a prisoner in the Ierendi Islands, he had been transferred various times from one area to another, and during his stays in this or that area he had made contacts with charismatic or influential characters among the prisoners, and with corrupt garrison and administration officers. He knew that the empire's first interest was the defense against Alphatia, and also knew the vulnerability of the local imperial bureaucracy to bribes.

After the initial uprising, Creeg managed to get money from interested parties in the Five Shires, Minrothad, and Darokin to further his attempt to free the islands from the Thyatian control. The former pirate used the money

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<sup>24</sup> The Hattian origin of Mad Creeg was devised in G. Agosta's *Ierendian Government and Aristocracy*, in "Threshold" issue no.3. For a different take about the pirate leader's background, see [The Dynasties of Thyatis](#) (by J. Mishler).

to bribe garrison commanders and officers into inaction, desertion, or leaving the islands, and the imperial bureaucrats into slowing and thwarting the reaction of the empire to the uprising. As the rebellion widened, charismatic prisoners who Creeg had become friends with during the past years decided to fight under his banner. Pirates hiding in the nearby waters flocked under his command, assaulting Thyatian ships or raiding plantations, mines, and camps in order to free other prisoners. Many Makai tribes, who had been subject to Thyatian oppression or who had seen nearby tribes dispossessed of lands and resources, were convinced that Creeg was a better choice than the Thyatians and threw their lot in with him.

All this, coupled with the Thyatian government's choice to give precedence to the war against Alphatia rather than to the quelling of the Ierendi rebellion, made possible a swift success of Mad Creeg's ragtag supporters. In a few months he had seized control the Ierendi Island, where the main imperial assets were located; within a year, his tactical mind and Thyatian inability to get the upper hand against Alphatia in the east allowed his forces to take one island after another. In AC 601, the rebellion led by Mad Creed had completely overturned the Thyatian provincial government, and the few imperial troops - left without aid from the mainland - had been at last recalled to Thyatis. This rapid success was also possible due to the fact that some of the prisoners who chose to help him were former Thyatian army officers or noblemen or functionaries, and had had experience in army, fleet, and administration management; one of these, for example, was Tiberius Alexander, a

former senator who helped put together a fleet for Creeg<sup>25</sup>.

### **The Proclamation of the Kingdom of Ierendi**

Creeg established his residence in Ierendi town. At the beginning of AC 602, he gathered there the various leaders who had supported his rebellion - prisoner leaders, halfling clanheads, Makai tribal chiefs, pirate captains, officers who had deserted from the Thyatian army, Thyatian bureaucrats who had been promised an appointment in the new government - in order to communicate to them his idea to make the archipelago a kingdom united under one monarch with strong authority in order to better resist future attempts by Thyatis to retake the islands. The flock of his supporters, without surprise from him, enthusiastically agreed and proclaimed him as the first King of Ierendi. Thus, the Kingdom of Ierendi, claiming all the ten islands - some of which were still uninhabited (White and Honor islands) - was born.

Thyatis was not any nearer to seeing the end of its conflict against Alphatia, and had no resources to spare for an attempt to retake the archipelago. In order to avoid exposing the empire's western side to attacks by Mad Creeg's pirate fleet, the Thyatian government chose to sign a ten-year truce with the newly-proclaimed King of Ierendi in AC 602, temporarily recognizing his possession of the archipelago but not his royal title in exchange for abstention on Creeg's part to launch pirate attacks against Thyatis. This truce

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<sup>25</sup> The character of Tiberius Alexander was created by G. Agosta (see *Ierendian Government and Aristocracy*, in "Threshold" issue no. 3, pages 45-46).

would have actually been renewed for many years until AC 643.

King Creeg effectively complied with the truce, forbidding his pirates any raid against Thyatian territory or any attack on Thyatian ships in Thyatian waters. But this excluded, from his point of view, attacks on Thyatian ships in Ierendian and nearby waters. Thus the result of the truce for Thyatis was the sudden severing of the empire's trade routes toward

the Serpent Peninsula and Davania, which passed through Ierendian and Hin waters made now impassable due to piratical activity. In order to preserve access to the Green Coast's markets, the empire had to find another sea route, which this time went from Ochalea to the Serpent Peninsula through the Davanian Shallows - a route which would have revealed itself filled with unforeseen dangers in the future.

## CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The Threshold editorial team invites all fans of the Mystara setting to submit contributions to the **seventh** issue of the magazine.

We are looking especially for contribution fitting the theme of that issue - **The Hollow World**.

**Proposal Deadline: August 31st, 2014**  
**Manuscript Deadline: October 31st, 2014**

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

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

The Threshold editorial team strives for edition neutrality, but edition specific articles (e.g., conversions) are also accepted.

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

See [inside back cover](#) for submission guidelines.



FROM  
THE VAULTS  
OF PANDIUS

A Truly Dreadful Destination:

# Bararna Island

A map by Andrew Theisen (Cthulhudrew)



Too late for inclusion in our last issue to accompany Geoff Gander's article on Bararna Island, but presented here as a bonus, we present a map of that "truly dreadful destination"

*The Editors*



FROM  
THE VAULTS  
OF PANDIUS

## Advice for Traders in the Sea of Dread

by Michele “LoZompatore” C.

**A conversation (actually a monologue) between senior Captain Maddom Eneterias and junior Captain Polin Jalenta at the “Linton Navigators’ Restplace”, Port Tenobar, AC 1000.**

My dear Polin, I see the House has sent you to take over the command of the *Armstead*, my beloved ship. It is a special ship, you know: the fastest blue-water large sailing ship of the whole fleet.

I had been a successful merchant in my early career so I managed to persuade Linton House<sup>1</sup> to build her following the instructions of a sage from our odd village of Armstead. How this ever-smiling guy from the northern side of the Cruth Mountains knew how to build ships is out of my knowledge, but he really knew what he was doing.

I crossed most of the Sea of Dread with this ship for almost twenty monsoons, and would have done it for twenty monsoons more, if only all the heads of that hydra would have been of the same opinion.

But now, back to business. Polin, I read here you never went farther than Thyatis and Jahore, your travelling being mostly confined to the Sunlit Sea. Typical. Remember that any real seamen, really wishing to see if the world ends at the horizon cannot miss to face the

maelstroms lingering in the misty center of the Abyss.

Anyway, they told me you are one of the most experienced captains of the House so - before you decide to end up your career enlisting in that Minrothad Navy which apparently is all the rage among you rookies - the House wants you to run a profitable trade across the Sea of Dread, just like I did until a mere season ago.

You are going to assume command of my ship and my crew, so I'd better to give you a crash course on what you'll face on - and in - the high seas.

What I'm going to tell you is a mix of what I saw with my eyes and what I read in the rare books I seldom happened to trade - by the way, insure you are always provided with some of those convoluted scrolls for reading languages: they are an invaluable tool for your new job.

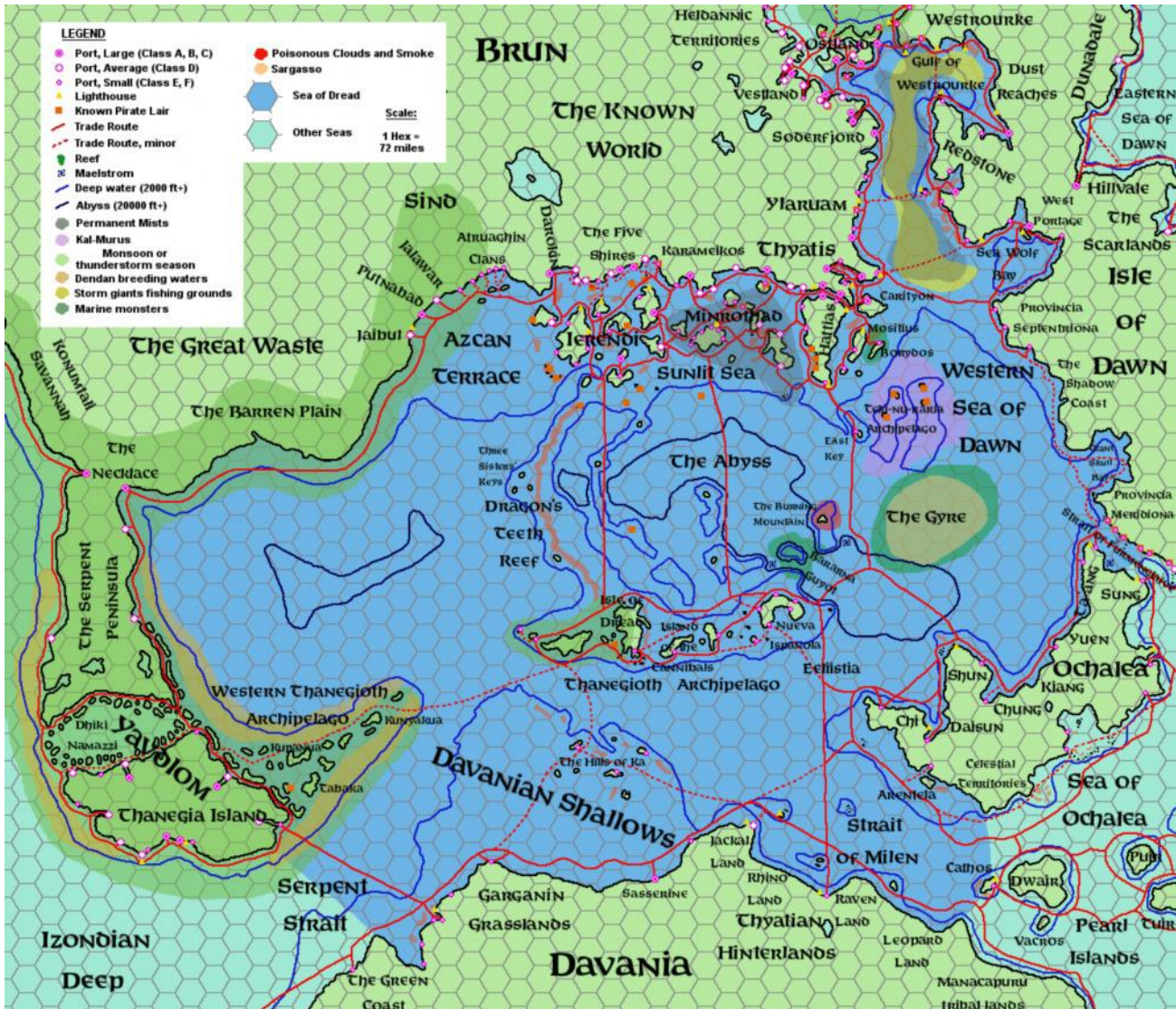
Oh, and be careful: everything you are going to hear from me *by no means* will exhaust the list of perils and opportunities you may find in the terrible, charming waters just south of here.

Of course, if you feel the need to get more nerdy details on the best way to distinguish between an hungry kraken and a clamped school of goby fishes just have a stop at Newkirk High<sup>2</sup> and try to talk with some of the senior professors – provided they can spare some time for you, of course. On my part, I prefer direct experience.

<sup>1</sup> From GAZ11 “The Republic of Darokin” by Scott Haring. Linton House is the merchant house of Darokin most specialized in sea trade.

<sup>2</sup> From a table in TM2 “Eastern Countries Trail Map” game accessory. It is a university specialized in sea exploration.

## Trade Routes in the Sea of Dread





## THE BASICS OF TRADE IN THE SEA OF DREAD

Let's start with a few words about your job: the Sea of Dread is roughly round, just like a huge pool, with a single metropolis on its northeastern side - **Thyatis City** - which will buy everything you are going to sell her, and about a dozen of cities scattered around the pool's perimeter acting as trade hubs to the inland territories or to the nearby seas. Such "**Gate Cities**" will both buy and sell everything they can get their hands on.

The Sea itself is not an easy place: it is filled with dangers and obstacles of all sorts - from bad weather to pirates and monsters - and it is crossed by three fierce **competitors**, namely traders from **Minrothad**, **Cathos** and **Kastelios**.

From your perspective the best way to make a profit is to buy high-valuable, lightweight, non-bulky goods in faraway places and then sell them in Thyatis City or in any of the gate cities, always taking the safest and fastest route and selling at lower prices than your competitors.

If the goods you sell are rare you may expect to charge a 5% markup for every 50 miles of travelling, a fare that you could easily double if the goods are unique to a particular area.

It is really that simple, at least in principle.

### First choice marketable goods

The best marketable goods you should look for are end-products such as **jewels**, **art objects**, **rare books**, **fine dresses** - especially if made of precious material such as silk or furs - **superior weapons and armors** and - of course - **magic objects**. Most of these goods

require a pretty large economy in order to be produced, so they are usually found in large cities and extensive ruin structures.

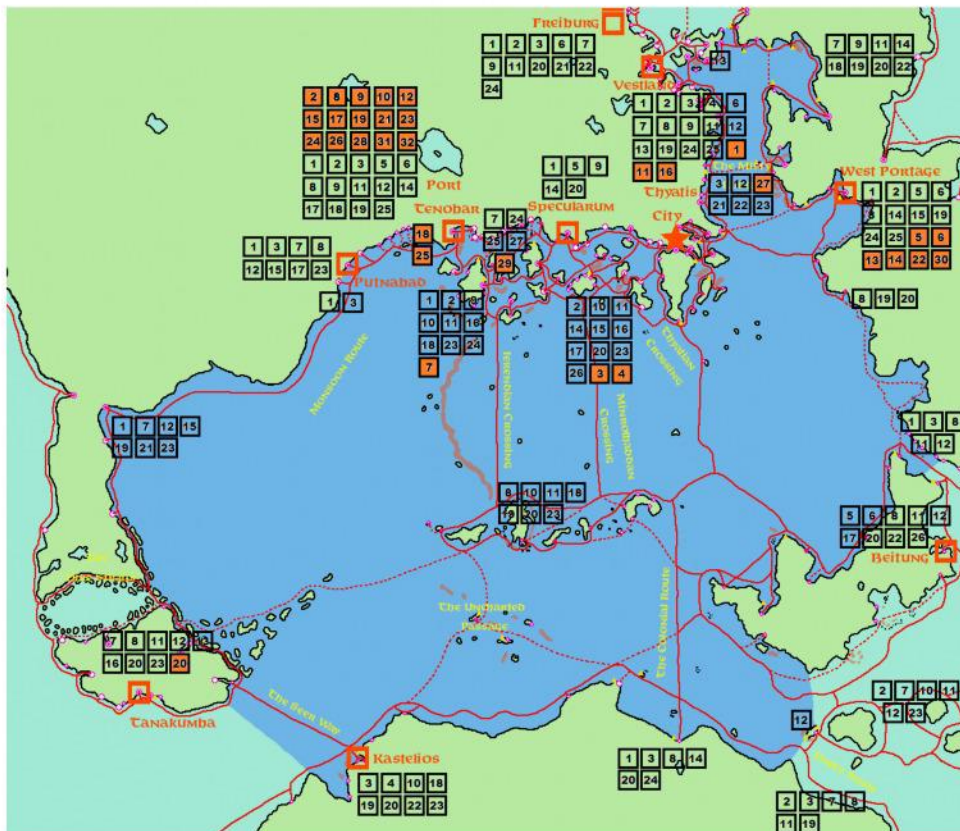
About ruins: you might try to hire some adventurers to complement you and your best crewmen and explore the ancient ruins yourself but it is far safer, and ultimately more rewarding, to attend to your business and to buy the same findings by the same adventurers once they get back to civilization: prices are higher and you may have to hire some more experts in magic and lore to study the findings but, in general, this approach is much cheaper than having to repair a damaged ship and hiring new crewmen.



### Second choice marketable goods

On a second choice you should look for precious raw materials such as **gems** and **semi-precious stones** like **amber**, **corals** and **pearls**. **Ivory**, **tea**, **coffee**, **dried spices** and **dyes** are good choices as well, while you should trade **furs** only if you are sure they do not spoil during the trip. The same is true about **magical ingredients**, especially if they come from recently killed monsters: always

Map of marketable goods in the sea of Dread



**Legend**

- ★ Thyatis City (buys everything)
- Gate City (buys everything it does not sell)

**Goods for sale:**

- |                                |                                     |                                    |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 Magic Objects                | 23 Exotic Food                      | 16 Ethengarian Light War Horses    |
| 2 Jewels                       | 24 Liqueurs                         | 17 Darokinian blown glassware      |
| 3 Rare Books                   | 25 Rare Wine                        | 18 Bear Clan Pottery               |
| 4 Fine Armours                 | 26 Silk                             | 19 Krondahar Youghurt              |
| 5 Art Objects                  | 27 Tobacco                          | 20 Yavdlom Coconuts                |
| 6 Rare Fur/Skin/Leather Coats  |                                     | 21 Morlay Malinbois Wines          |
| 7 Gems                         | <b>Unique goods</b>                 | 22 Alphatian Spider Silk           |
| 8 Magical Ingredients          | (sold only in a single place):      | 23 Krondahar Silk                  |
| 9 Rare furs                    | 1 Dwarvish Armours                  | 24 Belcadiz Black Laces            |
| 10 Pearls                      | 2 Belcadiz Steel Weapons and Armors | 25 Bear Clan Cotton Clothes        |
| 11 Ivory (including cetaceans) | 3 Hammer's Guild Weapons            | 26 Vyones Fine Dresses             |
| 12 Semiprecious Stones         | 4 Eisan Shell Weapons and Armors    | 27 Alasyian Carpets                |
| 13 Amber                       | 5 Alphatian Ghost Paintings         | 28 Darokinian Silk Ropes           |
| 14 Dyes                        | 6 Alphatian Living Dioramas         | 29 Halfing Tobacco                 |
| 15 Spices                      | 7 Ierendian Paintings               | 30 Alphatian Fireworks             |
| 16 Coffee                      | 8 Nemiston Carved Woodworks         | 31 Glantrian Fireworks             |
| 17 Tea                         | 9 Glantrian Paintings               | 32 Elvish "Empire Style" Furniture |
| 18 Corals                      | 10 Nouvelle Averoigne Fur Dresses   |                                    |
| 19 Monsters (alive)            | 11 Dwarvish Carved Gems             |                                    |
| 20 Exotic Animals (alive)      | 12 Elvish Carved Gems               |                                    |
| 21 Glassware                   | 13 Alphatian Laque                  |                                    |
| 22 Porcelains                  | 14 Alphatian zzonga-wu              |                                    |
|                                | 15 Bergdhoven Perfumes              |                                    |

hire a competent alchemist if you go after **monster parts**, trust me.



**Precious metals like platinum, gold and silver** are, in general, received as payment for your goods, so you'll likely carry them on your return trip: I'm sure you already know very well this part so I'll

just give you just a couple of advices. It's my firm opinion it's better not to muscle in the whole raw precious metal trade: loading just-mined raw gold in your ship is the best way to burden your merchantman, lose maneuverability and to attract pirates like seagulls on my yesterday's dinner.

Moreover, many countries strangely believe they have exclusive mining rights on certain territories, even if you actually mined the minerals and they did not care to exploit the veins themselves until a mere minute before: their ships may easily seize your cargo or impose an ultra-high taxation should they discover you in their waters.

### Third choice marketable goods

Finally, on a last-resort choice, you should look for fragile and potentially perishable luxury goods such as **fine wines, spirits, glassware,**



**exotic foods and perishable spices.** I'd put **live monsters** and **live exotic animals** in this category as well:

remember they pose the additional danger of escaping.

If possible, move such goods across short distances and take the safest route. Avoid low latitudes, if possible, as warm temperatures and likely thunderstorms may spoil your cargo –or let it evade - in a very short time.

### Exceptional circumstances

Avoid loading any other good I did not mention so far. Moving common goods - even weapons - and foodstuff from a place to another will give low profits to Linton House, and it's better suited for short-range trade with less expensive ships.

Of course you may think it's a good idea to sell food in a famine-stricken country, to offer weapons and armors to some war-torn border province and to provide tools to a newly-founded colony. The problem is - my dear Polin – that, under the same such exceptional circumstances, you're not assured to be paid off once you unload your cargo.

Such an occurrence should arise, I believe it's way better to **move people instead of goods**: move clerics to the famine, warriors to the war - they'll also help you in defending your ship, by the way - and colonists to the wilderness. And get paid in advance for their transportation, it's a much more rewarding business.

Just remember to buy plenty of food and water for the extra passengers and to hire a few additional clerics to deal with the inevitable diseases and wounds. Try also not to overload the ship: shipwrecked people tend to blame the captain, if he is still alive.

## Slave trade

A final note: slave trade. Trust me, avoid it. The Alphatian Empire is too far away to be profitable and the Sindhis' institutionalized "slaves" (they call them Kulyias<sup>3</sup>) are mostly an internal matter of their caste system.

Actually there is a single, huge market where slaves can be sold - the Thyatian Empire, which basically means Thyatis City.

Captives from the Thyatian Hinterlands and from the Alphatian borderlands on the Isle of Dawn are the main sources of the increasing slave population of the Empire<sup>4</sup>. A further complement is provided by Ostlanders and Caerdanian raiders, while independent pirates add their little contribution looking for slaves in both Thanegioth Archipelagos and in the northern Davanian coast.

I strongly suspect that several unscrupulous Minrothaddans are involved in slave trade despite the official declaration of their leaders that Minrothad is out of the slave business<sup>5</sup>. I believe the Cathosians don't mingle in slave trade as they were themselves enslaved centuries ago and didn't enjoy the experience, while I'm not sure about Kastelios' policy on this matter: most of the area around them is a hunting ground for slaves so, likely, some Kastelians may be involved in the business.

Why slave trade is not a business, you ask? Well, if you start trading slaves then a lot of people will begin to think that you may look at them as a potential "trade goods", and will

<sup>3</sup> See "Champions of Mystara: Explorer's Manual" (by Bruce Heard) section about Sind for details.

<sup>4</sup> The increase of slave population of the empire is cited in DotE "Dawn of the Emperors Boxed Set" by Aaron Allston.

<sup>5</sup> GAZ 9 "The Minrothad Guilds" by Christian/Eastland.

act accordingly. Most people west of Thyatis - including Darokin - oppose slavery as they are descendant of populations who were enslaved in the past. If you trade slaves your not slave-related business reputation will be disrupted in a very short time and you'll end up despised and attacked on sight by the halfings, the elves, and the Ierendians.

Moreover, the bulk of slave trade to Thyatis is carried out by the Thyatian themselves and by their allies - most notably Ostlanders. I bet they would not like a new competitor in this field.

## WHERE TO SELL GOODS

Now, let's now talk about destinations.

First of all, you have to understand that the whole area is experiencing a real golden age in trade and exploration, which is opening untold opportunities to any enterprising merchant wishing to move goods to the gate towns.

Large parts of northern Davania coastline were recently opened to the northern markets thanks to Thyatian colonists<sup>6</sup>, Heldannic holy warriors<sup>7</sup> and Kastelian traders<sup>8</sup>. The end of the Isolation Act of Minrothad is leading to the reopening of old trade routes<sup>9</sup> in the Sea of Dread, which are soon followed by expeditions from Karameikos<sup>10</sup>, Cathos and Ierendi<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> DotE "Dawn of the Emperors Boxed Set" by Aaron Allston.

<sup>7</sup> ["Heldannic Knights -- Historical Timeline"](#) by Bruce Heard

<sup>8</sup> CoM "Champions of Mystara: Explorer's Manual" by Bruce Heard.

<sup>9</sup> CoM "Champions of Mystara: Explorer's Manual" by Bruce Heard about the "discovery" of Thanopolis (Tanakumba) by Minrothad traders in 852 AC.



Minor seafaring actors like the Black Eagle's Barony<sup>12</sup> and Hule<sup>13</sup> are right now sending their exploration parties across the sea: even the dwarves of Rockhome<sup>14</sup> have recently attempted to explore the Isle of Dread looking for a place to establish a new colony!

The Thanegioth Archipelago is the big prize: anyone who will manage to establish a few safe ports of call on it will have the keys to the whole pool. Unluckily, the area is infested with dangerous monsters and hostile people - including cannibals: Thyatians would be the most advantaged thanks to their new colony in their "Hinterlands" if not for the hate of the people of Nueva Hispanola<sup>15</sup> - escaped

Thyatians persecuted a century ago who are just seizing the moment for revenge.

I attended myself a meeting with the indigenous people of Tanaroa confederacy in which they expressed their desire to be more opened to foreign influx<sup>16</sup> but, also, when I was a naïve rookie seaman, I had to help evacuate a few beleaguered survivors of the Aquapopulus War between the Twaelars and the human colonists<sup>17</sup>.

**Thyatis City** is not a gate to anywhere except for herself: her population is larger than that of many nearby kingdoms, and she consumes any kind of goods at an alarming rate, goods which are paid with gold and precious metals taken from the rest of the huge Thyatian empire. Everybody wants to sell goods in Thyatis City, at least until they are paid off. Sometimes I'm scared about what will happen to this city should the sea routes be broken or the provinces rebel against the central power.

<sup>10</sup> X1 "Isle of Dread" by Cook/Moldvay and XSOLO1 "Lathan's Gold" by Merle M. Rasmussen.

<sup>11</sup> X6 "Quagmire!" by by Merle M. Rasmussen about Ierendian explorers trying to find new routes in the western Sea of Dread.

<sup>12</sup> XSOLO1 "Lathan's Gold" by Merle M. Rasmussen.

<sup>13</sup> PWA I "Poor Wizard's Almanac" volume 1 by Aaron Allston, at least referred to Hulean pirates.

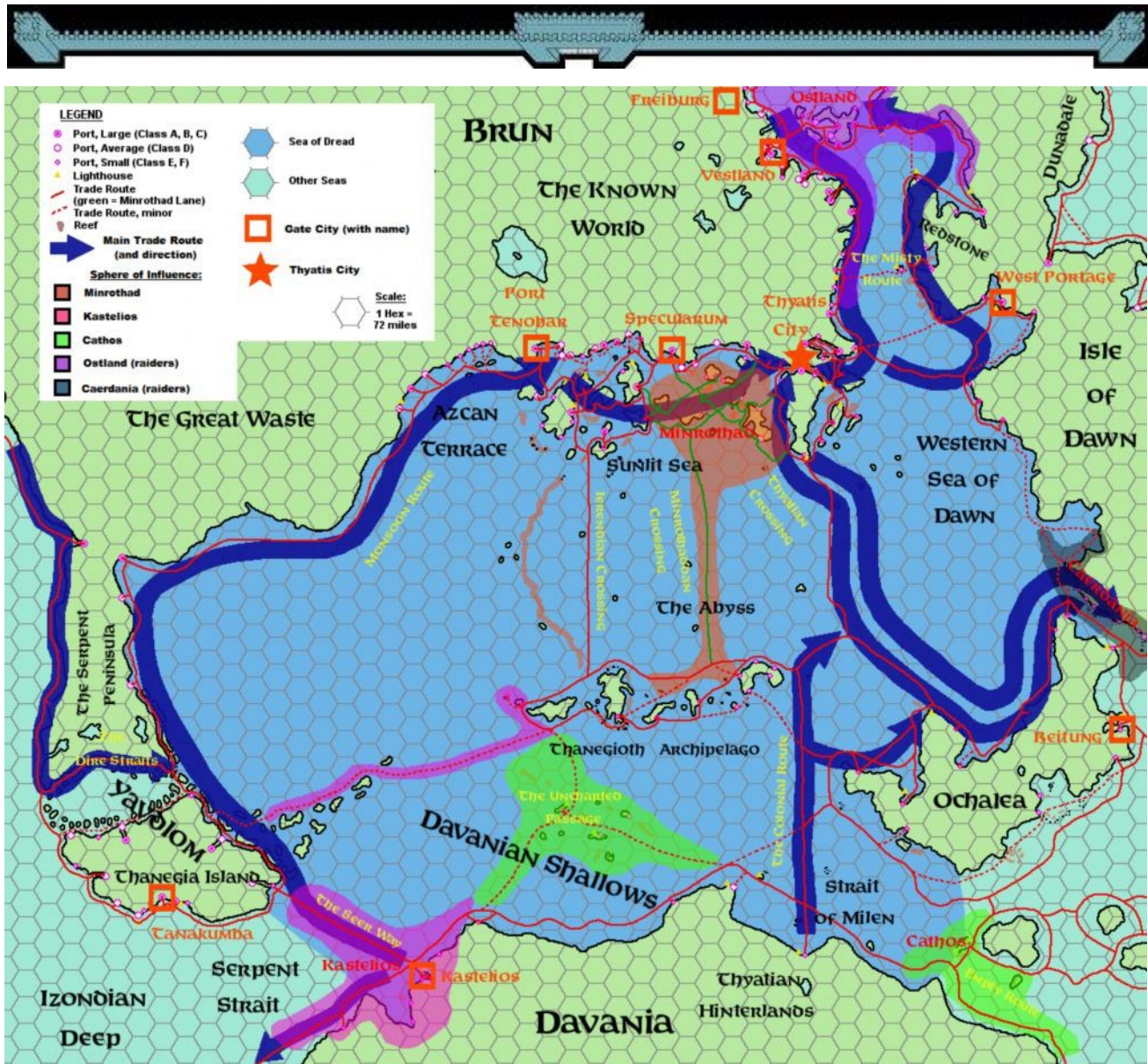
<sup>14</sup> XSOLO1 "Lathan's Gold" by Merle M. Rasmussen, a reference to Elrem Nessumsar's quest.

<sup>15</sup> ["Grand \(Arch\) County of Nueva España"](#)

by James Mishler

<sup>16</sup> X1 "Isle of Dread" by Cook/Moldvay, the reference is to an adventure idea found at the end of the module.

<sup>17</sup> The Aquapopulus War is cited in XSOLO1 "Lathan's Gold" by Merle M. Rasmussen.



Map of the gate towns and the main sea routes of the Sea of Dread

**Gate cities**, located in the Sea of Dread or in its vicinity, are - clockwise from Thyatis City - **Vestland, Freiburg, West Portage, Beitung, Kastelios, Tanakumba, Putnabad**, our nice town of **Port Tenobar** and **Specularum**. Specularum is the newest gate city, thanks to the recent opening of the Duke's Road leading to Selenica<sup>18</sup>, so its full potential is yet to be explored - maybe a good first task for you, my young Captain.

I believe Raven Scarp and Helskir might one day become gate cities as well, but Raven Scarp is still too intermingled with Thyatian colonial policies to attract foreign traders, while Helskir is periodically razed to the ground by contending Thyatians and Alphatians<sup>19</sup>, so it is not safe to stop there for too long.

<sup>18</sup> GAZ 1 "The Grand Duchy of Karamaikos" by Aaron Allston about the building of new roads.

<sup>19</sup> See M5 "Talons of Night" by Paul Jaquays for details, The next clash in Helskir will happen in AC 1002.

## TRADE COMPETITOR: KASTELIOS

The city of Kastelios is a good place to sell goods, as it is the gate to the scattered city-states of the northwestern Davanian plains, but it is also a competitor on its own as she fields her own strategy of buying luxuries everywhere she can and selling them to other gate cities. A very dangerous combination for our businesses, I must say.

The strategic position of Kastelios - just in front of Thanegia Island - also provides to Kastelian traders a fast access to the exotic goods of the Savage Coast and the Addakian Sound. It is a common sight in Yavdlom to meet a Yavi intent on predicting a bright future to a newly disembarked Kastelian captain. While I believe most farseers actually do it for the generous tip they receive from the captain, I must say the farseers are rarely wrong - one of them once predicted for me *"a band of decades in sail and a band of decades at anchor"*, and now I'm afraid he will be right.

Even if I'm not blessed with the prescience of a farseer I strongly believe the Kastelians will become the most important middlemen in the Sea of Dread within a few decades, and that's why I think we Darokinian captains should lobby Linton House to build more blue-water sailing ships as soon as possible.

Kastelian ships puzzle me, by the way: they have a mix of rowing and sailing features which I'd deem impractical, if not inefficient, but they seem to do their job very well.

## TRADE COMPETITOR: MINROTHAD

As I talked about Kastelios, let's have a quick look at our other two competitors.

Minrothaddans - you know them very well - owe their fortunes to their superior shipbuilding abilities.

Their ships are really the fastest and safest in the high seas: their building is a closely guarded secret in which I suspect the elves are involved<sup>20</sup>.

Their ridiculous Isolation Act has been a true blessing to foreign traders - including us - for more than a century but, since they dropped it in the last years, things are becoming worse for our businesses.

Thanks to their better navy, Minrothaddans make contact with any potential trading partner faster than us and say to them:

*"Do you want to sell your coconuts to Thyatis City with such a clunky boat? Aren't you aware of the many dangers of the Sea of Dread? You'll barely escape with your life, trust us. Just let us do this trade for you! Sell us the coconuts and we will bring them safely to Thyatis' docks. Oh, by the way, we'll charge you with a 18% tax, just to keep our fleet in working order, nothing special. And, before we forget, you'll maybe be interested in buying some fine jewelry we keep in our warehouses in Trader's Island. Just let one of our pilots guide you there - waters in our*

<sup>20</sup> According to GAZ 9 "The Minrothad Guilds" by Christian/Eastland at least the Minroth clipper is built by water elves. Moreover, any attempt to reproduce Minrothad ships on continental shipyards resulted in higher costs and less quality, at least so far.

country are very treacherous - and we'll be glad to show you all our merchandise! The pilot's rent will cost you a purely nominal tithe - just about 18% of the final price for any traded good".

Very clever guys. I hate them.

I heard tales of a Minrothaddan clipper who recently made contact with barbarian horsemen in a northeastern subarctic land called New Thonia, a quarter world away from here<sup>21</sup>. I also put my trust into what rumors say: the Thyatian town of West Portage is secretly controlled by guildsmen from Minrothad<sup>22</sup>, which also pay the many bandits infesting the famous "ship land route" to East Portage<sup>23</sup>. This is unfair practice at its best, my young Polin, but it gives you a hint of the true power of these people.

In short, as you already know, avoid selling anything to Minrothad - avoid even going around their archipelago - at least until you can afford the cost and the risk to sell there your goods yourself.

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<sup>21</sup> From M2 "Vengeance of Alphaks" by Skip Williams: the Minrothad fleet is used to move horsemen from (new) Thonia to help in the Thyatian invasion of Norwold some years after AC 1000.

<sup>22</sup> This rumor is true according to the background of Guildmaster Lareth Kubek of West Portage at the end of M5 "Talons of Night" by Paul Jaquays.

<sup>23</sup> DotE "Dawn of the Emperors Boxed Set" by Aaron Allston. Ships are provided with wheels and pulled by pack animals over a land route between West Portage and East Portage, to save the long voyage around the Isle of Dawn.

## TRADE COMPETITOR: CATHOS<sup>24</sup>

Finally, we have the Cathosians. Strange bunch of people, indeed, mostly interested in trading along the Davanian coast.

They have an odd motto: "*Our ships will always find the route*" and I have to admit that it seem to be true. Cathosians make use of sailing ships only, usually of small or medium size and with a stripped-down crew. They seem not to care very much about following well-established routes, and they place their trading offices extremely separated from each other - I heard rumors about faraway colonies of Cathos located at unreasonable distances from home, such as in front of the coast of Minaea<sup>25</sup>, or down along the savannah of tropical Davania – the *southern* tropic, I mean.

I suspect water or air magic – most likely some kind of elemental stuff - is strongly involved in their careless approach to the sea but, if you ask them, it is always just a matter of "*skill and luck*".

Cathosian trade network is so scattered that their merchantmen actually pose a limited threat to businesses focused in the Sea of Dread but, sometimes, they tend to unexpectedly outrun you in the race to the gate cities, so always beware of them.

I heard the sailors of Cathos have a strong dislike for galleys, longships and others

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<sup>24</sup> MSOLO2 Maze of the Riddling Minotaur by Jeff Grubb. For its placement see "[Another Vacros and Cathos placement theory](#)" by LoZompatore

<sup>25</sup> This is a popular fanon location for Vacros and Cathos themselves. Here it is turned into a trade outpost.



vessels moved by rows. They say such ships remind them of the huge galleys of slavers moved by minotaurs which were used during the final years of their former ruler, the long-lost sea empire of Vacros<sup>26</sup>, about four centuries ago.

## OTHER POTENTIAL COMPETITORS

Now that I'm on it I'd like to add some notes about two more potential competitors: Thyatians and Ierendians.

### Thyatis

Thyatians are able to field a huge fleet - almost six hundred units, to my knowledge<sup>27</sup> - but their ships are mostly concerned with the administration of their colonies, where most of the trade is carried out. They pose a little threat to foreign traders, until such traders behave correctly in Thyatian waters and help supplying the never ending needs of their hungry capital.

### Ierendi

Ierendians are likely to possess the best crews in the world - loyal, brave and trained sailors who will not stop at anything - just make sure to have as much of them on the *Armstead*, by the way. Unfortunately their waters are infested with nasty pirates who pin down most of their businesses and deter most foreign

ships from approaching the Ierendian archipelago.

Should the Ierendians manage to get rid of the pirates I think they would become a naval power to be dealt with.

## PIRATES AND RAIDERS

### Pirates

We started talking about pirates and raiders, what to say about them?

In my maps I took note of every pirate den I incurred personally or I have heard of. For sure many more exist hidden here and there. Also remember that, once in open waters, trade competitors and pirates often tend to mingle.

Now, the menace posed by pirates in the blue waters calls for a relatively large ship, with at least an user of arcane magic and a cleric - by the way, our Elimon and Rodarsky are good and experienced fellows, trust them and you'll see how they always manage to earn their pay. Fire and long-range weapons - while imprecise - often discourage pirates from approaching, that's why the *Armstead* fields a light catapult and two ballistas.

Some pirates are supported by the leadership of nearby countries, such as in Jaibul and in the Five Shires, so do not expect any compensation by their governments after your complaints. The lands of the hins are a very peculiar case: they say they must attack foreign ships because their waters are closed off from the most profitable trades<sup>28</sup>. I say

<sup>26</sup> MSOLO2 Maze of the Riddling Minotaur by Jeff Grubb. Vacros was invaded and destroyed by Cathos some 400 years before the beginning of the adventure (which could be likely set in AC 1000).

<sup>27</sup> For details on this estimate see "[Mystaran Fleets](#)" by LoZompatore here:

<sup>28</sup> GAZ 8 "The Five Shires" by Ed Greenwood specifies in the "Smuggling" sections that the waters in front of the Shires are mostly neglected by human traders except for foodstuff.

their waters are closed off because they attack foreign ships. Anyway, thanks to our Diplomatic Corps, Darokinian ships do not suffer from hin attacks: I bet you already made many profitable businesses with the Shires on your previous assignments.

By the way, a skillful diplomat is always a valuable resource In businesses; unluckily, diplomats tend to get too much involved in local politics after some time. Just see if you manage to get the help of one of them, sooner or later, but don't get too attached to it.

## Raiders

Raiders pose a slightly different kind of issue: they seldom attack ships in open sea unless they "*provide a fair fight*", but they become a real danger if decide to raid that precise spot you are docked into.

Two loosely related groups of raiders exist in the Sea of Dread: the **Ostlanders** - who control the northeastern routes to the Strait of Helskir - and the **Caerdanians**<sup>29</sup>, who control most of the southeastern route to the Sea of Ochalea.

Ostlanders have a strange sense of honor and will not explicitly steal from you, but they believe it's fair to pick up your goods once you are defeated in battle.

The Caerdanians are slightly less scrupulous: they assume any ship entering the Strait of Furmenglaive to be a trespasser and will send their "navy" to "escort" the offender out of the Strait. This escort service usually costs a tenth of a ship's cargo. If the captain refuses to pay,

the ship is assumed to be an enemy and a boarding attempt ensues.

It's worth noticing that Ostlanders and Caerdanians usually enslave the people they defeat.

Both groups of raiders are approved, and somewhat sponsored, by the Thyatians as they help in providing slaves to their capital. Ships of the Empire usually have little to fear when crossing the straits to Helskir, Freiburg, Furmenglaive and Ochalea.

## NATURAL DANGERS AND MONSTERS

Now that I introduced you about the most important hindrances posed by human activities, I'd better start talking about natural dangers and monsters. The Sea of Dread offers plenty of them.

It is usual among blue water seamen to divide the Sea of Dread into four regions: the **Sunlit Sea** to the north, the **Davianian Shallows** to the south, the **Eastern Sea of Dawn** to the east and the proper **Sea of Dread** in the western and central regions of the pool.

## THE SUNLIT SEA

The Sunlit Sea is the region you know best, so I'll not pull out too much on it. The main hazards here are pirates. Avoid the Minrothad archipelago if you still wish to make a profit. Just remember that if you really wish to reach Trader's Isle then you are forced to stop at Kobos, Gaamo, Specularum, Kerendas, Thyatis City, Gray Bay and Fort Southpoint to embark a Minrothaddan pilot. These guys are the only ones who know how to properly master the "Lanes" - as they call their sea

<sup>29</sup> Caerdanians are fan-created material. A detailed "[Caerdania Gazetteer](#)" by Simone Neri can be found in the Vaults of Pandius. It is also based on information first provided by Andrew Theisen.

routes – and manage reach safely Minrothad City while dealing with mists, reefs, sandbars and dead calms.

I'll just give you some more information about the easternmost and westernmost parts of the Sunlit Sea: the kara-kara archipelago and the Azcan Terrace, respectively.

### The Kara-kara archipelago<sup>30</sup>

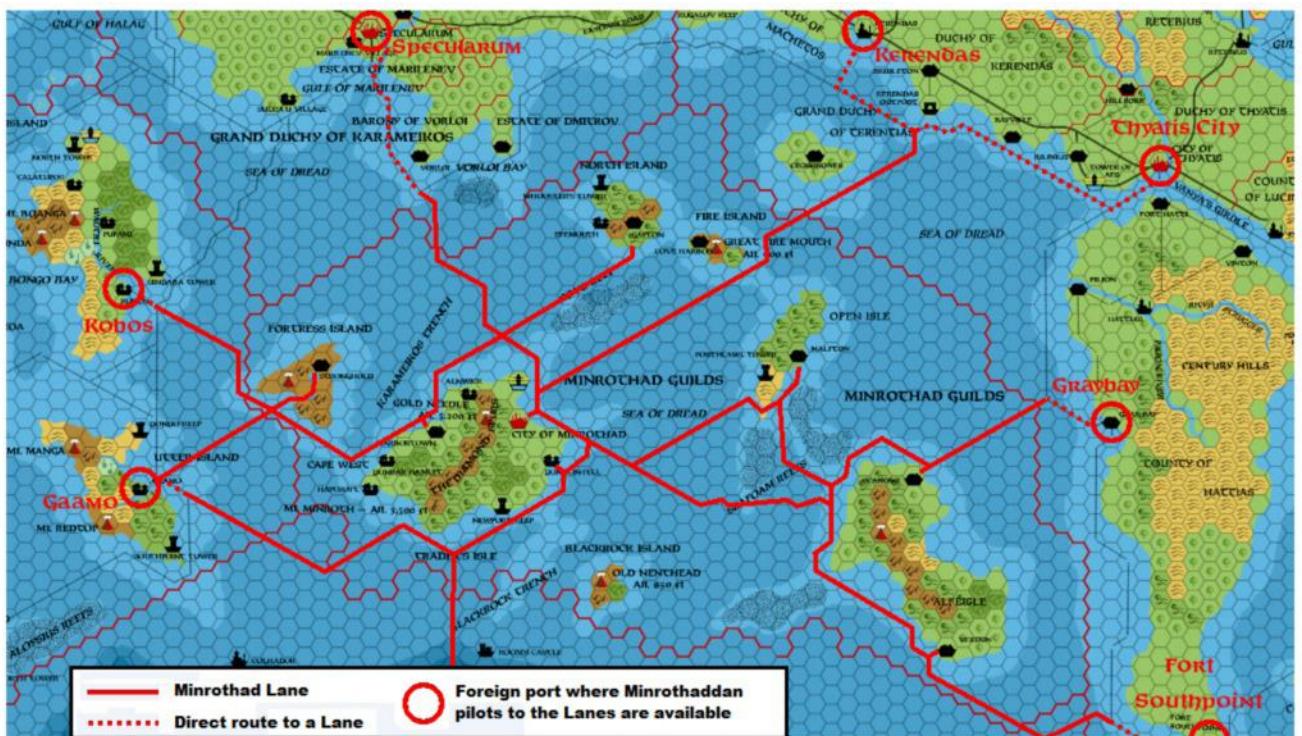
The Kara-Kara archipelago is infested by the Kal-murus, sort of evil air elementals. They bring warm winds to the islands, which enjoy an almost tropical climate, but the offset is a bloody one. Kal-murus are a very aggressive species: they prey on the most defenseless ships, push the sails on a crash course to the nearest reef and then they gladly proceed to kill the entire crew.

The Kara-karas, humanoids inhabiting the archipelago, do not help at all in keeping their waters safe for navigation, as they rush en-masse to assault any ship taken by the kal-murus and stranded close enough to one of their islands.

I must say it is way better to be a prisoner of the kara-karas than to be outright killed by the kal-murus, even if kara-karas are famed cannibals. I once escaped from captivity by stealing one of their canoes - which the kal-murus somewhat recognize and do not attack - and, ultimately, I must agree with the Thyatian Admiralty: the whole archipelago does not possess anything worth enough to compensate for the loss of a single ship and her crew - even if the islands are dotted with very ancient and unexplored temples obviously not built by the kara-kara.

I strongly advise you to stay away from this area.

<sup>30</sup> X8 “Drums on fire mountain” by Morris/Kirby.



(Original mapmaking artwork by Thorfinn Tait)

## The Azcan Terrace

The Azcan Terrace is nothing more than the westernmost extension of the Sunlit Sea undersea terraces. Merfolks from the westernmost Undersea Baronies say the seafloor is inhabited by hostile - while somewhat dull - crabmen<sup>31</sup>.

I do not like to poke in the petty quarrels of the undersea races so I'm not able to confirm their statement. For sure these waters are rich in whales, especially just south the Atruaghin Clans' coast. I once read in a rare book from Jahore that the Azcan Terrace was once a thriving continental forest which has been brought under water by an untold cataclysm<sup>32</sup>. It seems that a warlike people who called themselves "the Azcans" built cities and temples on this land: I suppose too many of them were wiped out by the cataclysm and their people died out; maybe their only remnants are the aggressive members of the Jackal Tribe along the coast of Atruaghin. While there is some potential in ivory and handcraft trade here I'd suggest you to stay away from these barbaric guys as well.

## THE WESTERN SEA OF DAWN

Now, let's talk about the Western Sea of Dawn. Polin, please, try to stay awake as this is not a boring part at all.

<sup>31</sup> Crabmen are hinted in GAZ 2 "The Emirates of Ylaruam" by Ken Rolston. They live close to the tritons (in his mortal life Al-Kalim helped the king of the tritons to get rid of the crabmen's menace), so the undersea west of the Sunlit Sea seemed a suitable locations for them.

<sup>32</sup> GAZ 14 "The Atruaghin Clans" by William Connors and also HWR 1 "Sons of Azca" by John Nephew.

This sea is seldom called Oceania<sup>33</sup> - a name I read dates back to the ancient times of Blackmoor and somehow shifted to indicate nowadays a large island far to the east.

For sure the greatest danger you may find in the Western Sea of Dawn - much greater than pirates and Ostland raiders - are the Dendans.

## The Dendans<sup>34</sup>

Dendans are a race of intelligent whales, much more intelligent than the average lot.

Their breeding waters are in the northern part of the Western Sea of Dawn, where the cold current from the north mixes with the warm current coming from the south<sup>35</sup>. Sailing in these waters is not easy, as you may guess, and storms from the north are a real danger, especially in winter<sup>36</sup>. Winds and sea currents strongly favor north-to-south navigation along the coast of the Northern Reaches and south-to-north navigation along the Isle of Dawn western coast. That's why we have Vestlanders in Thyatis and Thyatians in Helskir, by the way.

<sup>33</sup> See the Hollow World boxed set (by Aaron Allston) Pre-Cataclysmic map.

<sup>34</sup> See GAZ 2 "The Emirates of Ylaruam" by Ken Rolston.

<sup>35</sup> This is an attempt to conciliate various sources about the direction of sea currents along the Strait of Helskir - most notably PWA II (Poor Wizard's Almanac) map by Ann Dupuis, VotPA (Voyage of the Princess Ark) part 2 by Bruce Heard and the article "[The Winds of Brun](#)" by Bruce Heard. By allowing two sea currents in opposite directions all sources are not conflicting with each other and many interesting features ensue in the area.

<sup>36</sup> GAZ 7 "The Northern Reaches" by Ken Rolston.



Water here is so full of marine life you may just lower an empty bucket close to the surface and a fish will jump into it. The same water is very, very, often shrouded in fog and heavy mist. Land breezes from the east usually keep the heaviest fogs away from the coast of the Isle of Dawn, but if you try to cross the sea to reach the continent of Brun you'll end up surrounded by a grey cap within half a day of sailing from the coast. Mists seems to be produced by the mixing of the warm and the cold current, so they are always present above the sea, with the exceptions of days of strong gales.

Back to Dendans: they hate humans and, during the mating seasons, tend to sink on sight any ship they may incur on. Such hate is due to active hunting by the people of Northern Reaches, as they are able to extract from Dendan corpses a precious magical ingredient used to make underwater breathing potions. Young Dendans are an easier prey, so you may figure out the everyday bitter struggles between humans and whales for young cetaceans. An alchemist of Redstone Castle once told me that just one in ten Dendan dead bodies is brought him in good enough conditions to actually extract the magical ingredient. What a waste.

What is worse, the pious men of Ylaruam are not of any help in this as too many of them wish to emulate a legendary enterprise of Al-Kalim<sup>37</sup> and they will fervently take the sea to single-handedly kill a large Dendan to extract the oil. Foolish guys.

## The Misty Route

The abundance of fish is the main reason for which the good Ylari people possess such a large fleet – about 200 ships I know of<sup>38</sup>.

The great amount of fish they manage to catch in the misty waters is an important food source for their arid land.

The most skilled of these fishermen know of a risky direct route to the Isle of Dawn which will shorten by many days the whole trip to West Portage and back. The "Misty Route", as they call it, is only for the most skilled, brave and desperate crews, as it requires a full day of crossing in dense fog, cutting just in the middle of the Dendan breeding grounds<sup>39</sup>.

Bring always with you plenty of warriors and at least a trustworthy Alasyian navigator should you decide to try the Misty Route.

## The Shadow Coast

The Shadow Coast and the whole western coast of the Isle of Dawn are poor in fish,

<sup>37</sup> See GAZ 2 "The Emirates of Ylaruam" by Ken Rolston. While in his mortal life, Al-Kalim - with the help of sailors from the Northern Reaches - hunted a Dendan in order to create a *potion of water breathing* and visit the undersea palace of the Old Man of the Sea.

<sup>38</sup> For details on this estimate see "[Mystaran Fleets](#)" by LoZompatore:

<sup>39</sup> This is an attempt to explain why there are so few contacts between Ylaruam and Redstone, which are pretty close to each other across the Western Sea of Dawn.

likely due to the warm waters coming from the Davanian Coast and the Strait of Furmenglaive.

That's why there are not so many settlements around here. This could become a danger in case your ship is short of food or you need urgent repairs.

## The Strait of FURMENGLAIVE

The Strait of Furmenglaive is a dangerous place: unfortunately, it is also the shortest route between Thyatis City and Beitung, which is the gate to Edairo and the Alatian Islands, so you must be ready to cross it should the need arise.

If you are entering the strait from the Western Sea of Dawn you'll face Caerdanian raiders on your left and a dangerous whirlpool bordering a long rocky cliff on your right.

Caerdanians know very well how far they can go without being caught in the treacherous currents produced by the whirlpool, and they'll take every care not to let your ship cross the Strait "unattended" by them.

Raiders usually content themselves to board your ship and ask for a tithe between 5% and 20% of your cargo value but, when facing dire times, they'll search for any excuse to capture the ship and sell your crew as slaves. As I already told you, they are pretty similar to Ostlander raiders, just a bit less honorable. On approaching Castle Furmenglaive, the Caerdanian crews may include odd guys like werewolves, lizardmen and even undead, just tell your men to keep cool.

As both sides of the Strait formally belong to the Thyatian Empire, Thyatian ships are rarely approached by the raiders - especially if the

ship embarks a unit of legionaries on "transfer duty".

Some Thyatian captains harbored in Northern Ochalea usually allow you to use their ships to safely cross the strait for a "modest" fee of about 10% of your cargo value - per voyage. Just ponder your odds and make your decision.

## CENTRAL AND WESTERN SEA OF DREAD

### The Serpent Peninsula

The westernmost part of the Sea of Dread is subjected to monsoons in summer, which strongly favor south-to-north navigation, and by hurricanes coming from the east in winter.

In both cases, it is very difficult to reach Tanakumba and Kastelios sailing down the coast from Sind<sup>40</sup>. It is much easier going in the opposite direction when there is the right climate. This is another little detail that will support future Kastelian penetration in the Known World markets, trust me.

Storm giants exploit the monsoon season to go fishing in the shallow waters around the Serpent Peninsula<sup>41</sup>. They hover their clouds at low altitude and then they lower some impressive kilometres-long nets, moving their clouds like trawlers. It is believed they then sell most of the fish they catch to other giants'

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<sup>40</sup> This would also help explaining why Tanakumba was "discovered" so late (AC 852) by Minrothad explorers according to CoM "Champions of Mystara: Explorer's manual" by Bruce Heard.

<sup>41</sup> What follows is based on a random sea encounter from X6 "Quagmire" by Merle Rasmussen, generalized to the whole Serpent Peninsula.

communities who live in landlocked countries. Such "fisher giants" tend to stay away from islands, sandbars and the coastline: they prefer to catch the big fish that roam the deeper waters. Expert seamen know this and tend to sail closer to the coastline, but rookies may venture too far and incur into a net, damaging it along with their ship. Giants may become very vocal in asking for a refund of the damage, which usually stands up to some thousand of gold coins.

The central part of the Sea of Dread is dominated by three features: the Dragon's Teeth Reef, the Abyss and the Gyre.

## THE GYRE<sup>42</sup>

The Gyre is an insidious place: it is a vast swath of sea where currents run around in a great circle, hundreds of miles wide.

The area is crossed by gentle breezes and it is usually bathed with sun. Sea currents in themselves are not very strong, and they could easily be mastered by a sailing ship with a good navigator on board - galleys and longships should better stay off, as the currents may push them a hundred miles off-route before they could manage to cross the area. Even if weather is a minor hindrance, the weeds and the monsters of the Gyre are not.

Weeds are not a danger in itself: basically they are harmless, long stretches of algae which grow in the Gyre and usually stay afloat there,

herded by the currents on the boundaries. Unluckily, they have a tendency to intermingle and form localized patches of net-like fabric, which can trap any ship foolish enough to traverse them - and I must say that only experienced crews are able to distinguish between the weed patches that may be safely crossed from those that are not.

Weeds are a huge breeding ground for a lot of marine life, most notably eels. While there are plenty of common eels and they do not pose a threat to anyone, giant eels and various eel predators usually do. Sharks, giant jellyfishes, giant octopuses, giant sea serpents and hydras are a common sight here.

The most clever among such monsters learn to hunt around the densest patches of weed, knowing that, sooner or later, suitable prey will be caught by the weeds and immobilized for them.

I heard rumors of savage sea folks - tritons, mermen and the like - living in the weeds: I believe they are to common sea folk as the jungles' savages are to ordinary people.

A druid I once ferried across the western sea once told me that the Gyre is actually the "seed" of most of the hurricanes hitting the western part of the Sea of Dread and the Serpent Peninsula. I have no clue about the details of such a process, but I suppose cloud and storm giants actually exploit such features to move around.

## The Dragon's Teeth Reef<sup>43</sup>

The Dragons' Teeth Reef is a formidable coral barrier splitting the Sea of Dread in two.

<sup>42</sup> The Gyre is based on the circular sea current path shown on the map of PWA II (Poor Wizard's Almanac II, by Ann Dupuis) with the addition of some info taken from the real world Sargasso Sea. A similar concept has also been developed by James Mishler in "[The Thanegioth Archipelago](#)"

<sup>43</sup> MSOLO2 Maze of the Riddling Minotaur by Jeff Grubb and also the map of X7 "The War Rafts of Kron" by Bruce Nesmith.

The barrier was slowly built by tiny corals upon an ancient mountain chain - a learned sea elf I befriended once told me the reef was already there when their people reached the Sunlit Sea, shortly after the Great Rain of Fire<sup>44</sup>.

The reef is almost an insuperable obstacle, except for a few gaps just south of the Three Sister's Keys<sup>45</sup>. The Keys? Avoid these islands, if you do not like to be randomly teleported across the Sea of Dread. I know many funny stories about this odd phenomenon, but I suppose it is not very funny when this happens to you.

The Reef provides lots of fish, sure, and also marine monsters who eat the fish, and abyssal creatures who did not expect the sudden rise in the seafloor and got lost, and distrustful Twaelar scout parties going north and irritable crabmen colonists going south<sup>46</sup> and the occasional cannibalistic lizardmen group which just decided to get a life among the coral reefs. Oh, did I mention the scavenging pirates? Avoid the area.

## The Abyss

The Abyss is the deepest part of the Sea of Dread. It is mostly unknown to us, if not for the effects it produces on the surface.

<sup>44</sup> According to the Hollow World boxed set (by Aaron Allston) Pre-cataclysmic map, the northern half of this part of the Sea of Dread was a mountain chain before the Great Rain of Fire. Part of it - while submerged - was used by corals to build the reef soon after the cataclysm. See also note 47 below.

<sup>45</sup> What follows is a generalization of what happens to the Player Character when he disembarks on the Three Sister's Keys in XSOLO1 "Lathan's Gold" solo adventure by Merle M. Rasmussen.

<sup>46</sup> See also note 31.

The good people of the Undersea Kingdom have a sacred fear of the Abyss and they very seldom venture into it. Sea Giants are more enterprising. Once I helped one of them, someone Jubbulnul'ulul'ul or so, and she gave us some information in exchange. She said the Abyss was carved by the Immortals<sup>47</sup> and it is divided into layers: there is the layer of sea giants, then the layer of devilfishes, then of the sperm whales, then of the krakens, then of the water elemental creatures<sup>48</sup>, then who knows.

For sure, all these layers become quite intermingled when there is a sudden rise in the seafloor, such as close to the Dragon's Teeth Reef or to the Bararna Guyot<sup>49</sup>. Beware of this place. The Guyot is entirely under water, but its sharp elevation forces marine monsters and elemental creatures to rise from the deep and reach the surface.

How do you recognize you are sailing above the Guyot, you ask? This is pretty easy. The Guyot is flanked on both sides by two large

<sup>47</sup> According to note 44 above, the Abyss was a mountain chain before the Great Rain of Fire. The idea suggested here is that the Immortals used most of this landmass to seal the pre-cataclysmic opening to the Hollow World located in the Ethengar Khanates, leaving the Abyss in place of the mountains. The gates to the elemental plane of water could also have been used to re-balance the global oceanic level after the Cataclysm.

<sup>48</sup> PC3 "The Sea People" by Jim Bambra.

<sup>49</sup> The Bararna Guyot is named after fanon explorer Bararna by Geoff Gander, who also discovered Bararna Island in the Thanegiot Archipelago (see "[Dark Worship in the Known World - The Thanegioth Archipelago](#)", also expanded by Geoff Gander on Threshold Issue #3). It is implied here that Bararna helped the Thyatian Navy to find the safest direct route to the Hinterlands, a route that was then used to establish the Thyatian colony on Davania.



semi-permanent maelstroms - an adventurer told me they go deep to the elemental realm of water - if you are daring enough to fall into them to have a check.

Just sail way east of the Burning Mountain and just west of the floating weeds of the Gyre and you'll avoid all of them. Remember, the Burning Mountain is a danger in itself: while it is said that pure gold may sometimes be found spouting from this volcano<sup>50</sup>, its clouds of poisonous smoke may kill you and your crew dozens of miles away from the mountaintop, if the winds are unfavorable.

Maybe for the first crossings you'd better hire a Thyatian navigator: they established this route to their Hinterlands and they know it very well.

## THE DAVANIAN SHALLOWS

Finally, let's have a quick talk about the Davanian Shallows.

According to ancient lore, and supported also by undersea explorers of the Twaelar empire, the Davanian Shallows were once an emerged land, the northernmost tip of the continent of Davania which sunk after the Great Rain of Fire<sup>51</sup>.

It was once part of the great, temperate, primeval Forest of Ka<sup>52</sup> of fabled legend, as can

<sup>50</sup> XSOLO1 "Lathan's Gold" by Merle M. Rasmussen.

<sup>51</sup> Davanian Shallows "borders" (i.e. the deep water level line shown on the map below) are drawn by comparing the coastline of the Hollow World Pre-cataclysmic map (by Aaron Allston) with AC 1000 coastlines. Differences are assumed to be due to ancient lands which sunk during the Great Rain of Fire and its aftermath.

<sup>52</sup> Hollow World Pre-cataclysmic map, by

be seen by the large number of tree stumps that sprout out everywhere if you care to dig just a bit on the seabed.

Rather primitive tribes or Neathar savages inhabiting the area around Garganin have legends about "*the day Ka turned away his head and the sea ate the forest and all of our cousins*".

The Twaelars are trying to add this region to their empire - they believe there is a great potential for kelp plantations and sea horses' pastures, while I'm afraid these are not very marketable goods on the surface. Nevertheless, I heard they are having a lot of troubles because of undead and all kinds of vermins hidden in the seafloor mud.

To my knowledge, the only people who successfully managed to establish some colonies here are the people of Cathos, who settled the so-called Hills of Ka<sup>53</sup> - actually an archipelago of small islands - which were likely a proper hill chain before the Cataclysm.

## The Katonates <sup>54</sup>

The Shallows are crossed by the Katonates, nice undersea fellows who built a floating city just to trade with us and the Twaelars. They belong to the race of the knas. Should you incur into them do not hesitate to stop and have a nice and profitable conversation with them.

Aaron Allston.

<sup>53</sup> The Hills of Ka are based on Andrew Theisen suggested location for [Vacros](#) and [Cathos](#) (available in The Vaults of Pandius). In the current article it is assumed they are just colonies of metropolitan Vacros and Cathos which are located west of the Pearl Islands.

<sup>54</sup> "[Katonate Confederacy](#)" by Christopher Cherrington

To my experience they are very fair traders and - for a small fee - they could also provide you with the most updated info about Cathosian and Kastelian movements in the area and about the last sighting of the dangerous Eeliistiis.

## The Eeliistiis <sup>55</sup>

Who are the Eeliistiis, you ask? You'd call them "sirens" or, at least, they would look very similar to them to you. These monsters just place themselves on some rocky reef, the upper half of their bodies looking as astonishing beautiful women, and singing their charming songs. They just want you and your crew to join them - as potential mates or as food, it is almost the same to them. Once you get in their hands you'll never come back, for sure. They are a major hindrance on the routes to the Hinterlands and western Ochalea.

## Arentela

At last, a few words about the mythical island of Arentela<sup>56</sup>, just offshore Ochalea. It is a magical place, inhabited by dragons and dragon kins. Its most distinguishing feature is the silvery dome which entirely surrounds it, reflecting the outside like a mirror and preventing any view of the island itself. I know of a few captains who used to sail close to the mirror to check for damages to the hull of their ships.

<sup>55</sup> "[The dark truth of the Eeliistiis](#)" by Christopher Cherrington

<sup>56</sup> Arentela is cited in an adventure idea in GAZ 4 The "Kingdom of Ierendi" by Anne Gray Mc Cready but never officially placed. In this article it is conveniently placed offshore western Ochalea, on an island shown on Frank Mentzer's Known World map but seldom shown in other canon maps. Here the Chinese myth of a mortal enmity between the dragon and the tiger is adapted to Mystara.

The mirror can be lifted only by the rulers of the island, otherwise anyone trying to cross the barrier will find himself instantly teleported on the opposite side of the dome, with no hope to ever reach the island.



Until a few decades ago the dragons of Arentela occasionally traded with foreign merchants. People from Arentela possess a very fine silver jewelry and many exotic luxury goods. Unluckily, the weretigers living on the Celestial Territories of Ochalea found a way to bypass the magical mirror and started a unending war against the Arentelans. Most battles take places inside the dome, so they are not visible to the external passer-by, but nearby waters are dangerous as the rafts manned by weretigers going to Arentela and flying dragons on patrol are a rather common sight here. As you may guess, they are not friendly with neutral traders.

Well, I suppose I topped off with it. You are now ready to try to gain some big money on the high sea, and you'll likely not be killed at the first crossing. Just take care of my ship and my crew and - remember - I have enough savings to afford a whacky ring of regeneration for myself, if only I manage to get my hands on one of it.

Who knows, maybe that Yavi farseer was wrong after all, and I could come back to the *Armstead* way sooner than expected, to relieve you of the burden of command. Better you behave with her!

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FROM  
THE VAULTS  
OF PANDIUS

# KRON - The Raft City

by Jesper Andersen (Spellweaver)



*“The raft city of Kron is a unique place, forever drifting on the Sea of Dread. Its position changes constantly and few seafarers ever get to visit this extraordinary place except by chance. Some of the Merchant Princes have established formal trade relations with the citizens of Kron and from their ventures bring back exotic corals, rare fish and even lost treasures salvaged from the bottom of the deep oceans.*

*The people of Kron are rumoured to be wary of outsiders but generally friendly, once trust is established. The city center is built on more than a dozen large rafts, some of them as*

*large as 400 feet across, all held together by massive suspension bridges and walkways. Surrounding the central rafts are almost a hundred smaller rafts, each supporting the house structures of one or more families.*

*The ruler of Kron, an aged captain with the pretentious title of 'King' One-Eye, oversees the city's daily affairs from his estate on the largest raft in the centre of the city. Here, he sits on the Throne of Kron - a massive, green marble seat shaped like the hand of some forgotten sea god.”*

- Thaoldaw Kaseld,  
chronicler of Clan Corser

## THE CITY OF KRON

South of the islands of Minrothad Guilds, a mysterious city built of rafts floats on the tides and currents. It never reaches land - perhaps this is another effect created by the artefact known as the Throne of Kron, which stands in the central palace. The throne is what makes Kron un-sinkable, which is ironic, because the throne itself would sink like a rock, if it fell into the ocean.

The city is home to about 1,000 souls - most of them humans. Because the city constantly moves, visitors are rare but not unheard of. Experienced seafarers, including but not limited to the Merchant Princes of Clan Corser, have learned to befriend the dolphins of the Sea of Dread, who somehow always seem to know exactly where Kron is and will gladly guide to it.

## RULERS OF KRON

The current ruler of Kron is an aged captain named King One-Eye. In his youth, he was a formidable fighter but due to old age he now fights as a level 6 fighter. His first mate (captain of the guard) is named Falcon (F12). There also is a court wizard named Morak (M12), who has five apprentices and an amber golem.

## DAILY LIFE IN KRON

The citizens of Kron survive mainly by fishing and diving. All the people are outstanding swimmers and with the help of *water breathing* spells, they venture into the deep after pearls, corals and other valuables or necessities. Their diet consists primarily of fish and various types of kelp, supplemented by goods traded for with outsiders. Fresh water

is collected from the roofs of the city whenever it rains and stored in large tanks. Spilling drinking water is a punishable offence - usually with a flogging.

Naturally, firewood is lacking but for cooking, Kron's citizens harvest and dry different types of sea plants that produce a suitable heat. At night and indoors the city is illuminated by luminescent corals that need to be replaced on a weekly basis.

For crafting items that require a more powerful heat source, the city relies on the potent mixes of the local alchemist, who is also responsible for producing alchemy fire for the tower-mounted ballistae used to defend the city against enemy fleets and large sea monsters.

For all-out defence, the city can also muster 24 war catamarans carrying a pilot and two archers each, and against enemy ships the city will deploy a boarding party of 24 divers using *water breathing* spells.

## NOTABLE NPCs AND ESTABLISHMENTS

### Garimir, local head alchemist and glue-maker

On a large raft in the northeast corner of the city lies Garimir's workshop and laboratory - Kron's famous 'glue factory'. Garimir and his apprentices use the glands of giant jellyfish along with other ingredients and a secret recipe to produce barrels of waterproof, sticky goo, which the citizens then use for a variety of things. Foreign traders have also come to appreciate its many uses and so Garimir has established a formal connection

with Cuthbert Hengel, Master Alchemist of Minrothad Guilds of Clan Corser.

Garimir is probably one of the top alchemists in the Known World when it comes to harvesting and using plants, corals and creatures from the Sea of Dread. Few people have ever heard of him, however, because Minrothad traders are very tight-lipped about their sources, when they sell his goods abroad.

Adventurers visiting Kron could seek him out to get his help before going on aquatic adventures. He has a vast knowledge of undersea animal and plant life and therefore also a number of anti-toxins against some of the more nasty things, you can encounter in the deep. If the price is right, Garamir can supply the PCs with water-breathing items, light sources that do not require fuel or oxygen, salves and ointments to treat wounds underwater where regular bandages are not of much use and even one-time emergency flares (for use on the surface) based on an Ochalean recipe for fireworks, he once got his hands on.

## Dock Master Igoa

Igoa and a handful of men run the primitive docking area in the southeast corner of Kron. The enclosed area is only roughly 200 x 400 feet and protected on the two sides facing the sea by a floating wall and a gate mechanism. The docks also include a stables area for sea horses and other aquatic mounts and so can rarely accommodate more than two small sailing ships at any given time<sup>1</sup>. Dock Master Igoa is in charge of overseeing everything that goes on at the docks - a dull job most of the time.

<sup>1</sup> F5-I port in Bruce Heard's port classification system - see "[Ports of Mystara](#)"

## Ship Builder Yirav

Yirav is in charge of the large ship building yard north of the docking area. Here, he and group of skilled workers produce and repair Kron's fleet of war catamarans and other small boats used for fishing or for loading and unloading vessels that are too large to dock at the city itself. Yirav also has a number of triton customers, for whom he constructs special sea horse-drawn rafts that can operate both underwater and on the surface.

## Zalni, INNKEEPER AND OWNER OF The Maiden's Kiss

Zalni is one of the few women to run her own business in Kron - the city's only inn, called The Maiden's Kiss. It is located on one of the large rafts in the western part of the city, just west of the palace and south of the city's stadium. Her inn only has a few rooms for guests that want to spend the night and don't have their own ship, but the ones she have are fairly nice and clean. The food is also reasonable, even if the menu has very little variation.

Much of Kron's economy is based on bartering, where outsiders bring in wares and exchange them in bulk for Kron's goods from the sea, but individuals can also buy goods and services with coin and most nations' mint are accepted. At the Maiden's Kiss there is a limited but satisfactory selection of beer, ale, mead, wine and spirits from Minrothad Guilds, Ierendi and Thyatis but what is on tap can vary from visit to visit.

Since Kron is not under the rule of the Guilds, gambling is legal<sup>2</sup> in this city and it is a major

<sup>2</sup> GAZ9 Players' Booklet page 3 : "Travelers are often surprised to learn that most gambling is illegal among the Minrothad

pastime with foreign visitors, who engage in a number of games at the Maiden's Kiss. Zalni has employed a burly fighter by the name of Vamar to make sure any cheaters or troublemakers are shown the door (and the ocean right outside it).

## Paewyn's Salvage Operations

One of the wealthier individuals in Kron is the merchant Paewyn, owner of a small diving and salvage operation. He has built his business paying Kron divers for bringing up salvageable goods from shipwrecks and undersea ruins they encounter on their dives, and selling it to visiting merchants. Recently, Paewyn has expanded his operations with a sinister crew of 12 Thyatian divers - cutthroats all by the looks of them - under the leadership of one Joshua Stormshadow.

Joshua and his men have expanded Paewyn's operations by roaming far from Kron in an *Undersea Boat* and bringing back lost treasures. Most of the citizens of Kron are uneasy around Joshua and his men, but they keep to themselves - many suspect that they are on the run from the law somewhere. They would not be the first fugitives to lay low in Kron.

## Jolan Tosk / Dominic Haaskinz

Another important but not famous (part-time) resident of Kron is Dominic Haaskinz, son of the noble Harald Haaskinz of Glantri. Dominic is following in his father's footsteps, including taking an interest in the Elemental Plane of Water and Water Elementalism magic.

When he learned of the existence of Kron about a year ago from a Minrothad merchant he met, Dominic arranged for secret passage

Guilts..."

on a ship to the enigmatic floating city. He used his magic to slip unnoticed into the city and learn more about it. A few weeks later he returned in disguise on another ship, posing as an old scholar by the name of Jolan Tosk, come to find a quiet place to live out retirement. He was granted permission to stay and rented a small barge on the dull side of town.

To the citizens of Kron, Jolan Tosk is a kind old fellow who lives with a middle-aged manservant named Ulard. Jolan seldom ventures out but has Ulard run errands such as food shopping. Actually, Dominic is gone for long periods at a time - either attending matters back in Glantri or conducting underwater experiments to increase his understanding of Water Elementalism.

He is extremely careful - not least because of the Thyatian Joshua and his crew of cutthroats staging their salvage-operations out of Kron. Dominic owns several powerful water-related magic items, which he is certain the Thyatians would love to get their hands on.

His most useful item however, under the circumstances, is an *Amulet of Disguise* that allows him to assume any medium-sized humanoid form including basic equipment as often as once per turn. Dominic can appear as Jolan Tosk or some other creature, but if he tries to copy an actual person, creatures he encounter are allowed a chance to see through the illusion<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> Source: Joshuan's Almanac & Book of Facts, page 144

## PLOTS AND INTRIGUE

### The wererat

A wererat recently jumped ship in Kron, having been on the run from Minrothad authorities for some time. He is currently scouting the city in rat form, trying to find the best location to set up a more permanent lair. Since the citizens of Kron have next to no silver weapons, his presence could become a major problem in the longer run.

### The greedy High Sorcerer

Morak, magist to the ruler King One-Eye, lusts for power and wealth. Eventually, he will acquire a *Ring of Human Control* and seize control of the king. By making a deal with the corrupt triton Ulobon and using dark magic, they will force King One-Eye to make a pact with the triton King Lopra of Suthus, in which Kron supplies Suthus' triton warriors with war rafts with which to raid merchant shipping (see X7 - War Rafts of Kron). Morak has no idea what Ulobon wants with the prisoners from the captured ships and he doesn't care.

### The Spy

One of Kron's gifted native citizens by the name of Hallar has recently found employment as a local agent of the Blue Eels (see Gaz 9, p.10). His mission in Kron is to gather information about the city's salvage operations and to monitor the buyers of rare items brought up from the deep. Hallar was recruited, because the Blue Eels suspect that magical items retrieved from wrecks or undersea ruins may be working their way into unknown hands in the Minrothad Guilds. With the recent attempt on Oran Meditor's life, the Blue Eels are investigating any possible leads

to who might be building up a secret force in the islands.

So far, Hallar has managed to bribe a shop clerk at Paewyn's to report on the comings and goings of Joshua and his men and clients coming to buy Paewyn's goods but nothing deeply incriminating has been reported so far.

## HISTORY OF THE CITY OF KRON

Approximately around the year 600 AC, there lived a powerful pirate lord on the island of Terentias in Thyatis. His name was Kelyr and his greed for treasure knew no limits. One day, Kelyr heard tales of a lush, green land far to the south, where the temples and cities were filled with golden idols and statues. Intrigued by this tale, he ordered his pirate fleet of 20 ships to set sail at once and Kelyr led the fleet himself onboard his flagship, *Demon of the Seas*.

After weeks of sailing, Kelyr's fleet reached the coast of the Hinterlands and soon found rich, yet poorly defended settlements of native tribes along the coast. Kelyr's men plundered and burned and carried both loot and slaves - including women and children - back to their ships. They also brought along a massive, green stone throne, which Kelyr found in a temple. He liked it and intended to make it his throne at home.

The pirates departed the burning cities, their ships heavy with plunder, slaves and fresh provisions for the journey home. Everyone was ecstatic - the raid had been a major success. But back on the shore, a mortally wounded priest called out to the immortal patron of the now enslaved people - the



immortal whose temple Kelyr and his men had sacked and burned and whose "hand" they took - mistaking it for a throne. With his dying breath the priest called out to his deity and the immortal answered by cursing Kelyr and his men. They would never return home. They and their successors would spend an eternity adrift at sea.

Halfway home the weather changed and a powerful storm, which lasted for days, blew the fleet far off course - into the deepest unknown of the Sea of Dread from where ships did not return. Several of the ships sank in the storm and the rest were badly damaged. Horrified, the pirates watched as giant sea monsters emerged from the depths to devour the screaming sailors that were swept overboard by crashing waves.

After 10 days the storm finally settled and the ocean calmed. Only 14 of the 20 ships remained and most of them were unable to manoeuvre or propel themselves, having lost rudders or masts or both. Unwilling to leave his treasure out of his sight, Kelyr ordered a few of his most trusted men to take the last operational ship and go for help. They set off to the north and were never seen or heard from again.

### **The Pact with the Shark-kin**

Weeks went by and food and water onboard the last 13 ships were rapidly being consumed. Some of the pirates started killing off slaves to preserve what little food was left. The slaughter and blood in the ocean attracted an evil tribe of shark-kin, who cautiously approached the smashed fleet, now bundled up together. Through weary negotiations, the evil shark-kin - who realised that the pirates were much too well armed to take on in an assault - proposed a trade: The fleet would

give up one human sacrifice a week to the satisfy the hunger of an abominations that the shark-kin both worshipped and feared, and in return the fleet of shipwrecked humans would be given enough fish and sea kelp to survive.

Half-starved and desperate, Kelyr agreed. Even he was not so cold-blooded that he enjoyed human sacrifice to the horrors of the deep, but Kelyr eventually acknowledged that the arrangement had its uses. As such, not strictly prisoners were traded away to the shark-kin - a number of pirates who might have been working up the courage to challenge Kelyr were also dragged screaming to the depths to face the mouth and claws of He Who Devours.

### **The Years of Horror**

Two years went by. The colony of shipwrecked were barely surviving on what they were being given by the shark-kin. Kelyr sank into deep melancholy, realizing that despite his wealth and power, he was going to die out there on the ocean. The colony was close to anarchy, with pirates regularly killing each other over food, water, treasure - or most of all - the female prisoners.

There was little the slaves could do to prevent the abuse, but the men of the Hinterlands had valiantly tried to spare their wives and children the horrible death of being sacrificed to He Who Devours. And so, they had drawn lots each week to determine whose turn it was to be sacrificed.

One day, a young man named Lerisar drew the shortest straw, meaning that he was to be sacrificed the next day. That evening before he went to sleep, Lerisar prayed to the immortals and much to his surprise the triton

immortal Polonius spoke to him in his dreams, telling Lerisar to rebel against his jailers and the evil shark-kin – worshippers of Polonius' enemy, the evil immortal Sasskass the Destroyer.

The next day, as the evil shark-kin came to collect Lerisar on the semi-submerged sacrificial platform, he turned to Kelyr and the pirates and called out to them. He chastised them for their lack of courage and for not giving him a fighting chance. Impressed with his courage, his pride wounded by Lerisar's words, Kelyr threw Lerisar a sword and a shield. On the stands around the platform, the crowd went wild, as Lerisar cut down the two shark-kin when they tried to grab him and drag him under the water. The blood flowed in the ocean, and for a moment all went silent...

### He Who Devours is revealed

Suddenly, the whole rotten fleet shook, as with a thunderous shriek He Who Devours emerged from the sea in a spray of water!! The stench of rotting flesh between his teeth was overwhelming, but Lerisar stood his ground. He Who Devours lunged forward, huge pincers clicking and cutting. Lerisar dodged but



disappeared beneath the shallow water of the submerged platform. The crowd gasped and many screamed in terror, as He Who Devours climbed further up onto the fleet. Panic spread. A few pirates tried to engage the horror of the deep but they died gruesome deaths.

Suddenly, Lerisar emerged again from the water, right next to the beast. He dodged a pincer, deflected another with his shield, and then with a mighty thrust buried his sword to the hilt in He Who Devours' eye. The horror was slain.

### The End of Kelyr

Everyone on board the fleet of lashed wrecks were stunned by Lerisar's sudden defeat of He Who Devours. As the panic died down, Lerisar called out a challenge to Kelyr. The pirate lord appeared on his balcony above the submerged platform. He could easily have ordered Lerisar killed where he stood, but Kelyr did not become pirate lord by backing down from a challenge - even one from a slave.

Lerisar and Kelyr met each other in single combat and after a fierce duel the old pirate lay dead as well. Lerisar ordered the slaves to be freed at once and none of the nine remaining pirate captains dared to challenge the man, who had just killed both He Who Devours and Kelyr himself.

The slaves were freed and quickly armed themselves with whatever improvised weapons they could get their hands on - certain that the pirates would eventually go back on their word and try to enslave them again. Lerisar sensed the coming bloodshed and ordered both sides to stand down. An uneasy truce settled over the fleet as the



*Lerisar and Kelyr do Battle*

pirates withdrew to one half and the former slaves to the other half of the wrecked fleet.

Lerisar then called for a council of the 10 captains (himself included). The main topic right now was survival - what to do without the food supply from the evil shark-kin, and how to defend the fleet against the reprisal attack that would surely follow just as soon as the shark-kin had gotten over the shock of the death of their monstrous overlord. The former slaves knew many crafts that were vital to the survival of the fleet in the long run and the pirates were too few and too weak to defend the entire fleet. For now, the two sides agreed to put their differences aside and work together for mutual survival. That meant

arming the slaves with whatever weapons could be found.

### **The shark-kin attack**

Three days after the defeat of He Who Devours came the attack, which the fleet had been waiting and preparing for. Hundreds of shark-kin swarmed the fleet at night and in a horrible, bloody battle tried to overrun the combined force of pirates and slaves but were defeated - though the victory was costly. A third of the pirates and half the slaves including many women and children had been killed. Losses among the shark-kin were even greater, however, and they did not return.

In the months that followed, Lerisar established a more formal rule over the fleet. The pirates acknowledged his role as leader but many were afraid that Lerisar and the former slaves would seek vengeance on them for past deeds. One of Lerisar's first actions, therefore, was to declare a general amnesty to anyone in the fleet. This greatly upset his fellow country-men who have suffered not only kidnapping from their homes but also two years of abuse and seeing their friends sacrificed to the sea monsters. Wise leaders on both sides recognized the necessity of the amnesty, however, and helped Lerisar enforce it.

Secondly, Lerisar introduced a strict work regime with responsibilities for everyone - some were made fishermen, some guards, some craftsmen, cooks, healers etc. Hard work kept the minds occupied. Anyone who violated the law was severely punished and Lerisar measured out justice equally against the pirates and his fellow countrymen.

## The Rule of Lerisar

In the years that followed, life on the fleet was harsh. Of the original fleet of more than 2,000 pirates and 800 slaves, only 500 pirates and 300 slaves remained. Yet, this number was sustainable and through fishing and diving and collecting rain water the fleet managed to survive. Gradually the lashed fleet of wrecks evolved into a floating city, as giant rafts were constructed from the hulls and better accommodations were built.

A conspiracy by a group of Hinterlanders to poison Lerisar and then surprise and kill the pirates for revenge was exposed and the traitors hung. 30 pirates later disappeared on a homemade raft, trying to escape the fleet. After nearly three years at sea, however, both pirates and Hinterlanders started to get philosophical about their existence and the

realization that they would likely never see land again. Children were brought up hearing tales of "Dry Land".

The worship of Polonius and other immortals gradually grew as the fleet's citizens adapted to their new life at sea and within a decade of Kelyr's death, several small cults of worship had established themselves in Kron.

## A unique society

In the decades following Lerisar's ascent to the throne of the floating city, the pirates and the Hinterlanders gradually formed a unified society. Children were born who had never seen "dry land" and gradually as the original members of the fleet grew old or died of malnutrition and the general harshness of the life on the fleet, a new population of mixed pirate/hinterlander heritage took over.

In the early years, the gender mix was far from equal - 2/3 men and 1/3 women - but because of the influence of the rulers and the churches, women were no longer treated as objects to be stolen or bargained for. Rather, they were elevated to something special and the men of the fleet competed for their affections.

Although the gender mix is a lot more 50/50 today - 350 years later - these traditions still affect life in Kron strongly. Four times a year, tournaments are held to decide who is the best swimmer, fisher, craftsman, warrior, and climber and so on. The women don't have to choose a mate from among the winners only, but the tournament is considered a good opportunity to display one's prowess and impress the ladies. A large stadium is built next to the High Captain's Hall, where many of the competitions take place.

It is not unusual for a woman in the floating city to take a new partner every five years or

so. Once the woman takes a new partner, any male children leave the household with their father to go live by themselves (until, perhaps, the man secures a new mate), while female children stay with their mothers until they come of age and choose their own first partner. From the age of five, boys are raised by their fathers to take over whatever profession or craft they know.

During the first century of the floating city's existence, a few shipwrecked sailors joined the floating colony but other than that things remained uneventful. Around 700 AC, however, the floating city of Kron, as it has begun naming itself, establishes a regular contact with friendly races of the sea and initiate trade. This creates a great deal of prosperity in the city, because the sea folk bring tools and items long lost or forgotten among the fleet dwellers. A great deal of the ancient treasure is gradually traded away over the following decades, as tritons and merfolk patiently teach the fleet dwellers about the deep and how to cast water-based magic such as *Water Breathing*.

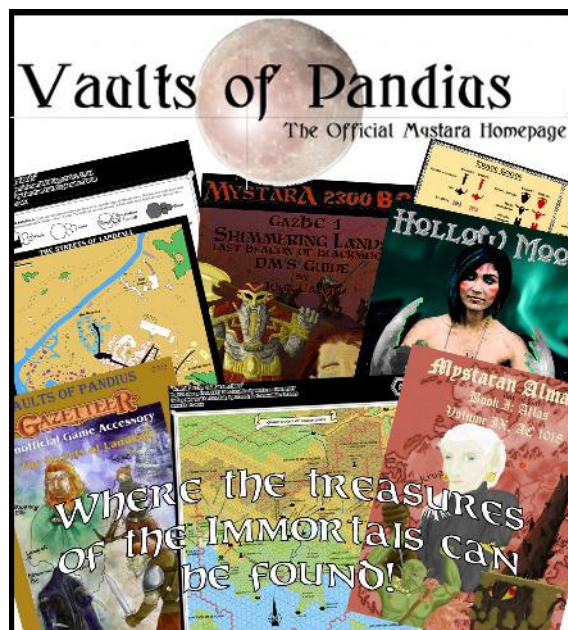
When a ship finally encountered Kron in 776 AC, the fleet dwellers were so set in their world that they categorically refused to leave their raft city - even just for brief trip to "dry land" and back. As Minrothad Guild ships started regularly paying visits to Kron, the fear of the outsiders gradually subsided and a few daring citizens of the raft city did go away and came back with fantastic tales of dry land. Not many felt inclined to leave the raft city, however, to take on such an enormous outside world filled with so many dangers.

During the 900's, Kron prospered further from trade with "dry landers", increasing the raft-dwellers' knowledge of medicine, alchemy and other aspects of science and trading with the dry landers for much-needed metal tools and other items in exchange for what little remained of the original treasure and what they could salvage from or hunt in the deep ocean.



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# The Three Starflowers



## THE STORY OF A SLAVERS HUNTER

An adventure for PCs of any level  
fighting slavery in the Known World

by Francesco Defferrari (Sturn)

This adventure was inspired by the few words written by me in "[Slaves of the Known World](#)" quite some time ago.

This adventure pits the PCs against pirates and slavers as they strive to locate kidnapped loved ones and avenge the freedom fighter known as the Seagull.

In Act I, they will meet Nahi, the Seagull's protegee and learn the sad tale of his life. With his very special ship and crew, they'll travel across the Sea of Dread to reach the slavers hideout.

In Act II the PCs will go against the infamous slavers ship Black Octopus and its powerful captain.

In Act III the PCs will finally learn the truth about the Three Starflowers.

It could be any time of the day or the night, when the PC's will see a middle aged and simply clothed man being ferociously beaten by a group of men. These men will run away once the PC's spot them or yell. If the PC's are high level, the men will get away by magical means.

Once the PCs run to the unmoving beaten man, they will spot a red gem beside him. That's a delayed fireball, and the PC's will be hit if they do not run away quickly (if they are low level, the DM should time the explosion before they are too near). PC's can immediately realize powerful magic was used, as really nothing is left of the body of the beaten man, and that was obviously done to prevent a raise dead spell.

Naturally, a huge number of people will come in the street too see what's happening.

PCs should now notice a small steel medallion with the exquisite engraved image of three flowers with five petals each.

Among the people flocking here there is a running girl, that suddenly will stop and will start to cry silently among the crowd. Guards will arrive too, and PCs should be able to give them a partial description of the men (simply clothed like locals, dark or brown haired). They could however be able to recognize

## ACT ONE

### A city ON the shores of the Sea of Dread

The adventure can begin in any city that has a port on the Sea of Dread, although it is better if set in Karameikos, Darokin, Ierendi or Minrothad, or even in Davania.

them if they see them again (roll on intelligence). Guards will know nothing of the medallion but if the PCs show it, they'll insist to keep it to investigate.

The girl, young, dark haired, simply clothed and apparently unarmed, will eventually walk away. PCs should stop her and ask if she knew the beaten man.

“Everyone knew him. He was The Seagull”, she says soberly.

PCs should have heard such a name, either because the DM has introduced stories about him before or simply because obviously characters know more of their world than players. The Seagull has become famous in recent years as a pirate hunter. The stories say that the pirates he caught were killed and left with cocoa grains inside their mouths, and he also was known to free captives and slaves whenever possible, but PCs do not know much more about him.

The girl will try to leave. If the PCs ask her name or how she knew The Seagull she tells them her name is Nahi and is an Ierendian, but doesn't have the time to talk now. She has to search for the men who killed The Seagull. If the PCs offer to help or point out that it's dangerous to do so alone, she will look at them and ask why they want to help. If the PCs explain that they oppose slavery, she will let them follow her (she trusts her ability to detect lies) but if they give another motivation she'll ask bluntly if they do oppose slavery, and if their answer is not straight she'll try to continue alone. PCs who do not immediately gain the trust of Nahi could skip the next part of the adventure and meet her again later (go to Story of the Seagull), or search the killers on their own, as below, and meet again Nahi later.

## Searching for the killers

Nahi will begin to visit all the nearby inns and taverns, asking the owners if they have seen men like the one who killed The Seagull. She'll whisper, in case the men have accomplices nearby, and offer a good bribe to obtain information. She'll ask the PC's to do the same in other establishments, urging discretion and caution. In the fourth attempt, the owner of a dirty and loud tavern called The Rotten Squid will tell her (or the PC's) that those men just came to take their stuff, pay, and then went toward the port. One she hears that, Nahi will rush to the wharves but the men will be nowhere in sight. She'll ask the local sailors patching nets, port guards and anyone nearby, but everyone will tell that such men didn't come recently to the docks.

She'll comment that the men could have exited the city in some other way, or went away by magical means, but she'll also say she has a good idea on whom they could have been.

## Story of the Seagull

(If the PCs have not followed Nahi in her investigation above they could meet her again now, scorned and sad, and ask if she has news). Nahi will tell the PCs she has a story to tell and could use some help. She'll specify that there is no reward in that except for the satisfaction of doing the right thing. If PCs are interested, Nahi will lead them to a quiet local tavern she knows to tell all of her story.

I have to begin with my story to explain how I knew him. Two years ago I was travelling by ship with my younger sister and many other people from Alcove island to Ierendi city to sell some necklaces we

made at the time, when the ship was captured by pirates. They sold us all into slavery in some Minrothaddan port, unknown to me. I was separated from my sister and sent on another ship, toward Thyatis.

Somehow, the Seagull intercepted it and freed us all. That's how I came to know him, and almost immediately I asked for his help to find my sister. He agreed to help me, at the time I didn't know yet his story, and that it was way more terrible than mine.

He never told me his real name, he said it was as dead as the man he once was. He said however that he lived in a small village on the coast, and he was a happy man with a beautiful wife. They had three children, three female triplets, a very rare event. When his wife was in labor he picked up for her three starflowers, without knowing yet they were about to have three daughters. That's the reason why he called the little girls "my starflowers". The girls were only three years old when his home village was raided by pirates. All his family was captured. He fought, in vain, and was heavily chained in the ship. He fought again, and was beaten senseless for almost all the trip. He was sent to a fighting pit somewhere in Thyatis but survived and, after some months, he managed to escape. He was able to track down the people who had bought his wife, but she had already died, from a common malady. He began to kill slavers and slave owners, while searching for his daughters in all of Thyatis. Eventually he was forced to leave the empire with soldiers on his trail, but did not give up. All that happened twenty years ago.

Nahi continues the story, explaining how the Seagull never stopped searching for his daughters, becoming an expert on the routes and means of slavery and on the people involved in it. He killed pirates and slavers, he freed slaves with force or just by buying them. He built an organization spanning different nations, the Brotherhood of Freedom, to help slaves escape and gained the aid or the sympathy of many people and churches willing to fight slavery, but he never found his daughters.

(DM's wishing to expand the Brotherhood could link it also to Lathan Lancehand (Male elf 4), main character of XSOLO, Lathan's Gold, a Calaari elf of Karameikos, sworn enemy of Ludwig Von Hendriks and the slavers of the Iron Ring).

Since he freed me I aided him in all the ways I could. - Nahi explains, then her eyes become wet and her look sadder - I think he became a sort of second father to me, and I became a sort of daughter to him. We looked and looked for my sister and his daughters and finally, just a month ago, we had a breakthrough. We found The Black Octopus.

Again, PCs could have heard the name, as it's an infamous pirate and slaver ship, reputedly commanded by a vampire, or a necromancer in some stories. Nahi and the Seagull found out that The Black Octopus was the ship that kidnapped both Nahi's sister and the Seagull's family. The ship has always been elusive to the fleets of half the world's nations, that have hunted it almost everywhere for years. It has huge bounties in the Shires, Ierendi, Darokin, Sind, Karameikos and even far away Yavdlom and the Savage Coast.



We did it by following the cocoa trail - Nahi explains - that's why he left cocoa grain in the mouth of the pirates and the slavers he killed. Because his daughters were sold for three sacks of cocoa. He always said "Think about the tragic irony, Nahi. We never ate cocoa in our lives, before they took us. So many nights I wondered, are my daughters still alive? Do they know cocoa now?"

We discovered indeed that cocoa coming from the south is often used as payment to slavers by Thyatian traders, and following that route we managed to find a stray sailor who was on the Black Octopus and knew its favorite hiding place. He also saw a girl similar to me in that place, a lone island in the southern Sea of Dread, and that could be my sister. I have a map, a ship, a crew with good warriors, but I need more help to assault a pirates' cove. Would you come with me?

Nahi eventually would like to alert a fleet or a personality known to fight pirates (like Devon Hyraksos or Zandra Sulanov in Karamaikos) about this hideout, but cannot do it right now. She explains that pirates have many spies in all the major ports, and if a fleet leaves to engage them they are often warned before, at least two thirds of the time. She prefers a lone ship and a small group to scout the place and, hopefully, free her sister. She'd also like to capture the Octopus' captain or one of his officers, to ask them what has become of the Seagull's daughters. She feels she owes that to him.

Nahi also points out she's risking much by trusting the PC's, as the men who killed the Seagull could have allies everywhere, but she needs help immediately. The Seagull had many enemies, but he could have been killed now

exactly because he discovered the Octopus' hideout, and the place could be vacated soon. It's important to go there right now.

If the PC's need time Nahi could agree to wait two hours, but not more, or she'll search for somebody else. If the PC's accept, she'll lead them or meet them at the port, by The Hope of Freedom, Seagull's ship.

## The Hope of Freedom

On the ship, PCs will get to know the crew, almost entirely made up by former slaves the Seagull freed. Obviously when they arrive all the crew will be sad and angry over the death of their beloved captain.

The Hope is a small, quick sailing ship (similar to a [caravel](#)), that has Attack 3 and Movement 8 with the naval battle rules of the Ierendi and Minrothad Gazetteers. The ship has a crew of 19 people. They are all warriors, sailors and even rowers when needed. One of them is Nahi (Ierendian female, 21 years, Thief 3, freed 2 years ago), the others are:

- **Julius**, the second (Thyatian male, 38 years, Warrior 5, descends from generations of Thyatian slaves, freed 19 years ago, gruff, fights with two swords, in an apparently casual relationship with Herja, but she's the first woman he really loved),

- **Teur** (Ochalean, male, 29 years, Warrior 6, born a slave, freed 5 years ago, jovial and kind, he rarely relates the horrible scenes he witnessed in his life. In love with Nahi, but hasn't yet found the courage to tell her),

- **Iana** (Ierendian, female, 34 years, Thief 6, taken 20 years ago and freed 10 years ago, beautiful and regal, the informal cook of the crew, is devastated by the Seagull's death as she loved him, often hides to cry),

- **Selan** the boatswain (tanned skin, he was taken as a child and doesn't know where, male, 27, Warrior 4, freed 16 years ago, very gallant with all women but secretly in love with Kala, eager to avenge The Seagull),

- **Kala** the helmswoman (Pearl Islander, female, 33, Warrior 5, taken 14 years ago and freed 12 years ago, always friendly bickering with Selan, smiling and strong, every sunset she throws a flower in the sea in memory of her slain husband and lost daughter),

- **Dragan** (Kerendian of Traladaran origins, male, 41, Wizard 6, sold by his parents 35 years ago and freed 10 years ago, always carries silver pieces for the poor everywhere he goes, fearless in battle. He loved Patricia from the moment she saw her, but didn't tell because he considers himself too old),

- **Shine** (Ierendian halfling female, 44, Thief 8, a sailress taken in the seas 20 years ago and freed 18 years ago, knows the sea, winds and currents better than anyone, has infiltrated countless slavers' houses, in a happy relationship with Abir),

- **Patricia** (Thyatian female, 22, Cleric 4 of Tarastia, from a rich family of slave owners she repudiated 3 years ago, kind and always willing to help, attracted to Kalb and Dragan but feels guilty about it as she thinks it would be like indulging her vanity, and is unable to choose),

- **Kalb** (Ylari male, 25, Warrior 4, 10 years a slave, freed 1 year ago, proud and serious but friendly, selfless in defending comrades in battle. Likes Ansel much, but cannot admit to himself that could be more than friendship),

- **Ansel** (Darokinian male, 39, Warrior 7, a free man of Akorros who joined the cause for idealism 2 years ago, was part of an

adventuring group but left them because they didn't want to challenge the laws permitting slavery and serfdom. In love with Kalb, but thinks he'll never reciprocate),

- **Ailyn** (Minrothaddan female, 18, Cleric 1 of Calitha, 5 years a slave, freed 2 years ago, apparently fragile, often praying, wakes up crying in the night, Patricia and Shine often hug her. Knows Ajeet likes her, but she feels too weak to have a relationship),

- **Cedric** (Dunadalian male, 23, Warrior 3, all his family was taken by Alphatian slavers, he has a long story of escapes and struggles, freed two brothers now returned home, while mother and father died. Likes to joke, drink and party, but deadly serious in battle. Likes Ailyn, but is uncertain if is a good idea to tell her),

- **Arafrid** (native Heldannic male, 34, Warrior 6, family sold for rebellion by the knights to Thyatians 15 years ago, still searching for two sisters, mother dead, melancholic, drinks too much when at land, is considering telling Ellada he likes her even if he knows it's very unlikely she would reciprocate),

- **Herja** (Vestlander female, 36, Thief 3, taken and sold as a child by Ostlanders, freed 3 years ago, never told anyone about her slave years, apparently hard and casual about her relationship with Julius, but she's really in love with him and deadly afraid of losing him in battle).

- **Ellada** (elf female, 115, Elf 7, she was taken as a child and doesn't remember much, has been recognized by other elves she met as probably Wendarian, was kept as concubine by a powerful Thyatian wizard for decades, escaped after he died. Had an attraction for the recently deceased Sergej but didn't tell him and anyway she feels really older than

the humans and thinks only Abir can partially understand her),

- **Saryan** (Cypric Alphanian male, 27, Thief 4, crooks sold him into slavery 4 years ago, ended in the Isle of Dawn, then on a ship directed to Davania and was recently freed by the Seagull. Always been a scoundrel and a womanizer, likes Ellada, Ailyn and Patricia, but hasn't yet chosen the first he'll court),

- **Abir** (male gnome, 59, Warrior 3, an excellent artisan and smith, grew in the house of a rich Ylari merchant, treated very well. Didn't even realize he was a slave until his master died and he was sold 4 years ago. Fortunately, the buyer was the Seagull. Doesn't know his origin, he doesn't even speak gnomish. He's in a happy relationship with Shine and close friend of Ellada).

- **Ajeet** (Sindian male, 19, Warrior 2, taken 3 years ago and freed recently. His family exterminated, horribly tortured and burned by slavers, even if Patricia and others of the crew are trying to cure him, he's sick with the desire of revenge and he's the most likely to do reckless things. In love with Ailyn, but will not admit it as he's ashamed of his looks. Practices with the sword maniacally).

These people come from all the Known World, all have interesting and sad stories, they were sold by pirates, enemies or crooks, all of them were uprooted and lost their families, most of them were tortured and saw others die. Many are experienced (the DM could also raise or lower their levels to better match the PCs) but the older ones can easily explain how what they do is dangerous by pointing out that more than half of the crew was composed of different people 5 years ago, now all dead fighting slavers. They lost a comrade, a

Karameikan named Sergej, just ten days before, during a Thyatian mission.

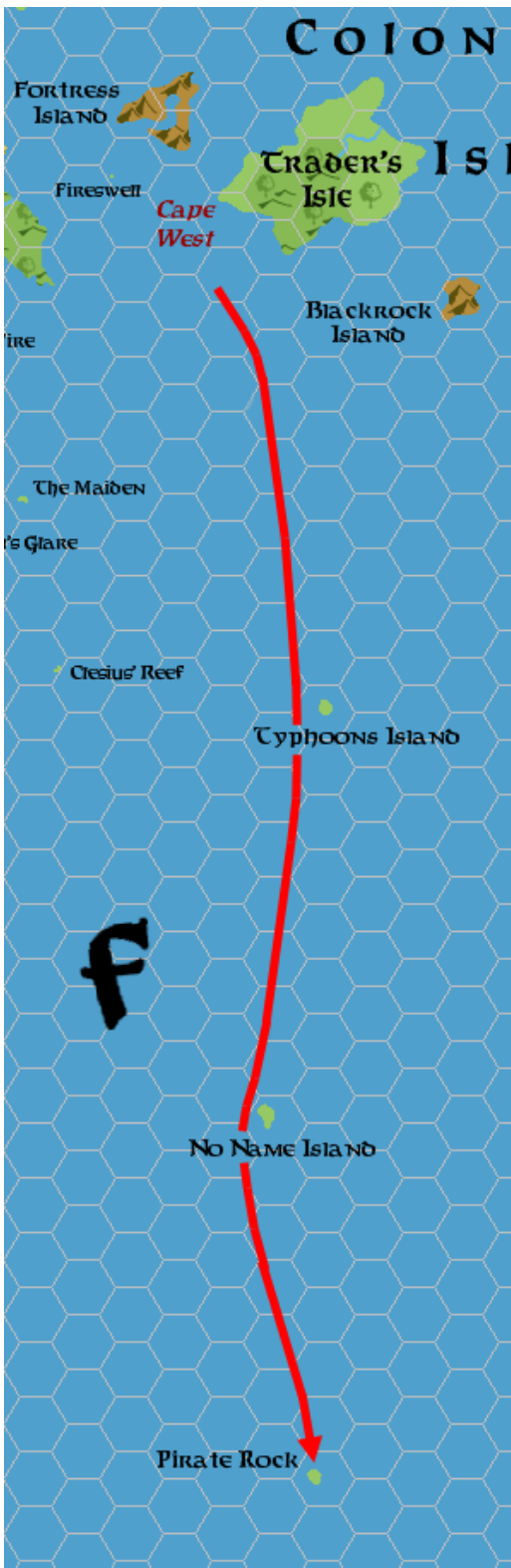
All the personal relationships of the crew are deeply tragic as they are all ready to die for the cause and know that could happen quite soon, particularly if they have to engage the powerful Black Octopus.

## The Sea Voyage

200 miles south of Trader's island The Hope will meet Typhoons island and pass far away from it, as ships are frequently sunk near it (location of AC10 adventure Isle of the Storm Giant). Nahi will not consider the idea of investigating on the way to the pirates hideout, as time is too important.

170 miles south and 25 west of Typhoons island The Hope will meet the No Name island, aka the Island of Dried Skins of the Shark-kin (PC3), a volcanic island with a high mountain. Shark-kin and Weresharks live on the island, they are wary and threatening, as this is their sacred island and they had to fight pirates encroachers in the past, but could be approached and talked to, depending on the PC's action. If PC's are not menacing or arrogant, in fact the Shark-kin will talk, as they consider the PC's ship too small to be a real threat. They know by sight the Black Octopus (if the ship is described by Nahi) and they can confirm they have seen the great, dark ship pass by directed to the south. (The Octopus can carry up to a 200 people crew and an even greater number of slaves, treat it as a [galleon](#) ).

Pirate's rock is 150 miles south and 25 east from No Name island, 420 miles from Trader's island. The Hope, if the wind is favorable and the weather good, could cover the distance in just 4 or 5 days. (Water



Route to Pirate's Rock

movement modification table for weather in Rules Cyclopedia page 90).

The trip could be uneventful or the DM could use encounter rules (here modified from Rules Cyclopedia), rolling 1d6 for each day. If the result is 1, an encounter occurs, 50% of the time it will be another ship, roll 1d12:

**Table1: Ship Encounters**

1	Small ship of adventurers, could be allies or headed to a complete different mission, as per DM's decision
2-7	Merchant ship, probably will just signal to salute, but PCs could sign to communicate with them or even buy provisions
8-11	Pirate's ship, could try to attack, see Pirate's Rock below for a list of them
12	Special ship, as one of the floating islands of the lizardmen described in Gaz4 The Kingdom of Ierendi, page 53, or Kron, see X7

The other 50% of the time the encounter will be with creatures of the ocean (1d8 with 1-2 flyer, 3-8 swimmer). For flyers see Rules Cyclopedia (a result of 6 could be a dragon as per appropriate table), for swimmers roll 1d12:

**Table2: Creature Encounters**

1	Sea Giant
2-4	Sea Hydra
5	Mermen
6-9	Sea Snakes
10-12	Sea termites

Any of these encounters could be hostile or not depending on the DM's decision or the reaction table.

The lone Sea Giant and the Mermen will both be agents of the Twaelar Empire. They will demand the ship's direction and purpose and they will tell PCs that they are entering the dominion of the Empire. They could be satisfied by several answers, even by the truth, or by a "donation", provided that PC's aren't arrogant or menacing. They know about Pirate's Rock and affirm that the island belongs to them. Slavery is legal in their empire too, but they do not care about the PC's actions against other surfacers, as long they do not disturb the peace of the empire. If the giant or the mermen become hostile they could attack in force and the Hope of Freedom will risk sinking, and PCs and crew could be killed or captured (see below the Twaelar Empire box).

### OVERCOMING WINDS AND CURRENTS

It's very difficult to reach Pirate's Rock, and that's the reason why it has been an haven of piracy for so long. Nahi and The Seagull were lucky to find a sailor willing to share the vital sailing information required to reach the island. They consist in a series of maneuvers to avoid dangerous winds and currents that could otherwise push a ship off course. A full day, in addition to the normal trip, is necessary to perform all these maneuvers.

Several governments would pay handsomely for such information, but Nahi would give it freely to anyone willing to attack the pirates. (See **Full attack on Pirate's Rock** box on page 87)

### Twaelar Empire

The Twaelar Empire is the heir of the ancient dominion of Adhuza, that in the remote past ruled over the Thanegioth archipelago and beyond, up to the shores of the Known World. The masters of Adhuza were the kopru, but eventually the more numerous mermen rebelled and took control of the Empire, renaming it. The mermen of Twaelar are not peaceful as those of Undersea, they have learned cruelty too well and are ruthless rulers of the sea that aim to expand their dominion to the north and the south. All the other races of the Empire are second class citizens and they use slavery too. Wereshark and wereseal slavers are used to capture, transform and enslave surface dwellers. They consider pirates useful to disrupt trading routes of the surfacers. Their ultimate goal is to find a way to develop the ability to stay on the surface for extended periods (developing temporary legs as the shark-kin do and the ability to breath air) in order to conquer all the surface of the Thanegioth archipelago, and more. They claim rulership of Pirate's rock and have in the waters east of Pirate bay their northernmost fortress.

## ACT TWO

### Pirate's Rock

The island has been in the hands of pirates for centuries. Even if all the Known World fleets know of its existence, only a brave Ierendian admiral once managed to find it decades ago, but his ships were sunk and all his men were enslaved. The reason is the difficulty in reaching the island and also navigating around it without precise maps, as it is surrounded by strong winds, currents and dangerous reefs. The Seagull discovered that there is a safe way to approach the island, from the north, but Nahi will want to do that at night, as by day is much more difficult to remain undetected.

From a distance the island appears exactly like a rock on which waves break continuously. The rims of the island are high cliffs, treacherous to climb, with many submerged rocks beneath. However there is a beach on the northwestern side, with a small cove nearby where the Hope of Freedom will drop anchor and, hopefully, remain hidden. With a small boat the PC's, Nahi and 11 other members of the crew will disembark on the nearby beach and begin their exploration of the island. 7 of the crew will wait on The Hope.

### General Geography and History of the Island

Roughly 20 miles long and 8 wide, the island is so hilly and rugged that getting lost is really easy (1-3 on 1d6 each half-day) and the movement rate is just 3-4 miles a day. With a local guide, it could be increased to 5 miles a day. Even if the external cliffs are bare of vegetation, the interior is an incredibly thick tropical jungle full of insects (and beetle swarms), snakes, lizards (some poisonous),

marine birds, ducks, parrots, cranes, herons, flightless birds (like the weka or the dodo), rats, mice, bats and small wild pigs. There are also more dangerous animals, like giant draco lizards, pit vipers, sturges and even some hydras, but they aren't the most dangerous creatures of the island. In fact several intelligent peoples inhabit the island and claim parts of it.

The first people, who claim to be the most ancient inhabitants, are in reality a mix of races that includes medusas, cyclops, harpies, giants, phanatons, and fairies. They warred in the past but now have forged a stable alliance that dominates the northern part of the island. The second people are the lizardmen that live in the eastern part of the island. The third people are the humans of mixed Makai and Tanagoro descent that live in the south west and in the smaller eastern island. The fourth people are the pirates that include men from all the Known World, Makai, Pearl Islanders, Yavdlomians, Sindians, lupins, rakastas, turtles. The fifth people are the mermen and the other races of the seas they dominate, i.e. knas, sea ogres, sea giants, shark-kin, tritons, weresharks, and wereseals. All of these five people claim to be the real masters of the island, and it's hard for an external observer to know who's telling the truth.

All these people now have an uneasy truce, but they had several wars in the past and they also defeated several other people who tried to live on the island but were eventually destroyed and have left only traces now, and that includes fire salamanders, gyerians, crabmen, chameleon men, carnifex, neanderthals, rakastas, Oltecs, Blackmoorians, Taymorans, Nithians, and Milenians.

The waters around the island house an incredible variety of jellyfish, lobsters, crabs, fish, dolphins, seals, more dangerous creatures as sharks, water termites and sea snakes and really dangerous creatures such as sea hydras, sea dragons and the people of the Twaelar Empire.

## Walking the Island

From Fairy Beach to Pirate Bay is just a 7 mile walk through the south east, a two hour walk in normal conditions, but due to the impassable vegetation and the rugged terrain the PCs will never be able to walk in a straight line, will have to climb in several places, cut vegetation, cross streams and ravines and will risk getting lost. During the first day they will hear laughter and movement in the jungle, but they will find nothing except for wandering monsters (even a hydra if they are unlucky). In fact the fairies are observing them from the start. If the PC's do not get lost (and there is a small chance of that, see above), they will reach the outskirts of the village of Sharath by the first evening. If they get lost they could arrive near Gukluna by the first evening or near The Grumbler in two days, or be truly lost in the jungle in the direction of the bay. Either way the fairies will manifest by the end of the second day.

## Flying Over

Flying, even if PC's have the means to fly with other 12 people, it is a very bad idea not only because it would provoke attacks from stirges, hydras and maybe even the dragon Kumatun, but also because the lookout in The Strong (see below) will surely spot them. If the PCs have the means to fly all invisibly, the fairies will stop and confront them anyway, as

described below, as soon as they land near the bay.

### Sharath

This village is mostly built on trees, in one of the rare plain areas of the jungle. The inhabitants are phanatons, pixies and other creatures that resemble small rakastas and gyerians (pookas) and treants.

### Gukluna

This village of wood huts is inhabited by a particular race of giants probably unique to the island, and by some pixies, treants and harpies. The giants in the past mixed with humans, ogres and neanderthals, so they are only 9 feet tall and have brown skin.

## The First People



*Treant*

Wherever the PCs arrive after one or two days of walking, a delegation of the First People will confront them, probably composed of a treant, a pixie and a pooka or a giant. They will ask PCs, kindly but firmly, why they are here on their island and what are they doing.

If the PCs speak with them, they'll explain that they have a sort of agreement with the pirates and they'll insist that the PCs speak with the Snake Queens.

If the PCs agree, the fairies will lead them, in a days walk, to Medusa Cape. If the PCs escape or fight, the fairies will run away but shortly after they'll begin to harass them to drive them toward the south, outside their territory. The fairies will avoid kill or be killed situations, but if the PCs somehow manage to kill some of them, they will retreat to attack later in full force (i.e. numbering in the dozens) until all the PC's are exterminated. Excessive violence would be a very stupid choice on the PCs part and Nahi too will oppose it at any cost as it would compromise the mission.

Probably accompanied by fairies PCs will pass near to

### **The Grumbler**

The still active volcano has a cloud of smoke hanging over it, even if it hasn't erupted for decades. In the past flame salamanders came out of it and tried to invade the island, and some say they are still a threat in the area. The DM could add a salamander encounter if he wishes, as they could attack (not lethally) the fairies and the PCs in order to harass them. If the PC's have somehow arrived here escaping from the fairies the salamander could be friendly and even aid them in reaching The Strong through underground passages, if they are willing to aid the salamanders in killing the medusas.

### **Medusa Cape**

They will see a bare area full of caverns, rugged hills, cliffs and sand dunes, inhabited by medusas, cyclops, giants and harpies. The medusas, called by the other of the First People

the Snake Queens, will meet the PCs with veils on their faces. There will be three of them. If the PCs tell the truth, the medusas will explain that, after many wars in the past, they made an agreement with the pirates. They trade with them but don't consider them friends, so if the PCs would like to try to enter The Strong and fight the pirates, the First People will not interfere. They will point out, however, that the fortress and the town of Hideout have a thousand inhabitants and, even if most of the pirate captains hate each other, they will fight together against an external enemy. Besides, they know that the captain of the Black Octopus, simply known as The Masked One, is a powerful wizard. The medusas are willing to help, as they could obtain from the pirates any individual slave or any information, but only if the PC's will steal an idol in a human village of Tuawo-ki, in the south, or, alternatively if they will aid in killing the dragon Kumatun.



*Medusa*



The PCs could discuss the proposal with Nahi and the others. They want eventually the capture of the Octopus but, for now, could settle with the freedom of Nahi's sister and information about the whereabouts of The Seagull's daughters, as they all feel they owe at least that to him. Nahi will suggest asking the medusas also all the available info about the other ships now at anchor, as some pirates could be allies in future battles with the Octopus and its crew (see descriptions of the ships below). If the PCs agree they'll have to choose one of the two missions, if they refuse the medusas will simply let them go and the fairies will escort them to the northern...

### Pirate's bay

With approximatively a diameter of three miles the bay houses in its lower half the pirate town of Hideout, dominated by a tall fortress, The Strong. As walking on the beach PCs could be easily spotted from the towers, they'll have to go back into the jungle to continue south. The next destination is the village of Kamawi, 9 miles away. With a pixie guide, the PC's can reach it in two days. The pixie will leave them before the village, they'll have to reach Tuawo-ki with a local guide, as he won't enter human territory...

### Kamawi

This large town of wooden houses that resemble overturned ships, located in the larger plain of the island, is inhabited by brown skinned humans that look similar to Ierendian Makai and Pearl Islanders. In fact they are a mix of both people and many others, therefore some of them even have fair eyes and hair. They will be suspicious but not outright hostile. If PCs say they are here to meet the high priest of Tuawo-ki, they will

warn them of his evil ways, and the reaction will be identical if PCs say they are after the green dragon Kumatun. They do not have much in weapons and magic, and are too scared of the priest or the dragon to accompany PCs, but they'll offer food, water and everything they have (even magical objects, if the DM wishes). They could also provide a guide to lead them to Tuawo-ki in just one day and half.

### Tuawo-ki

This town is similar to Kamawi, but larger and built on the northern shore of a small lake (1 mile long, half a mile wide). The people inhabiting it are apparently similar to those in Kamawi, but the truth is that the priest and several other chiefs and warriors are aranea in disguise. The people of Tuawo-ki know that their leaders are aranea and, as followers of Korotiku, they are proud of it, but do not share this information with foreigners. PCs will be quickly lead to the high priest, who will be willing to share information about their neighbours. He'll tell them that the medusas, the pirates, the Twaelar empire generals and the dragon Kumatun are all power hungry psychopaths that would like nothing better than to conquer and pillage all the others, but they can't as their powers are, at the moment, balanced. He'll also tell them that the humans of Kamawi are dangerous cultists of undersea monsters who perform human sacrifices at the first chance they get, even if he, the high priest, has done his best to redeem them. All this is perfectly true. If the PCs say they are after the pirates or after Kumatun, the high priest will offer any aid he can, as provisions, potions and scrolls, but will warn them about the power of the dragon and of the black wizard that leads the Octopus.

The idol the medusas want stolen is kept in the high priest's house and it's what has kept the town safe for centuries, as it has the power of boosting the abilities (+3 to all characteristics and rolls) of any person born within 300 feet from it. The large high priest house is almost always inhabited by him, his wife, two children (teenagers), all of whom are aranea, 2 acolytes and 3 warriors (all humans). During the night the aranea will be in their natural form. The idol is also protected by a magical alarm and it's a spider figurine weighing 10 pounds, so stealing it is not an easy task. If the PC's manage that anyway, they could be chased by the inhabitants, but a few moments before they are surrounded a portal will open in the earth below them and a pixie and a pooka will lead them to safety through it. The medusas were in fact scrying them.

### The Kuma Swamp

If instead PCs have accepted the other mission, to slay Kumatun, or hope to gain the aid of the dragon against the pirates (the high priest of Tuawo-ki will tell them that's possible) the swamp could be reached in a 1 day walk with a Tuawo-ki guide, who'll leave them on the fringe of it. By day, lizardmen warriors will soon surround them and lead them to the dragon. By night, they could try to sneak to his lair, which is not an easy task.

The lair is a deep ravine in the swamp, hidden by trees and surrounded by a town inhabited by lizardmen, troglodytes and gatormen. Kumatun is a 13HD Large Green Dragon, who will call his minions immediately if attacked, unless PC's find a way to seal his lair. Even so, he has items and magic and shouldn't be



an easy fight. If they kill him, however, the scrying medusas will provide them with a portal to escape (and will also dispose of the corpse to avoid resurrection).

If PC's instead talk to Kumatun, he'll offer to accompany them himself (in human form) against the captain of the Octopus, provided that they'll aid him in a little mission. The waters south of the island house a Dragon Turtle that controls several sea snakes, bitter enemy of the Kraken, served by devilfish, who inhabits the water near Kamawi (to whom the local villagers offer human sacrifices). The PCs, provided with water breathing, would have to attack several sea snakes, impregnated with the Kraken's odour (a disgusting white liquid that Kamatun minions obtained with many losses). This will lead the Turtle against the Kraken and the two, Kumatun hopes, will kill each other. No matter how that goes however, the dragon will aid the PCs against the pirates if they do that for him. If they accept, PCs will have to fight at least three Sea snakes 12 feet long, with 6hd each.

## Other Locations in the Waters around the Pirate's Rock

**The Ruins:** Mermen say they are old as the sea. This lost city was a Blackmoor fortress before the Great Rain of Fire, rumored to hold wonderful and dangerous secrets.

**Admiral's Graveyard:** Centuries ago an Ierendian admiral managed to find Pirate's Rock, but didn't really reach it as pirates and mermen led his ships to their fate among the reefs, now dotted with derelict ships.

**The Blue Wind:** Constantius and his famous ship sank here during a battle between pirates for the control of the rock. The derelict ship is rumored to hold still his treasure, and be haunted.

**North Reef:** Years ago a strong ship armed by Ierendian and Karameikan merchants to strike back at pirates sank here, where many other older derelict ships also lay.

**The Pirate's Fate:** The stories say that once a pirate wanted to secretly attack the island and kill the other captains, but his ship was sunk by monsters and he still wails under the waters on the darker nights.

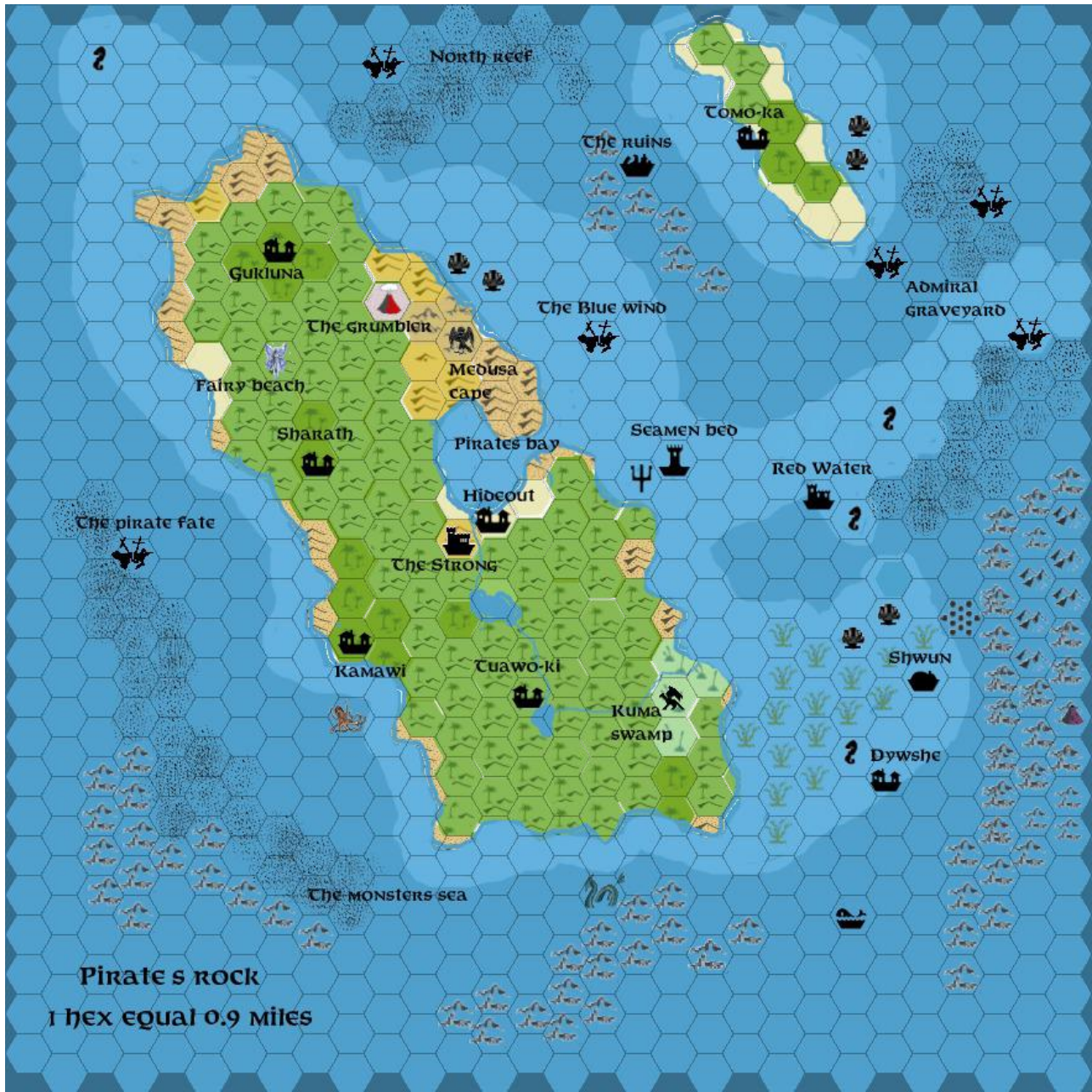
**The Monsters Sea:** This area is inhabited by the Kraken and the Dragon Turtle and their minions, see the paragraph on The Kuma Swamp for more details.

**Seamen Bed:** This tower of the Twaelar Empire has 50 mermen warriors, and it watches comings and goings, and activities of Pirate's Rock. It's so called by pirates because several ships who displeased the Empire were destroyed here.

**Red Water:** Has this name for the same reasons as above, that's the main castle of the northern border of the Twaelar Empire, 500 mermen strong plus 200 between shark-kin, tritons, sea ogres, and sea giants

**Shwun and Dwyshe:** These communities of the Twaelar Empire have 7,000 and 1,000 inhabitants, belonging to all the undersea races, and many slaves, including some former air-breathing people now turned into weresharks.

# The Three Starflowers



Map of Pirate's Rock and surrounding waters

## The Town of Hideout

At last PCs should arrive at Hideout (2 days walk from the Kuma Swamp), dominated by the fortress known as The Strong. The town is inhabited by a thousand people, half of which are usually the crew of pirate ships. The others are “civilians” who live in the town, women and children included. These people, as the crew of the ships, come from all over the Known World and beyond it, and can belong to any race. Some are slaves, some convicted criminals, some are lost children, some are unscrupulous traders, some are spies for governments or rival captains. The town has a lot of shops, inns, taverns but no law except for the historical custom, surprisingly respected by almost everyone, that all should behave well in Hideout, and not kill anyone

except in a formal duel. In the rare case in which someone doesn't respect the custom, the locals and the crews enforce it. The town even has a temple, dedicated to all immortals and never very crowded. Entering Hideout unnoticed isn't very hard, but if the PCs visit shops and inns and speak to people, or even if they just linger for some hours, spies will eventually notice that they aren't from one of the accounted crews and they'll report it to their masters (the captains, the Twaelar empire, the medusas, the aranea, and Kumatun). Once recognized as outsiders they'll not be exposed, but rather contacted by people interested in using them against an enemy (see The Ships and Characters of Hideout, below).



## The Ships in the Harbour

**The Black Octopus**, fast large vessel, attack 8, movement 7, 200 people crew, painted black and with black sails, heavily guarded, the crew on board will not reply to any question and will threaten who ask. Only thirty people are on board at any given time, the rest is around the town or inside The Strong, see below.

There is a 40% chance that each of these ships are in the harbour too:

(Names of these ships came from GAZ4 and GAZ9 and from the excellent article, "[Mystaran fleets](#)" in the Vaults of Pandius that gathered them. Also check the Pirate Lords article by Colin Wilson in issue 3 of Threshold magazine for more pirates and ships!)

**The Raging Dragon**, fast large vessel, attack 9, movement 6, 150 people crew, with a wooden dragon prow and somehow shaped like a dragon, with a crew of rakastas, phanatons and lizardmen, is rumored to be the ship that connects the inhuman races of the Thanegioth archipelago in trade and alliances. Captain Shanir (rakastan female F10) and her crew hate slavers.

**The Joyous Star**, double hulled makai ship, attack 5, movement 8, has a crew of up to 70 Thanegioth natives, Makai and Tanagoro, Captain Whaka (human male F8) and his crew hate slavers.

**The Blackbeard**, small, fast galley, attack 3, movement 8, Ierendian, Captain Koon Blackbeard (human male F12) and his crew of 50 men hate thyatians but occasionally engage in slavery.

**The Buccaneer**, a small, fast galley, attack 3, movement 8, Minrothaddan, crew of 50, Captain Sian Kevran (human male T10) hate

the Blackbeard and the Octopus, rarely engage in slavery.

**The Swashbuckler** small fast galley, attack 4, movement 7, Minrothaddan, crew of 50, Liansee Silveroak (female water elf 8) really hates and fight slavers.

**The Cutlass** large galley, attack 7, movement 6, Ierendian, crew of 120 men with two strong wizards, Captain Valen Richards (human male T14) has no loyalty to anyone but hates slavers.

**The Seabawk** large galley, attack 7, movement 6, Karameikan, crew of 130 men, Captain Yuri Kiros (human male F9) did engage in slavery in the past but has now become an enemy of slavers. Prefer to attack Karameikan and Thyatian ships but has Karameikans of Thyatian descent in the crew.

**The Sea Hag**, attack 3, movement 7, small sailing ship, Karameikan, several women in the crew of 70, rumored to be controlled by inhuman creatures with mysterious purposes, it's unclear if Captain Saira (apparently human female MU10) engages in slavery.

**The Revenge** war galley, attack 9, movement 6, Ierendian, equipped with ram, artillery, wizards and clerics, it's the most powerful pirate ship of the Sea of Dread, with 200 men. Captain Arteos the White (human male F13) hunts slavers and has tried to kill the Octopus' captain several times.

**The Renegade**, large sailing ship, attack 6, movement 6, Darokinian, captain Moana the Beardless, the Queen of the Sea (human female, T9), has a crew of 200 with many tough women, occasionally deals in slavery.

**The Barbarossa**, large sailing ship, attack 5, movement 6, Thyatian, captain Calia Barbarossa (human female F7) claims to be

the descendant of the famous explorer Rory. Her crew of 200 has women, dwarves and halflings. They are loyal Thyatians and don't oppose the empire, but do not engage in slavery.

**The Pride**, small sailing ship, attack 3, movement 7, Captain: Crommor, "The Hammer" (halfling male 7), has a mostly hin crew of 60 that opposes slavery.

**The Bounty**, small sailing ship, attack 4, movement 7, Captain Red Rory Hackskull, "The halfling as tall as a dwarf" (Halfling male 9), and his mostly hin crew of 65 oppose slavery.

**The Storm Bird**, large sailing ship, attack 5, movement 6, Captain Jalassa Longwinkle, "Jalassa of the Long Whip", (halfling female 8) and her mostly hin crew of 210 oppose slavery.

**The Bloodsail**, small sailing ship, attack 3, movement 7, Captain Mulgor Loberlinn (halfling male 9) and his hin crew of 70 oppose slavery but are ruthless with enemies. The Captain plans to retire soon.

**The Tortuga**, small sailing ship, attack 4, movement 7, Captain Pablo Silverleg (human male F10), known as the richest pirate of the seas, and his crew of 100 are from the Savage Coast, sometimes engage in slavery.

**The Thorgrim**, longship, attack 3, movement 8, Ostlander, Captain Arik Red Eye (human male F11) and his crew of 60 happily engage in slavery.

**The Sigfrygg**, longship, attack 3, movement 8, Ostlander, Captain Viktrum (human male F10) and his crew of 50 engage in slavery but really hate The Black Octopus, that have fought in the past.

**The Magnussen**, longship, attack 3, movement 8, Captain Jutrun, a Soderfjord

fugitive, hate Ostlanders but engage in slavery sometimes.

**The Audacious**, small sailing ship, attack 4, movement 7, Captain Nicola the Red Handed is a Minrothaddan female, cleric 10 of an Outer Being, with a crew of 60. She could be convinced to become an ally against the Black Octopus, if she finds it somehow convenient<sup>1</sup>.

**The Cutpurse**, small sailing ship, attack 3, movement 8. This really fast Karameikan ship with a 50 men crew and his captain Shiana (human female T12) used to be "the naval force" of the Specularum thieves guild, but recently struck a deal with the Karameikan government to spy on pirates.

**The Esperanza**, small sailing ship, attack 3, movement 8. Captain Donovan Keir (human male F8) and his crew of 60 from the Savage Coast occasionally engages in small slavery.

**The Stormrider**, large sailing ship, attack 7, movement 6, Captain Firebrand (human male W10) and his Alphantian crew of 150 has a lot of magic and engages in slavery.

**The Black Pariah**, longship, attack 5, movement 8. Captain Olev the Black (human male F7) and his 80 raiders came from Karameikos, Sind and the Northern Reaches, and they like slavery.

## Characters of Hideout

**Krun**: A big male orc, Krun is the head slaver of Hideout. Despite his fierce appearance, he's not cruel at all and has fired several overseers for sadistic behaviour. But he's not against slavery either and will report anyone he catches plotting against the town and the captains.

<sup>1</sup> See "[Depth and Destruction from the Deeps](#)" by Geoff Gander for more information

**Ian:** (NM) a boy of 14 years from Ierendi caught on a beach, Ian is a slave now “employed” as a longshoreman. If he has the chance, he’ll beg the PC’s to bring him back home to Aloysius, where he has a family desperately searching for him.

**Akakios:** (C8) A priest of Protius from Kastelios in his mid forties, he manages the little town temple for any immortal followers and provides healing if needed. Does not like slavery much but considers it an unavoidable part of life, so he’s not willing to fight it openly.

**Kai:** (T5) Her name means sea in Makai, but Kai is a 19 year old girl of fair skin and black hair who doesn’t know her origin, as she is the daughter of a famous prostitute, former owner of the local brothel. Her mother recently passed away and she owns it now, with 36 girls of different ages, almost all slaves or indentured servants, and 10 more people, mostly older women and former prostitutes, that clean and keep the house. Beautiful and delicate but as loud mouthed as the worst sailor, Kai displays wealth and happiness but doesn’t really like her life and her trade, even though it might be really hard to get her to admit it.

**Demetrio:** (W10) Owner and landlord of Demetrio’s Den, the biggest and best inn and tavern of the docks, this big man of almost fifty years is an institution in Hideout and the unofficial mayor of the town. A former experienced warrior, he also enforces the informal laws of the town if needed. Known to firmly oppose

anyone who mistreats slaves and underlings, but doesn’t oppose the institution of slavery.

**Krag Skraddle:** (T7) Arrived from Minrothad a few months ago in search of the treasures of dead pirates, Krag, who has a talking parrot named Paco, has become a sort of provider of everything on the island, through carefully cultivated relations with everyone, particularly Medusas. He also proposes treasure hunts on this and other islands. (Krag is a possible PC in XSOLO, the others listed on page 11 could also be used as characters of the island).

## The Strong

The great fortress that dominates Hideout was built originally by a forgotten culture (Nithians) and rebuilt several times by another people (Milenians) and pirate captains. It’s now a sprawling castle with a hundred rooms managed by Syvin, a strict, 35 year old woman of Darokinian origin that rules over 50 people between servants, wenches and guards. As in the past The





Strong was a prize coveted by many pirate captains and attempts to conquer it provoked much bloodshed, it was established centuries ago that each captain can apply to occupy The Strong in turn, providing they offer a feast to the others and they welcome them to hide in it, in case the island is attacked. During this month The Strong belongs to the Octopus' captain, and The Feast for the others is due in three days. Captains who hate the Octopus will not join the feast.

In the days and nights before the Feast, The Strong will be occupied by the Octopus' captain, his crew, and 1d6 other captains of the ships mentioned above (provided they do not hate him), with a few members of their crew, who have matters to discuss with him and will dine with him.

**Alaula:** (19 years, T1) Nahi's sister lives in the Strong as a servant under Syvin and could be encountered randomly in many locations. The castle's staff is treated and fed well, but must comply to almost any captain's desire, a condition Alaula suffers much, therefore she will be extremely relieved once she sees her sister and will want to leave the castle with her immediately.

### The Black Octopus Crew

**The Captain:** (Vampire, C7, M15). A former cleric of Nyx, he betrayed the goddess and joined the church of Thanatos many years ago. His true purpose beyond piracy and slavery is, eventually, to accumulate enough knowledge and magic to reach immortality himself, and become even more of a true terror of the sea in the process. He also plan to vampirize other captains to turn them into his servants. No one knows his original name, but that hasn't any magical meaning, it's just that he found it was no longer necessary. He owns a meticulous

diary that records all his life and researches and therefore also where and to whom he sold the Seagull's daughters (in Pilion, Hattias, see below).

**Morg:** (Ogre, O10). The second, and the Captain's bodyguard, Morg is a really big ogre from the Thanegioth archipelago, his bronze skin covered in tattoos. Surprisingly fluent in Thyatian, Makai and Magoro (the dialect of the archipelago), Morg is however, terrible in battle, unyielding and extremely loyal to the captain.

**Shadi:** (Minrothaddan female T11) An accomplished assassin, and former slave, Shadi however feels no sympathy toward the enslaved nor remorse toward her victims. As beautiful as she is dangerous, Shadi loves to pose as an escaped slave to stab the enemies of the crew in the back. She has a true friendship with the captain and has a strange yet working relationship with Andrei.

**Alexius:** (Thyatian male W9). The slave overseer on the ship and generally the one that looks after everything, Alexius is around forty years but looks much younger. Beautiful and charming, he's probably the most wicked and sadistic of the entire crew, and loves to inflict pain and suffering. One of his favorite pastimes is to push a slave toward a truly heinous action in exchange for freedom, only to take back his word at the last moment. Sometimes The Captain and Morg scold and punish him for unnecessary cruelty.

**Andrei:** (human male T7). The head cook and provisioner of the ship, Andrei is supposedly of Traladaran origin but has no loyalty towards his countrymen. Cross-eyed, short, bald, with a broken nose and a shorter leg, he is anything but beautiful, yet extremely agile (and therefore often employed in

difficult mission or almost impossible repairs of sails and riggings) and the chosen lover of Shadi. Andrei isn't really cruel, but worships Shadi and the Captain as gods, and would commit any crime if they order it.

**The rest of the crew:** The Black Octopus has a 200 person crew. Around 50 of them, (43 males and 7 females) are experienced (Lvl 3-8) warriors or thieves from all the Known World and beyond, that will fight for the Captain to the death or near to it (morale 10-12), as he always treated them very well. The other 100 of them (85 males and 15 females) are mostly sailors with not much experience of fighting (Lvl 1-2). They'll fight with the rest of the crew but will bolt in difficult situations (morale 6-8). The last 50 (33 males and 17 females) are former slaves, castaways, prostitutes or very young ship's boys (Lvl 0-1) who will try not to fight at all or will mount only a symbolic defence (morale 3-4). As the ship is a sort of moving village there are even two toddlers and 5 children (less than 10 years old, 2 males and 3 females). PC's should realize that only a minority of these people (20%) could be considered evil, even if almost all of them are aware of the nature and the patron of The Captain. A few of them are even known to be compassionate with slaves, but not to the point of betraying the ship by freeing them.

Only a small minority of the crew (around 5%) is truly unhappy on the ship and will escape if given the chance, but another 25% could betray the Captain if offered enough money.

In these days 15% of the crew will be guarding the ships in the harbour, 10 of them experienced warriors, 35% of them will be in Town (but will sleep at The Strong) and 50% will be inside The Strong, 30 of them experienced warriors. Night shifts of 15 experienced warriors will always be awake

during the night, as The Captain is (because he sleeps by day), reinforced by 10 resident guards of the castle.

### How the PC's can win

Besides accepting the medusas help (a course of action that would however earn the PCs the dangerous hostility of the aranea and the dragon), PCs could kill The Captain, steal his diary and/or destroy The Black Octopus in several ways. Many of the people and captains described above could help in a secret, by night attack on The Strong (an open attack is prohibited by the informal rules of the island), but the only things PCs need to do to fulfil their initial purpose is to free Aluana and read the Black Octopus' diary. If they steal the diary the Octopus will eventually be able to track it and will pursue them with his ship, if the PCs weren't able to damage it somehow. The Hope of Freedom is as fast as The Black Octopus, so he could fail to reach the PCs, depending on navigation's random events and incidents. PCs could choose to do battle, but only if they have obtained the help of other captains, otherwise it would be a suicidal choice given the superior strength in crew, artillery and hull of the Octopus.

Eventually, whenever they go, the Octopus will reach them to retrieve his precious diary. Clever PCs may also be able to negotiate with him, but remember that the final goal of the Hope of Freedom crew will be the end of the Black Octopus and the death of its captain. However, if the PCs free Aluana and look at his diary, but do not steal it, or leave it behind somewhere in Hideout, the Octopus will not bother to pursue them (he'll simply attack them if he see them, or the Hope, again somewhere). He'll pursue them if they kill one of his lieutenants mentioned above

(Morg, Shadi or Alexius, that he consider friends) or more than five people of his crew, even ship's boys.

If confronted about slavery, the Octopus will reply with utter disdain.

“Ah, do you paladines think that I'm the Evil? You do know that slavery is a lawful trade in many countries. And do you really think the nations that forbade slavery are free of exploitations? Do you really think that if you kill me today, another one will not do the same things I do, right from tomorrow, but with much more cruelty? I care about the slaves more than nature, or the Immortals, care about each living being. And why should they? A single living being is irrelevant. If you do not realize that, you're just so stupid and clueless you deserve to die.”

Surprisingly, if asked about the three girls, the Black Octopus will remember them.

“That's all? You could have asked. We sold them in Pilion, Hattias, to a merchant by the name of Batzas. That was because he had a decent reputation, the others of that batch were sold in Terentias.”

The information is completely true.

### Full attack on Pirate's Rock

If, after the adventure, the PCs involve one of the Known World fleets in a full scale attack on Pirate's Rock (Karamaikos, the Five Shires, Ierendi and Darokin would be particularly interested, as they are often victims of piracy), that could lead to a major naval battle involving also the Twaelar empire (probably allied with the pirates), maybe Thyatis and the inhabitants of the island. Anything could happen in this scenario that could provide plenty of opportunities for adventurers.

## ACT THREE

Whatever happens for now with the Octopus, the PCs and the Hope should eventually go to Pilion, Hattias, to retrieve The Three Starflowers, The Seagull's daughters. As the Hope is considered an enemy ship in Thyatis, Nahi will suggest changing/concealing the name or to dock outside the city. Random sea events could apply to this trip too, see above.

### Pilion port, Hattias, Empire of Thyatis

Pilion is an average port and a medium city of more than 10,000 inhabitants, at the mouth of the river of the same name. Weapons and similar, like wands, cannot be carried around the city, and magic cannot be cast, but knives and daggers are permitted. A calm city, Pilion has however a busy market right by the docks, where the girls, only three years old, were sold twenty years ago to a merchant named Leon Batzas.

Batzas is still alive, now over fifty, and very well known in town. His house is prominent on the market plaza and it usually has around twenty slaves of various ages (usually from babies to forty years old, sometimes older, even entire families) and 20 other people between clerks, guards, his personal slaves and his family. Forget the cliché of the fat, slimy slavers with overseers equipped with nasty whips and slaves in chains or cages, because Batzas is thin, well dressed and the very image of civility and politeness, his guards are discreet and slaves usually aren't even bound, but simply watched by the guards or kept in closed rooms. They aren't indeed displayed openly to the mob, a thing Batzas considers inappropriate, but only to motivate buyers inside the house. If PCs go to him, Batzas will offer them wine, tea or coffee and, if they tell him who they are looking for, he'll be happy to help and will go looking in his older records.

If confronted about slavery, Batzas will maintain that his trade is legal in the empire and he always did his best to treat slaves well. Also, he'll point out the <insert the PCs nation> hasn't slavery, but has several forms of serfdom that could be even worse. He'll eventually remember the little girls and explain they were indeed sold to him by shady people and, while he was almost sure that the sellers were criminals, he bought them anyway because he feared leaving them in their hands. The girls were afraid but were able to explain that they were captured with their parents, but as much as he tried, Batzas could not locate them in the city and the girls weren't able to explain from where they came. (True, as their parents were sold in Terentias, where their mother soon died of illness, while the Seagull was soon sent to Mchetos).

He decided to sell them only to childless women, hoping they would adopt them and doing his best to check their stories, as he is sadly aware that sometimes people buy children with such excuses but very different intentions. In short Batzas could very well be defined an hypocrite, but for the PCs could be difficult to label him as evil, as he is an outstanding member of the city, he does a lot of charity, freed many slaves, is esteemed by his peers and beloved by his family (wife, two sons, four daughters of which two are adopted slaves) and employees, and even his slaves speak only good of him. Killing him would obviously be seen as a heinous crime in the Thyatian Empire, one that authorities and relatives will go out of their way to punish, like sending bounty hunters after the PCs to foreign countries. That could also show PCs how much slavery becomes a grey area where it's legal.

### FINDING IRINA (IRENE)

Irina, the first daughter, according to Batzas, was sold to a rich woman of the city of Hattias in her forties, who left a name, Agathe Arendt, and an address. There is a 32 mile long road, good and safe, from Pilion to Hattias City, only 1 day walking. Hattias City has more than 30,000 inhabitants and is the major centre of the region. The locals are a bit distrustful of foreigners, but if the PCs are polite and respect the local laws they'll have no problems. The city is unwallled due to an old rebellion against the Empire, but there is a guard post on the road where visitors must leave their weapons and armor, including knives, wands and even spellbooks. It's also forbidden to cast any magic, except in official temples or in the small local wizard's guild. It's not impossible to sneak into the city, but guards will stop people carrying weapons

and arrest them. At the address the woman gave Batzas there is a butcher. If asked, he'll explain his family lives here for 50 years, so the woman gave a false address. The butcher has never heard the name, but Arendt is a common family name and he can point PCs to such a family. Indeed, on a nearby street lives the tailor Augustus Arendt. A friendly man, he'll immediately ask his wife and daughters if there is an Agathe among their numerous cousins and relatives, but they cannot think of any, not even among the in-laws.

The family name seems to be a dead end, but clever PCs could think of asking in local inns and taverns about notorious women named Agathe who live in the city. This way they can discover that at least two exist: one is Agathe Von Brun, wife of a famous magistrate. The other is Dame Agathe, owner of "Die Zuflucht" (The Refuge), a high class brothel. A quick inquiry near Von Brun house will prove that there isn't any Irina inside: the couple has two sons but no daughters and they never had a servant named Irina. At The Refuge however there is a 23 year old girl named Irene. If PCs ask Dame Agathe about her, she'll say she didn't buy her, but rather saved her from wandering the streets as an orphan. That's a lie, Irene, an extremely beautiful, pale, red-haired and elegant girl, is indeed Irina, one of The Seagull's daughters. Dame Agathe obviously didn't adopt her. She did keep her well fed, dressed and educated, but she also pushed her to prostitution very soon. Irene is now one of the stars of the house, adored and covered in gifts by clients, but she does not really like her life. Yet, she doesn't know anything else but the house where she grew up, and never thought to go away.

As Dame Agathe will be soon suspicious of the PCs intentions, and she has 7 well trained and

armed guards, and many friends among the authorities and the powerfults, PCs should find some clever way to speak freely with Irene in private. That's not very difficult, as she is free to, and often does, walk around the city by day, alone or with other girls. To prove she is The Seagull's daughter, Nahi will show Irene his diary.

### **The Seagull's Diary**

An old, worn out leather book with many pages, the diary not only describes in detail all the voyages and missions of The Seagull and The Hope, all the allies, the enemies and the lost members of the crew, but also all the details he could remember about his wife and daughters.

It's obvious that this section of the diary was compiled painfully and maniacally by him for years, as he tried to remember, with many corrections, and describe all the minute details of the family he lost. How each child smiled, the first words each one said, the hue of their hair, many good sketches of them, down to a map of the birthmarks of each girl. Irina indeed is described as having a small one on her left cheek, as Irene has. The section also contains three dried out starflowers and a nursery rhyme each girl will be able to remember. In fact this particular memory led all three of them to become very good singers (bards).

### **Irene's reaction**

Irene will be incredulous at first but eventually she will accept reading the diary, and then she'll be devastated. She'll leave The Refuge immediately, not even taking clothes, to hide anonymously with the diary in an inn by the outskirts of the city. Nahi will leave the diary with her, but Irene, even if offered, will refuse hospitality at the PCs inn and

disappear for two days. In the meantime, Dame Agathe will be worried and angry. She'll track the PCs and will ask them about Irene. She'll not be satisfied by any answer and will send authorities to search for them, will be present at the search and will ask for their arrest. If PCs remain calm, the guards will not arrest them, but they will post a hidden guard to follow them.

Now the PCs should try to retrieve their possessions, leave the city with Irene and reach The Hope in Pilion's port as fast as they can. After the two days alone, she'll be eager to escape and start a whole new life. Irene is still technically a slave, so she'll be labeled a fugitive, and risk several lashes if caught, at the very least. The Empire is well known to go out of its way to retrieve fugitives, as they're considered to be harmful to social order.

### FINDING Dara (Clara)

Dara, the second daughter, was sold by Batzas to the Korbhild, a rich Hattian family that lives in Port Hatti. The Hope could reach the city, but now the ship will be even more likely to have been reported to port authorities throughout the Empire, so Nahi herself will suggest docking at some distance.

Port Hatti has more than 10,000 inhabitants, roughly like Pilion, but it has more traffic as is well connected with Hattias City and just in front of Thyatis City, on the other side of the sea channel known as Vanya's Girdle. As in Pilion, daggers and staffs are the only weapons people can openly carry in the streets.

The Korbhild are well known in the city and any passerby could point PCs to their big mansion in a hilly district. Servants of the house, and guards, will however chase PCs away, obviously disgusted by their foreigners

looks, and will not answer any question. They'll have to use stealth.

Dara lives inside but is now called Clara. She is very similar to Irene and can be easily recognized. Once a day, in the morning, she goes to the market with Ymir, a tall blonde slave from the Northern Reaches, and Karin, an older free woman, head cook of the house. Karin however cannot be bribed and will send away anyone approaching Clara. Ymir is very strong but has no weapons. The easiest thing to do would be to kidnap Clara, and Irene will insist the PCs do that, but they could try a different approach, like slipping her a note explaining the story.

### Clara's reaction

However Clara gets to know her story, she'll be initially as incredulous as Irene was, yet she'll believe if she reads The Seagull diary (because a birthmark she has on the thigh is described and she also vaguely remembers a red haired woman, her mother). Clara however doesn't want to leave. She is in love with Julius Korbhild, the younger heir of the house, and they have had a secret relationship for seven years. Julius has promised to free and marry her, or escape with her if his parents do not consent.

Irene will insist on taking her away nevertheless, she'll do her best to convince the PCs and if they still do not want to, she'll even try to seduce one she thinks is the leader to take him to her side. She'll maintain stubbornly that the one Clara thinks is her lover is just her master, taking advantage of her naivety.

Unfortunately, Irene is completely right. In a year, Julius will marry a noble girl, and plans are already in motion. He just wants to keep Clara as a servant and mistress. The problem

is, once Clara discovers that, she'll not escape or give up, but will insist that Julius marry her, to the point of appealing to Jon and Silvia, Julius' parents. The couple has always treated Clara almost as a daughter, but she is indeed too candid. The two are Storm Soldier sympathizers and will have her secretly killed rather than see their son mix their blood with a slave.

PCs should find a way to open Clara's eyes, because if they bring her away by force, she'll run away at the first chance she gets (The Korbhild will not search for her too much, as she's only a slave to them, but will report her as a fugitive to the authorities). In the end Clara will be devastated to realize that Julius and his parents do not really care about her, and it will take many months for her to overcome the delusion. Irene will try to comfort her newfound sister as best as she can while Clara struggles with depression.

### **FINDING LILYANA (Lidia/Lucianna)**

Lilyana, the third sister, was sold to Corelius Antinoe, a well known mediator from Thyatis City who purchased her for an undisclosed buyer. Batzas accepted that only because he received several official assurances and recommendations about the unknown buyer from his friend Corelius and from the highest magistrates of Pilon. Indeed the mediator bought Lilyana for one of the most important families of the Empire, and they adopted her as their own daughter, never telling her the truth. As the adoptive mother of Lilyana was red-haired too, she could easily pass as the natural mother, and no one ever disputed that. As she also feigned pregnancy, only she, her husband, a trusted maidservant and the mediator knew the truth. Since then all these

four people have died, and the secret died with them, until now.

Marcus Antinoe, son of Corelius, lives in one of the best districts of Thyatis City and does the same work his father did. The truth PCs are searching for is buried in his old archives. Marcus will not grant access to them, for any reason, unless there is the written order of a magistrate (hard for PC's to obtain, but could be done with an handsome bribe). Marcus himself will not accept any bribe, either, but he can be blackmailed, as he has several night vices (masochism and drugs) he doesn't want the world to know. A third way could be to break into his archive, a feat a good thief could manage, as Marcus' archive has good locks and even one trap, but no magical alarms. Either way the archive just says Lilyana was sold to a woman that signed the deal as Costantina Teklanis. She, now deceased, was the trusted maidservant of a very important family, and her name can be traced to them in public state archives. Now it is up to the DM to decide the true identity of Lilyana:

#### **Lilyana as Lucianna Torion**

Lucianna, wife of the emperor Eusebius Torion, and empress from 1012 AC, was officially born in 975 AC, married in 993 AC and has two sons, Coltius and Gabrionus, born in 994 and 999. If the DM has set the adventure in 1000AC Lilyana can be Lucianna, just assuming that the three girls are 25 instead of 23 years old. In 1000AC Lucianna isn't empress yet, but is the wife of the official heir to the Empire, so one of the most powerful women in Thyatis.

#### **Lilyana as Lidia**

If the DM doesn't want to use Lucianna or if he has set the adventure years after 1000AC, Lilyana could simply be Lidia, daughter of a

powerful, conservative senatorial family. If the DM wishes to add a complication and if the adventure is set after 1014AC, Lidia could be the official fiancée of Coltius, or Gabrionus, therefore making her a possible future empress.

### **Life and fate of Lidia/Lucianna and her adoptive parents**

Either way, the adoptive parents of Lilyana loved her more than the world, as their only, precious daughter, and she loved them back as well. A great tragedy struck the family around eight years ago, when Julian, Lilyana's adoptive father, an admiral of the navy, was killed fighting pirates in the Sea of Dread. The pirate that killed him was the notorious Seagull. Antonina, Lilyana's adoptive mother, a strong woman with magical abilities that was an adventurer in her youth, was devastated and could not find peace. She left her young beloved daughter (Lidia/Lucianna was around 15 years old at the time) with the only people she trusted completely, the imperial family, and armed a ship to hunt her husband's killer. Eusebius, who considered Julian and Antonina precious allies, prayed in-vain to her to wait for a full fleet to be armed, but she had fresh clues about the Seagull's location and didn't want to lose him. Eusebius sent ships after her almost immediately, but it was useless. Antonina found The Seagull first, almost sank his ship and killed half of his crew, but was ultimately defeated. Several in the crew of The Hope remember very well the battle and "the mad, fiery woman" who accused them of murder. Lidia/Lucianna was obviously devastated to lose both her beloved parents. Only the love of Eusebius/Coltius saved her from complete despair. She and her future husband made a solemn vow to eventually find and kill the damned Seagull. They tried for

eight years, and finally succeeded some days ago. A great feast is in preparation in their house to celebrate the event.

### **Lidia/Lucianna's reaction**

The simple feat to reach such a powerful woman and speak to her will be quite difficult for the PCs. Kidnapping her could be almost impossible and extremely dangerous. Depending on PC's actions or to DM's discretion, the PCs could discover the true story of Lidia/Lucianna before they speak to her. That should advise them to be very cautious, as they could very well imagine she hated The Seagull more than anyone else in the world. If they manage to contact her somehow, maybe with a letter, Lidia/Lucianna's reaction will not be good. She'll mobilize almost the whole empire to capture the PCs, and her first desire will be to have them tortured to deny what they're saying. She would also want to see the Hope's crew beheaded to the last man and woman.

But even if she manages to capture them, she'll stop just a moment before doing that, providing she is able to read The Seagull's diary (and that should happen, either if the PC's send it to her or if she simply seizes it) and she sees her sisters. In fact of the three girls, Lidia/Lucianna is the one who remembers better her natural parents, the nursery rhyme and the two sisters. She always tried to convince herself it was just a child fantasy, but now she cannot deny the truth anymore.

The truth however will strike her as a mountain of lead. Her natural father, who she didn't even fully remembered, killed her adoptive parents, whom she loved so much. It's up to the DM to decide what would be her final reaction. Will she decide to kill the



PC's and the Hope's crew because they know the truth? That action is quite unlikely because, despite all, she couldn't bear to kill her two newfound sisters, and they do know the truth too. Will she decide to use the magical resources of the Empire to erase the memories of her sisters and of the PC's? Will she decide to have the Hope's crew killed anyway? Or will she understand that slavery caused the whole tragedy and she'll begin to re-think her whole life, and become a powerful abolitionistic force within the Empire? How will her husband/lover Eusebius/Coltius react? Will he support her or this will cause a rift in the couple? Anything could happen, and PCs could be rewarded or imprisoned for some time, or even hunted by the whole might of the Thyatian Empire.

Irene, for her part, has already decided she'll fight slavery to the end of her days. She very much wishes her sisters will follow her, but she'll fight them if she has to, and certainly she would not ever forgive Lidia/Lucianna if she has the PCs or the Hope's crew killed.

Clara is now too broken-hearted to decide anything, but eventually she'll follow Irene and fight alongside her and the Hope's crew. Less willing than Irene, however, she still wishes to marry and have children one day.

Regardless of what she'll decide about the Hope's crew and the PC's, Lidia/Lucianna will however use her powers to have her sisters freed immediately and, as much as she wishes to welcome them in her house, she'll let them leave if they want, even if they'll leave as enemies.

## To My Starflowers

(Last page of The Seagull's diary)

*Sometimes it happens that slaves are treated well. Sometimes they even earn their freedom. Every night I pray, my beloved daughter, that this happened to you. I pray you are happy somewhere, and loved, not remembering me at all. If I found you so one day, I could be tempted to leave without telling you, and be relieved at last. But if you are a slave still, my beloved daughter, and your life is sad as so often is the life of a slave, please find in your heart the strength to forgive me. I did not rest one day in my search for you. I looked everywhere for you and I raged and cried every night for you.*

*I pray to find you before I die, my beloved daughter, but if I die before I find you, I pray others will rescue you for me. And if they cannot find you either, then the world be damned, the immortals be damned, I be damned and may I return as a vengeful spirit to burn the souls of those who did you harm.*

*Every night I pray, my beloved daughter, that you may one day know I loved you so much it hurts.*

*Yes, my beloved daughter, I know the world has slavery and has evil, but it also has Hope and it has you. Mostly I pray, my beloved daughters, that you are united, or will be united again one day, because if you stay together and trust each other, you'll be so much stronger than any evil.*

*Please, Never forget that.*

*Your father,  
from a faraway place and time.*

Adapting the

*Savage Tide* to

Adventure Path

by C. Richard Davies &amp; David Keyser

**FOREWORD:**

From 2006 to 2007, Paizo, the publishers of *Dragon* and *Dungeon Magazine* at the time, released the *Savage Tide* adventure path. Having had success with two previous adventure paths (a linked set of adventures forming a campaign) Paizo decided one of the cornerstones for this new adventure path would be to revisit the Isle of Dread.

This raised particular interest for *Mystara* fans, as the original adventure module *X1 The Isle of Dread*, had first introduced the lands of the D&D Known World beyond *Karameikos*, providing the basis for what would later be known as the *Mystara* setting. There was some subsequent disappointment when it was announced that Paizo would not be using *Mystara* itself, instead placing the Isle of Dread in the *Greyhawk* campaign setting.

However, Paizo did make an effort to utilize some classic monsters of *Mystara* lore, as well as stay true to the presentation of the Isle of Dread as presented in the original adventure. In the end, we *Mystara* fans got what may have been the best possible outcome. A set of twelve adventures that have compatibility with the *Mystara* setting, without being actually set there and thereby creating yet another variant version of the *Mystara* setting (such as the BECM I and 2E AD&D versions).

The *Savage Tide* AP is contained in twelve adventures and two campaign background

articles within issues #139-#150 of *Dungeon Magazine*, plus an article series called *Savage Tidings* which appeared in issues #348-#359 of *Dragon Magazine*, as well as a *Savage Tide* Players Guide to introduce players to their starting city as well as provide some customization options for starting PCs. A few additional articles related to *Savage Tide* appeared in *Dragon Magazine* in addition to *Savage Tidings*.

This article has made an effort to supplement and improve the first eight adventures in the *Savage Tide* campaign, with an eye toward incorporating *Mystara* developments as much as possible, both TSR as well as fan-based materials. The first two adventures are set in and around the base city of *Sasserine*, while the third adventure incorporates the travel from *Sasserine* to the Isle of Dread. The subsequent four adventures are set on the Isle of Dread.

Statistics are all provided for 3.5 D&D, with the intent to come as close as possible to BECM I D&D “feel” as possible. In the 3.5 stat blocks, skill numbers incorporate the allocation of skill points as well as ability score bonuses, racial score bonuses, synergy bonuses and template bonuses. Situational bonuses are not incorporated into the stat block.

## DUNGEON MAGAZINE # 139: Suggested Davania Locations

### BACKDROP: SASSERINE

The first article in Dungeon provides a backdrop containing DM information for the starting city of the Savage Tide campaign, the city of Sasserine. As it is an independent city-state dropping the city onto Mystara works well for the continent of Davania. The timeline included below is designed with that continent in mind.

Should you wish to set it in Brun, you could simply adjust the first two adventures to fit into any coastal city on that continent, the countries of Ierendi, Minrothad and even Thyatis would be good candidates. Should you set it in an already established city of Mystara, I would recommend abandoning the Sasserine background for the most part, just using those elements that are key to the first two adventures.

Sasserine is located in jungle and swamp terrain with a main walled city and surrounding developed lands covered with plantations that support the city. One candidate for the placement of Sasserine is the swamp hex on the coastline north of the Kingdom of Emerond, leaving Sasserine between Ravenscarp and Garganin. This places it only 700 miles south of the Thanegioth Archipelago which makes sense for establishment of a colony, although the third adventure will need an explanation for taking a longer roundabout route should you wish to play the adventure as is.

The second candidate is to place it in the swamp hex on the coastline just west of Yasuko Tribal Lands and seven hexes east of the town Manacapuru. This places it south of the Pearl Islands and farther east of Ravenscarp. This provides a longer route that fits better to reach the Thanegioth



Archipelago in the third adventure but isolates Sasserine more from the other city-states and empire powers on Brun.

While the timeline works for both locations, it is a better fit for the more western swamp hex. Should you choose the more eastern location, you might wish to substitute Thyatis or Alphatia for Hule as the first major power that attempted to conquer Sasserine by sea, or disregard that part of the history altogether. There would also be less trade with city-states like Kastelios and Garganin.

## Timeline

The Sasserine timeline used below is designed for kicking off the Savage Tide campaign shortly after 1021 AC on the continent of Davania. This places the start of the campaign after the last date of the published fan-made Mystaran almanacs. The Cerulean Guard in this timeline is referred to as the Crimson Guard in the Mystaran almanacs. This is to avoid confusion with the Crimson Fleet, a powerful pirate navy that serves as one of the main adversaries in the Savage Tide campaign. The Crimson Fleet was created for the Savage Tide Adventure Path and this conversion does not adapt or map the Crimson Fleet to any already established Mystaran pirates from other sources. Instead it imports the characters and strongholds of the Crimson Fleet “as is” into Mystara.

**292 AC** Sasserine Founded by Isle of Dawn colonists with some families from the Northern Reaches as well as a few small clans of gnomes.

**656 AC** Huleans launch first of many attacks, destroying Teraknian's Arch

**719 AC** Minrothad water elf ship wrecks near Sasserine

**720-740 AC** Minrothad opens up a trade route with Sasserine, Minrothad immigrants begin to trickle in to the city

**843 AC** Last attack by Hulean forces repelled

**850 AC** Hule loses contact with Garganin

**970 AC** Emperor Thincol is crowned, Thyatis launches expeditions to explore southern continent of Davania

**971 AC** Thyatis first discovers the city of Sasserine

**975 AC** Thyatis invades Sasserine and conquers it

**985 AC** Emperor Thincol begins a major expansion of the Ochalean town Wumingdou, transporting a significant population of workers, specialists and soldiers to begin a colonization campaign on Davania. A few skilled and enterprising citizens from Sasserine relocate to Wumingdou for the opportunities.

**988 AC** Thincol's campaign to conquer the Hinterlander tribes to the east of Sasserine begins with the establishment of the fortress Fire-Height. The city that grows from this initial base eventually acquires the name Ravenscarp.

**1006-1010 AC** Sasserine citizens begin rebelling more and more, leading to Thyatian curfews, crackdowns and oppression

**1007 AC** Ochalea and the Pearl Islands declare independence from Thyatis

**1010 AC** Heldannic Knights first discover Sasserine from one of their flying warships

**1011 AC** Four Heldannic flying warships provide support and assistance as Sasserine rebels against Thyatian occupying force, Thyatis troops expelled completely in a fortnight and Sasserine declares independence once again. Heldannic Knights establish an embassy within Sasserine.

**1011 AC** The Barony of Fiorenza is established by Baron Justinian Silvestro of Thyatis, approximately 120 miles west along the coastline to Ravenscarp (closer to Sasserine).

**1012 AC** First celebration of Independence Day (what will be the holiday celebrated in the second Savage Tide adventure)

**1015 AC** Thyatian representatives approach the Dawn Council seeking a trade alliance/agreement. Sasserine spies learn the Thyatian empire is at war with some sort of naval power, and the Crimson Fleet is taking advantage and pirating the trade routes between Davania and Brun. The Dawn Council rebuffs Thyatis, preferring exclusive trading with Minrothad and the Heldannic Knights, as well as the city states to the west.

**1015-1016 AC** Lavinia Vanderboren arrives in the town of Wumingdou as a young teenager to study at a prestigious academy there for the next five years.

**1016 AC** The city-state of Kastelios establishes a trade treaty with Thyatis and begins opening its trade routes with Thyatis.

**1017 AC** Thyatian Hinterlands are politically re-organized. Cittanova, further west of Fiorenza and at the cape marking the northern tip of Davania, is also acknowledged as a barony. Ravenscarp is the capital of a Thyatian exarchate equal to the large dominions in their homeland, while the colonial regions outside the exarchate (called Davania Superior) are

broken into several territories, including Thratia (the south region) and Torionensis (the northwest region closest to Sasserine).

**1017 AC** The Hinterlander tribes not subjugated by Thyatis in Thratia begin a powerful offensive to threaten Davania Superior. Sasserine and Emerond are approached by the tribes for an alliance, but are turned down. A few mercenary companies from Sasserine are hired out however to fight the Thyatians.

**1017 AC** Colonists from the city of Kastelios found a colony on the western most island of the Thanegioth Archipelago, Mykonos.

**1018 AC** The Thyatian expedition led by Julius Ambrosius discovers the ruins of an ancient city as they sail up the Black River, but are driven off by Manacapuru tribesmen.

**1018 AC** Seeing the wealth Kastelios is making, Sasserine opens a limited trade agreement with Thyatis.

**1018 AC** The Vanderborens depart Sasserine on two ships to found a colony on the Isle of Dread.

**1019 AC** The Thratians, led by an elite adventuring company called the Nightstalkers, score some significant victories. A non-standard Thyatian force, not associated with Thyatian's military legions or navy, called the Cerulean Guard is summoned to Davania to counter the Nightstalkers. The momentum shifts several times as the Cerulean Guard uses even more potent magic than the Nightstalkers, although the Nightstalkers counter once again through feints, traps, ambushes and teleportation. The final battle sees the Nightstalkers captured when two dragons and anti-teleportation magic are used. The Thratians retreat from Davania Superior.

**1019 AC** Kastelios sends representatives to

all city-states and powers in the region, warning of a new threat to the west where lizard man tribes have been uniting and expanding. Thyatis offers to join any mutual defense alliance but both Sasserine and Emerond opt for a wait and see position. Once again some mercenary companies from Sasserine depart for where coin can be earned, this time to the west.

**1019 AC** The Vanderborens conclude peaceful negotiations with the natives living on the peninsula and islands on the southeast corner of the Isle of Dread, and found the colony of Farshore on the small unoccupied island of Temute. They leave the colony to return to Sasserine to resupply, but lose one of their ships on the return journey. Further misfortunes increase the delay of their return.

**1020 AC** Rumors begin spreading of ancient ruins and hidden treasures in Ravenscarp and Sasserine. Several adventuring and mercenary companies launch expeditions to explore and loot whatever can be found close to the coastline in Manacapuru tribal lands, many do not return. Some Ochalean ogre mages make the trip and begin infiltrating Manacapuru society to make their looting ancient lore easier.

**1020-1021 AC** Lavinia Vanderboren returns to Sasserine.

**1021-1022 AC** Beginning of the Savage Tide campaign...Vanderborens are murdered and their daughter Lavinia discovers the hidden colony and makes plans to return to reinforce the colony.

**1022 AC** A small earthquake allows access to the Hidden Shrine of Tamoachan, the PCs arrive not too long after with a map pointing them to this specific shrine.

## Greyhawk Gods to Mystara Immortals Substitution Table

Most of the major religions/gods in Sasserine come from the 3.5 Players Handbook. Here is a quick suggested substitution list.

Sasserine religion/god	Mystara Immortal recommendation
Kord	Thor
Fharlanghn	Asterius
Olidammara/ St Worgar	Korotiku (or Loki)
Pelor	Ixion
Wee Jas	Hel (or Nyx)
Nerull	Thanatos
Vecna	Masauwu (or Loki)

*Table 1: Greyhawk Gods to Mystara Immortals*

The Azure Cathedral in Sasserine is primarily dedicated to Protius, but includes shrines to other Immortals important to the sea, such as the triton Immortal Polonius the Designer. St Cuthbert can be renamed to another saint who was a prominent cleric who believed in the philosophy of Law but did not become an Immortal. The clerics of that church may be 0-level clerics or may gain their spells from the domain of Law as envisioned in Mentzer's early BECMi D&D.

The Church of the Whirling Fury is dedicated to Gwynharwyf<sup>1</sup>. Incorporating Gwyharwyf as is can be done by making her a little known Immortal of the Sphere of Energy. As an alternative, should you include the water elves

<sup>1</sup> A god detailed in the v3.5 *Book of Exalted Deeds*.

of Minrothad into Sasserine you could substitute Carlitha Starbrow instead and have her be a rival to Demogorgon and his shadow pearls, seeing them as a blasphemy of her own Pearl of Power artifacts. Should you do this her church can still be only recently established in Sasserine, and open not just to elven followers but specifically to all those who have the foresight to perceive the danger of demonic influences as well as the power to stymie them.

Of all these deities, only Gwynharwyf plays a direct role in the Savage Tide AP as it is written. The rest have minor roles or background roles.

## Other Substitutions

The Scarlet Brotherhood, a villainous organization from Greyhawk, has an embassy in Sasserine due to its role in liberating Sasserine from occupation. The organization plays a supporting role in the Savage Tide AP, as either a related affiliation or ally for the PCs or as a secondary villain. To replace the SB I recommend using the Heldannic Knights, who have an embassy in Sasserine and already have significant influence on the continent of Davania.

The head of the noble Arabani family claims to have a Drow parent, for this we can substitute a shadow elf parent, as the shadowelves became widely known when they seized control of Alfheim.

This article doesn't have an official adjustment for the City Stat block, but you can use the information in the character creation section to comprise your own as needed.

## Character Creation

With the Sasserine timeline established here you now have most of the character races in

the 3.5 D&D Players Handbook available to the city.

For the first few centuries citizens of Sasserine would be those humans and gnomes that first colonized the land, along with some Hinterlanders (western location) or Yasuko (eastern location) that may have made the migration and settled in the city. The next wave of immigration would be Minrothad immigrants, with Minrothad humans, water elves, halflings and dwarves now settling in the city for the first time. The years under Thyatis rule would leave some Thyatians behind, and lastly some Heldannic Knights establishing an embassy in the city.

One change I recommend for gnomish characters is to use the Wavecrest gnome build from the Stormwrack 3.5 book rather than the default gnome build from the PHB. If you have that supplement available it will make gnomish characters of a more nautical bent and more suitable for both Sasserine and the Savage Tide AP. Instead of their racial bonus applying to locathah and sahuagin (or goblins and kobolds in the PHB for regular gnomes) have it apply to kopru and a second aquatic race of your choice. Devilfish would be one possibility, shark-kin another. These gnomes are originally from the Falun Caverns who migrated to the Isle of Dawn and are distantly related to the sea-gnomes of Deepreach<sup>2</sup>, though both groups are unaware of the each other.

For half-orcs, they come from the city-state of Garganin with its sizable humanoid population. So while uncommon in Sasserine, trade between the cities does mean half-orcs are known along the Davania coast

<sup>2</sup> Developed by Ohad Shaham in [Deepreach Gazetteer](#)

and some reside in each city-state. Should you choose the location near Yasuko Tribal Lands, instead of Garganin there may be a few half-Bogdashkan orcs living in Sasserine.

As for half-elves, they do exist on the Savage Coast but not in Alfheim or Minrothad, so as a default I would recommend they do not exist in Sasserine. However, there is no reason not to use the 3.5 PHB Half-Elf build should a player want to use it. A player could play an elf and simply use the half-elf racial traits instead of the elf racial traits, perhaps explaining it by being a Minrothad wood elf or Alfheim elf. Or you could give a human the half-elf build, possibly dropping the spell immunity and save bonus and low-light vision and picking up the extra feat for humans in exchange.

Lastly, for water elves in Sasserine, you can optionally drop the immunity to sleep that they enjoy in 3.5 D&D and instead give them the navigation direction sense<sup>3</sup>. Just make sure they get to use it during the campaign.

Although not addressed any further in this article, there would be the possibility of a small number of Emerondians (western location only), lupins, or diaboli<sup>4</sup> living in the city. With the nation of Emerond to the south, Sasserine would likely engage in some trade with the kingdom overland, and so some Emerondians (greenish-cast humans with a druidic affinity for plants and insects) could live in the city. A clan of lupins could also have migrated to the city at any time during its history and settled there. And if you run the Savage Tide campaign after 1010AC, then you

<sup>3</sup> A water elf special ability detailed in *GAZ9 The Minrothad Guilds*, p17

<sup>4</sup> v3.5 D&D rules for lupins and diaboli are found in the *Dragon Compendium*, p6-10,18-21

have the precedent of diaboli reaching Mystara and requesting permission to settle on Brun. So another group could arrive in Davania and make the same request of Sasserine.

## DUNGEON MAGAZINE #139:

### ADVENTURE #1: THERE IS NO HONOR

The first adventure is set completely within Sasserine, so once the city is dropped into Mystara, the first adventure doesn't need any changes. It even features a Mystara classic, the rhagodessa. Should you pick an already established city, it won't be hard to adjust the encounter locations to fit that city's environment. As part of a treasure cache some perfume is listed as being from Mur which is in Greyhawk, this can be changed to Minrothad.

### Expanding the Dawn Council Banquet

One common complaint about Paizo adventures is that a lot of background material is not accessible to the players as they go through the adventure. NPCs get colorful histories that the DM reads and enjoys, but in play they get cut down in three rounds of combat against PCs with barely enough time to throw out a brief insult or rejoinder.

At the end of this adventure, the PCs are invited to a banquet by the ruling oligarchy in Sasserine, the Dawn Council. This is a good time to get some of this villain background information into their hands. Having prevented a thieves' guild from taking over





*The Dawn Council Banquet*

port authority in Sasserine, an official decides the PCs could help bring to justice some other criminals that have so far eluded Sasserine's city guard. They get presented with a collection of dossiers with the suggestion that there are still bounties to be paid should any of the individuals within be found.

Here are some brief write-ups of a few NPCs that appear in subsequent Savage Tide adventures which would be known in Sasserine, plus a couple of extra characters. These can be given directly to your players.

### **The Castellan**

No real name known, and a ten year old vague description provided. This Thyatian was the commander of the occupation for the last 12 years of Thyatian rule in Sasserine, and is wanted for crimes and atrocities committed primarily during the last 5 years of his rule. He escaped when Sasserine was liberated, and has managed to avoid the notice of Sasserine's spies since then. He is likely hiding in Ravenscarp or has returned to the Thyatian homeland far to the north.

This character is an extra who is not part of the Savage Tide AP but was added purely for

flavor to emphasize recent Sasserine history. It makes sense that a few Thyatians would be wanted criminals in Sasserine after the city drove the Thyatians out.

### **Kalvessano Spumeheim**

This half-orc native from the city-state of Garganin has been seen in Sasserine. Apparently he killed three people in a brawl at a portside gambling hall in Garganin and was jailed. He escaped and is still on the run. He is not yet wanted for any crimes in Sasserine, but they have posted Garganin's bounty for him.

This character actually appeared in the Savage Tidings for Dragon Magazine Issue #350. There he is an example of a replacement character for a player, but his story was good enough to add him in as an NPC in the campaign. He could become an ally, cohort or hireling, or could just be captured and turned over to the authorities for the bounty.

### **Kigante**

No sketch or description for this man. His name has come up in a few contraband cases as well as bribes to certain guards at Sasserine's sea fort. It is believed he is a local contact for the Crimson Fleet pirates. It is likely he serves the Crimson Fleet as a local spy and smuggler.

This poor bastard doesn't even live long enough to meet the PC's, they only get to find his remains in the Bullywug Gambit in Dungeon Magazine #140. At least now they can know a little more about him.

### **Larcos Dengrin**

[When the dossiers are presented, a second official begins to question why this man is included, the first official argues that while

the case is old, there is some evidence Larcos may have returned.] Apparently Larcos, or someone who looks like him, has been recently spotted in Sasserine. Looking at his file you see that his crimes were indeed long ago, he is wanted for murder and illegal duels that occurred 70 years ago. He is a human, not an elf or dwarf, which means he is quite old and it isn't clear if the new sighting is actually him. It might also be a son or simply a passing resemblance. You note that Larcos was a respected paladin in his day before his fall from grace. He apparently got involved with some unsavory people as well as a retributive gang war which broke out in the streets of Sasserine.

This character appears in the only adventure Sasserine that was NOT part of the Savage Tide AP. This adventure and Larcos are found in *Dungeon Magazine #149*.

### Slipknot Peet

This guy's story reads like a pirate novel. He was a pirate who raided Sasserine and other coastal ports until he was captured years ago and brought to the city square in Sasserine to be hanged. As he stood on the block with the noose around his neck he defiantly spat at and cursed the assembled crowd. When he dropped through the floor an incredibly well-placed arrow shot severed the hanging rope. In the ensuing confusion Peet escaped with only one other crimson masked individual seen helping him.

Slipknot Peet has been seen only once since then, serving with the Crimson Pirates and referred to by his current moniker. A Sasserine citizen who was captured and later returned for ransom reported that Peet still wears the tattered hangman's noose around his neck, and further adorns his body with coils of

knotted rope wrapped around his arms and torso in a tangled display.

This pirate will clash with the PCs in the adventure *Tides of Dread in Dungeon Magazine #143* when they reach the colony Farshore.

## DUNGEON MAGAZINE #140:

### ADVENTURE #2: THE BULLYWUG GAMBIT

This adventure is broken up into two main parts, a pirate cove which has been overrun with the remaining savage creatures that survived a localized outbreak of the magical chaos-mutating *Savage Tide*, and a siege of the PC patron's manor which has been captured by a tribe of bullywugs led by one of the pirates that survived the aforementioned tide.

### Kraken's Cove

As the PCs arrive at this Crimson Fleet hideout, they find the place in chaos, due to an accidental magical release caused by a pair of NPCs which the PCs followed here. These NPCs had brought their own mercenary company to the cove to launch a surprise attack, but none from the mercenary company are found among the savage mutated survivors.

You can sprinkle in a few mercs turned savage amongst the savage pirates. Basically take a level 1 warrior or fighter with baseline equipment from the DMG, and then apply the savage template from the adventure. Good places to put them are on the beach area of K1, which is otherwise deserted, and in the small maze deep in the caverns, which

is area K12. As one example, I had a couple of savage mercs on the beach and replaced one of the three savage pirates in K12 with a savage merc.

Another option should a PC fall into the water is to have them menaced by a savage aquatic animal. You could take a baseline medium sized shark and then apply the savage template.

Of course be careful with any additions as the battles at the cove are quite draining for level 3 characters, adding more savage opponents is more suitable if they start the cove at level 4.

Two mutated krenshar appear in one encounter, a monster first appearing with 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Krenshar are native to Davania but

## Jarjirlok

One encounter for this adventure was cut from the publication due to lack of space. At location K7, the slave pens, the encounter was a savage mutated blackscale lizardman which had escaped its pen and is devouring another slave. Here we replace the blackscale lizardman with a Sis'thik from the Aryptian Desert. This fellow was captured by slavers and sold to the Crimson Fleet, who transported him here in anticipation of reselling him later. The stat block includes the baseline Sis'thik statistics with a level of barbarian added and then the Savage Tide template from this adventure applied. Note that AC, hitpoints and ability stats do not account for barbarian rage, which Jarjirlok will do immediately upon noticing the PCs.

<sup>a</sup> See Mystara Monstrous Compendium Appendix, p72-73 and [Jamie Baty's 3rd Edition update](#)

## Jarjirlok

CE Medium Humanoid

(Reptilian)(chaotic) CR 4

Savage Sis'thik<sup>a</sup> barbarian 1

Initiative +1, Listen +5, Spot +5

AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 18

hp 38 (3d8+1d12 +16)

Fort +7(+9 raging), Ref +2, Will +3(+5 raging)

Spd 50 ft

Attack: Bite +6 (d8+3 plus disease[DC 15])

Attack raging: Bite +8 (d8+5 plus disease[DC 17])

Full Attack: Bite +6 (d8+3 plus disease[DC 15]) and 2 claws +4 (d6+2)

Full Attack raging: Bite +8 (d8+5 plus disease[DC 17]) and 2 claws +6 (d6+4)

BAB +3, Grp +4

Str 17, Dex 12, Con 19,

Int 2, Wis 11, Cha 10

Special Actions:

Death Throes(see adventure), Disease(see adventure), Rage 1/day

Combat Gear: None

SQ: Resist acid 10, Resist fire 5, DR 5/magic, Darkvision 60ft, Ferocity(see adventure), Savage Immunities(see adventure)

Feats: Multiattack, Power Attack

Skills: Escape Artist +5, Hide +0, Jump +3(+5 raging), Intimidate +7, Listen +5, Move Silently +0, Spot +5, Survival +3

unknown in Brun. Rather than krenshar, Davanians refer to them as “skulldogs”.

## Wormfall Festival

After returning from Kraken’s Cove, the PCs find Sasserine in the midst of celebrating the Wormfall Festival, which is a tie-in to the previous adventure path Age of Worms.

For our adaptation we recommend changing the holiday to Independence Day, to celebrate Sasserine liberating itself from the only foreign power to ever conquer them, Thyatis. The historical timeline of Sasserine has the details.

During the all day celebration PCs will be nearby when a wagon made up as a parade float of a huge humanoid figure shrouded in wriggling worms starts careening downhill out of control. This is the Worm's Revenge encounter, although it is just an accident, not a malevolent attack. You can change the parade float wagon to be a replica of a Heldannic Flying Warbird. The people of Sasserine honor these warships as several of them provided aid to the citizens of Sasserine when they rebelled and threw the Thyatians out of the city.

One last note for anyone using the affiliation rules in the PHBII and the affiliations outlined in the Savage Tidings article in Dragon Magazine #348. The Dawn Council, which is the collected guilds and noble families that form the government of Sasserine, is one of the affiliations which has the power to throw a holiday. According to the PHBII rules, during any declared holiday by a government, all affiliation members of that government as well as citizens gain a +1 morale bonus to attacks, skill checks and saves. For the entire second half of the adventure, you can let all PCs who

are Sasserine citizens benefit from this as soon as they return to the city. It lets them see a benefit from an affiliation early on which otherwise takes some time to achieve as the benefits don't begin to kick in until the PCs reach the higher mid-levels.

## VANDEBOREN MANOR

For the final part of the adventure, the PCs battle bullywugs who have taken over their patron’s manor. For Mystara, change the bullywugs into Mystaran frogfolk. Keep the bullywug stats as a baseline, but rename them frogfolk and apply the following modifiers.<sup>5</sup>



### Frogfolk modifiers

Atk Options: Hop (+4 attack bonus when they jump to attack)

SQ: Alien Smile (-8 penalty when making Sense Motive checks against a frogfolk), Hop(can jump higher than its height)

Skill Modifiers: +20 bonus to Jump checks,

<sup>5</sup> Based on froglin from the v3.5 D&D *Dave Arneson's Blackmoor*, p 195

+4 bonus to Escape Artist checks, +8 bonus to Swim checks

It is unknown if these particular frogfolk which live near Sasserine have ties all the way back to the frog cult in Blackmoor, but that is a question that doesn't really need an answer. They may be able to trace back their lineage that far, or to someone much later who rediscovered the technique, possibly even an Immortal.

## DUNGEON MAGAZINE #141:

### ADVENTURE #3: THE SEA WYVERN'S WAKE

The Sea Wyvern's Wake is the third adventure in the Savage Tide series, and covers the sea journey where the PCs travel by sailing ship from Sasserine to the Isle of Dread where a secret colony was founded by the parents of the PCs wealthy patron.

### Crew and Passengers on the Sea Wyvern

There are a few detailed NPCs which accompany the PCs on the journey, as well as a number of unnamed and undetailed NPCs who are either crew for the ship or colonists for the Sasserine colony on the Isle of Dread. First the detailed NPCs need a few adjustments to fit them into Mystara.

#### Captain Amella Vankalie

Rather than prejudiced against gnomes, she hates halflings, as she is originally from Brun and her husband perished at the hands of a hin pirate crew.

#### Conrad Horst

He is posing as a cleric of Vanya.

#### Skald

He's originally from Landfall, and has no idea his old boss may well be dead as a result of the Heldannic Civil War.

#### Master Forol

Change his character race from gnome to halfling, to keep the conflict between him and Amella. He is a former Master of the Five Shires who either became a renegade or was exiled from his homeland before making his way south. He has lost most of his magical powers as a result, but he may still have a small amount of blackflame that he keeps in a wooden crate.

#### Lirith Veldirose

She is from Karameikos, the daughter of a court lord, on her Shearing.

And here are a few more NPCs you can borrow to fill out the roster of crew and passengers.

#### Sailors and Artillerists Dorent and Morlond Migter

These two dwarves (level 1 Experts) are both skilled carpenters and competent deckhands and artillerists. The brothers can be hired on to maintain man either ballistae or catapults in ship combat. Each of them wears leather armor and carries a knife and hand axe.

#### Meridan, Wynona, and Wil Vicentius

This family were Thyatian immigrants to Sasserine in the earlier years of Thyatian occupation. Meridan (level 2 Commoner) is a farmer on one of the plantations maintained outside the city itself, who seeks to build a new farm of his own at the colony of Farshore. Wynona (level 1 Commoner) is his wife, both

are age 50. Will (level 1 Commoner) is their 25 year old son and has come along to help start a new farm. They leave behind their older daughter and youngest son to maintain the portion of the plantation they already own.

## Remapping the Voyage to the Geography of Davania

The adventure as written assumes a journey of approximately 3000 miles. If you place Sasserine on the eastern coastline near Yasuko Tribal Lands, the journey along the coast to Ravenscarp and then due north until turning west to the Thanegiorth Archipelago is about the same distance. However, the western location for Sasserine means the journey is less than 700 miles if you just head due north, and still much shorter if you first travel to Ravenscarp and then turn north. So should you choose the western location and still want to play the adventure with all the suggested encounters, you need some reasons to take an indirect route. The adventure provides one, and I manufactured another.

The first reason is that Urol/Master Forol lends his expertise for the voyage and to the colony in exchange for the patron agreeing to take him to explore some ruins on the coast of Davania. This ruin is actually from C1 The Hidden Shrine of Tamoachan, and the first ten rooms are lifted from the original module and used in this adventure.

The second reason is citizens of Sasserine still don't trust the Thyatians, and knowing Thyatian spies are still in the city Lavinia (the PC patron) decides to travel greatly out of their way just to prevent the Thyatians from being tipped off about the colony. This is to avoid any danger of having the Thyatians try to claim the colony for themselves. This makes the journey from the western site about 3500 miles, which is probably a little excessive, but good enough. Once the colony can be made secure, the PCs can stop worrying about the Thyatians and take the direct route.

### Optional Encounter: Thyatian spyship

Should you wish to take the idea of Thyatian spies further, this encounter can be included. A Thyatian caravel, The Parche, begins following the Sea Wyvern soon after it passes Cittanova. It is recommended to only use this encounter if one of the PCs is the ship captain, as The Parche has no intention of seeking battle. The Thyatians are suspicious of the Blue Nixie and Sea Wyvern, and intends to shadow their journey.

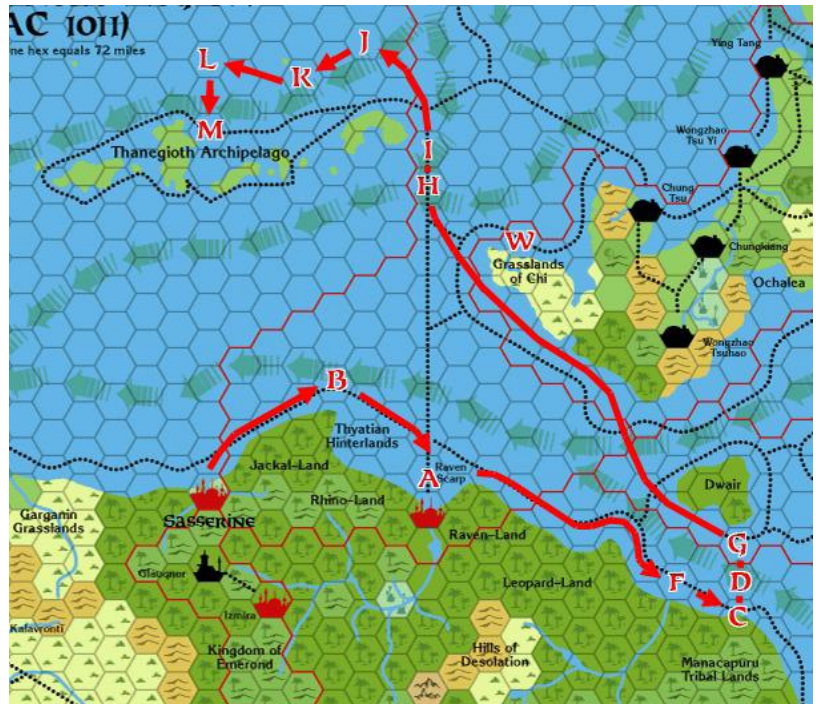
The Parche sea captain has equivalent stats to Captain Amella Vankalie. The PCs must first spot The Parche, and once they do so, make an effort to evade and escape. Should they split off from the Blue Nixie, there is a 50/50 chance they will still be pursued. A captain PC who successfully loses The Parche gains XP for defeating a CR4 encounter. The Parche may make another appearance at Ravenscarp and attempt to shadow the Sea Wyvern once again.

For the sea journey, refer to the enclosed maps, the red route offers the indirect route assuming the western Sasserine location, and the blue route offers the longer but direct route assuming the eastern Sasserine location. The letter annotations correspond to the major encounter locations as detailed in the adventure, with further conversion notes and comments provided here as well.

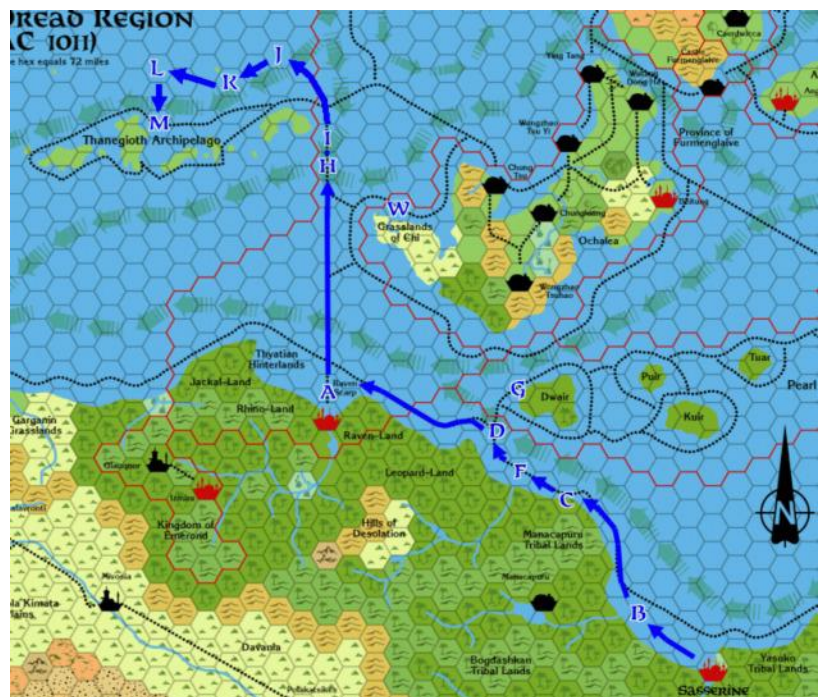
**A: Fort Blackwell**

This gets replaced by Ravenscarp, for both the red and blue route across Davania. The Hieroneous temple which Conrad Horst visits becomes the city's temple to Vanya. There are some suggested optional encounters here, but they are not stated or detailed.

One of the events at Fort Blackwell is when the fake priest Conrad gets injected with a slaad egg when he stays overnight in the Vanya temple. This is done by the Wizards of the Hopping Prophet, a sinister cult which has taken over the temple without anyone knowing. The Dungeon magazine adventure only details what happens a week later when Conrad gets sick, which is presumably at sea and long after the PCs have departed Fort Blackwell/Ravenscarp. Thus only the potential battle with the blue



Red Route



Blue Route

slaad and ways to deal with the egg are detailed. However, it is a sidequest for the Witchwarden affiliation to acquire the box and contents that Conrad delivered to the cult.

Should your PCs stay in Ravenscarp for a few days, or decide to turn around to deal with the cult, the following encounter for a battle with the cultists is designed for 6th level PCs.

First, the Hopping Prophet is a reference to the lawful evil demigod Wastri in Greyhawk. That background gets completely ditched. Instead these wizards worship whatever Frog entity that is worshiped by the Temple of the Frog during the era of Blackmoor. I am not sure if this was ever defined for Mystara. As part of this they honor and work with slaad, seeking to spread the slaad presence into the world. The slaad who is currently helping them in Ravenscarp is named Nurn, a death slaad that works as a mercenary for Demogorgon<sup>6</sup>.

Nurn has already departed Ravenscarp by the time the PCs return but they are able to catch the wizards and their frogfolk minions who have not yet fled.

The frogfolk minions are surgically enhanced by the wizards themselves, using crude techniques that leave significant scars and make them fanatically loyal to the wizards. For the baseline creature, I used the stats for a Pathfinder boggard, including their special abilities such as Sticky Tongue and Terrifying Croak, with a few additional changes noted below.

## 6 Enhanced Frogfolk

Use Pathfinder Boggard<sup>7</sup> as baseline with the following modifiers

Dexterity increases to 13.

AC, Touch AC, Initiative and Reflex saves increase by 2.

Atk Options: Hop (+4 attack bonus when they jump to attack)

SQ: Alien Smile (-8 penalty when making Sense Motive checks against a frogfolk), Hop(can jump higher than its height)

Skill Modifiers: +20 bonus to Jump checks, +4 bonus to Escape Artist checks, +8 bonus to Swim checks

The sticky tongue ability is a variation among the species of frogfolk that these particular individuals have, but the terrifying croak power is explained by surgery scars on their throats.

Six frogfolk minions guard the temple, two of which are hiding in a pool in the entrance chamber of the Vanya temple. The rest are with the two wizards deeper inside the temple, a brother-sister pair of fraternal twins named Ciermaeth Jahn and Valia Jahn. They may or may not share a telepathic link. Note that these are 30 point buy characters so adjust accordingly should you use them.

### Ciermaeth and Valia Jahn CR 6

CE Elite Human wizard 6

Initiative: +6, Listen +0, Spot +0

AC 12(16 with shield), Touch AC 12,

Flat-Footed AC 10(14 with shield)

hp 30 (6d4 +12)

Fort +4/+4, Ref +4/+6, Will +7/+5

Spd 30ft

Attack: Mwk Dagger +4(d4/19-20)

<sup>6</sup> As detailed in the v3.0 D&D adventure, *Bastion of Broken Souls*.

<sup>7</sup> as described at [D20PFRSD](#)



BAB +3, Grp +3

Str 11/10, Dex 14/15, Con 15/14, Int 17/17, Wisdom 10/10, Charisma 9/10

Combat Gear: Mwk dagger, Frog Mask of Minor Spell Storing<sup>8</sup>(contains False Life spell at CL5)

Ciermaeth's Feats: Augment Summoning, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Silent Spell, Spell Focus(Conjuration)

Valia's Feats: Improved Counterspell, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Silent Spell, Spell Mastery

Skills: Bluff +5, Concentration +9, Decipher Script +5, Diplomacy +2, Disguise +7, Intimidate +2, Knowledge(arcana) +7, Knowledge(the planes) +10, Profession(surgeon) +10, Spellcraft +7,

Level 0: Resistance, Acid Splash x 2, Disrupt Undead

Spells in Memory

Level 0: Resistance, Acid Splash x 2, Disrupt Undead

Level 1: Shield, Grease, Obscuring Mist, Enlarge Person(Valia only), Magic Missile(Ciermaeth only)

Level 2: Acid Arrow, Hideous Laughter(DC 15), Mirror Image, Summon Monster II

Level 3: Dispel Magic(Valia only), Heroism, Stinking Cloud(DC 16), Summon Monster III(Ciermaeth only)

Tactics: As soon as the twins hear something out of the ordinary, they begin casting defensive magic starting with Shield and Mirror Image. Each keeps a frogfolk near them in order to cast some augmenting spells like Enlarge Person or Heroism. When enemies get close enough they will summon more defenders and engage with offensive spells. Should things

go awry they will try to cast Obscuring Mist and escape. One twin can intuit if the other is dying and may be willing to surrender in exchange for saving the life of the other. Should one be captured and the other is not the captured twin will remain silent trusting their sibling will rescue them from prison.

There is a spellbook or two to be found in the temple of course, containing the spells already detailed for the encounter. I will note that the Savage Tide AP is actually short on spellbooks to be found, so having this encounter provide one will be of benefit to wizard PCs.

### **B: Hungry Flotsam**

#### **Red Route -**

Takes place off the cape of Davania between Sasserine and Ravenscarp, fairly close to Cittanova.

#### **Blue Route -**

Takes place at the mouth of the river that leads up to the town of Manacapuru.

### **C: Tamoachan**

Location is the same for both red and blue routes.

This is the Hidden Shrine of Tamoachan.

The magazine adventure updates the original 1st edition AD&D module for about ten of the rooms, with some changes. It has the pyramid partially collapsed leaving some chambers exposed at ground level. There is a basilisk at location 1 which is the area near the open entrances into the pyramid. At location 2 is a gibbering moulder(which is also present in the 1E version).

<sup>8</sup> See v3.5 D&D Dave Arneson's *Temple of the Frog*, p72



*The Hidden Shrine of Tamoachan*

The Manacapuru fight more or less as described in the Mystara almanac, preferring greater blowgun weapons, spears and javelins. Also included are Xipe's stats as well, which don't use the conventional Monster Manual stats but borrow some ideas from a Mike Mearls Dragon Magazine article revamping the ogre mage. Making ogre magi greatly differing in ability is in keeping with the original idea of the Rules Cyclopedia ogre spellcaster that was very rare but capable of up to a twelfth level of wizard casting ability.

#### **Manacapuru tribesman CR 2**

N Elite Human fighter 2

Initiative: +4, Listen +5, Spot +5

AC 18, Touch AC 14, Flat-Footed AC 14

hp 18 (2d10 +4)

Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +3

Spd 30ft

Attack: ranged Greater Blowgun(10 ft range increment) +6(+7 in 30ft range) (d3+poison), or

thrown Javelin +6(+7 in 30ft range) (d6+1) or melee Shortspear +3 (d6+1)

BAB +2, Grp +3

Str 13, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 10

Combat Gear: Hide Armor, Light Wooden Shield, Greater Blowgun w/poison darts,

## Manacapuru

Some Paizo fans decided to continue the conversion the magazine started and update the rest of the original adventure to D&D 3.5. It was distributed as a word document.

This Mystara conversion will make use of the fan adaptation and take its idea for the encounters used at locations 1 and 2, with further changes to bring it into line with the Mystara Almanacs which document an encounter in Davania along the Black River at an old ruin in Manacapuru territory where Manacapuru natives attack Thyatian explorers.

The fan adaptation replaces the encounters at the first two locations with the ogre mage Xipe(again from the original 1E version), leading a total of ten dominated lizardmen, six in location 1, and 4 with Xipe in location 2. The pyramid lies in a lizardfolk tribal area, but the lizardman chieftain fears the ogre mage and keeps his people away from it, as the ogre mage has magically dominated many of his best warriors. When the PCs enter the area, they will have to defeat Xipe, and the lizardfolk chieftain will have scouts keeping an eye on the battle, hoping to move in and finish off the survivors of the battle. The fan adaptation suggests having the Jade Ravens(the other NPC party employed by the PCs patron) do the fighting to keep the lizardfolk tribe at bay until the PCs finish their exploration of the pyramid.

So with all this in mind, this article has adopted the fan adaptation approach, but replaces the lizardfolk with Manacapuru tribesman.

3 javelins

Feats: Alertness, Blind-Fighting, Point Blank Shot, Exotic Weapon Proficiency(Greater Blowgun)

Skills: Intimidate +4, Jump +6, Move Silently +5, Survival +4, Tumble +7 (Note apply a -4 armor check penalty when appropriate.)

The blowgun poison requires the target to take a DC 12 Fortitude save should they take any damage from the dart. Initial damage is d6 Con points, and Secondary damage is d6 Con points once again.

Tactics: The first six Manacapuru guard the entrances at location 1. As soon as they detect the party they yell a warning and fan out to take cover behind the nearby trees and snipe at the party until forced into melee. Xipe and the remaining four warriors will arrive in two rounds after the alarm has been sounded.

### Xipe<sup>9</sup>

CE Large Giant CR 5

Ogre Mage

Initiative +6, Listen +9, Spot +9

AC 20, touch 11, flat-footed AC 18

hp 39 (6 HD)

Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +4

Space 10ft, Reach 10ft

Speed 40ft, Fly 40ft(good maneuverability)

Attack: Composite Longbow +5(2d6+5/x3) or Greatsword +9 (3d6+7/19-20)

BAB +4, Grp +13

Str 21, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 17

<sup>9</sup> Xipe's stat block conversion and tactics were originally written by Luke of the Paizo Message Boards, as part of the fan-made word document Return to the Shrine of Tamoachan.

Special Actions: Sneak attack +2d6

Combat Gear: Chain mail shirt

SQ: Fast Healing 5(regeneration), Spell Resistance 19

Feats: Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (greatsword)

Skills: Concentration +10, Disguise +10, Intimidate +10

Spell-like abilities(Caster Level 6th)

2/day - Invisibility

1/day - Charm Person(DC 14), Lightning Bolt(DC 16), Gaseous Form, Swift Invisibility(See Spell Compendium)

Deceptive Veil(Su): As per the spell disguise self, save that the ogre mage can appear to be up to one size smaller.

Flight(Su): An ogre mage can cease or resume flight as a free action. While using gaseous form it can fly at its normal speed and has perfect maneuverability.

Tactics: Xipe will start off disguised as a Manacapuru tribesman. He will attempt to line up as many enemy targets as possible for his lightning bolt. He will then use Invisibility to repeatedly fly up and drop back down into a position in the combat to make his reach, combat reflexes and sneak attack ability effective. Once he can no longer turn invisible, he fights until brought below 10hp, at which point he takes gaseous form and attempts to escape to his second floor lair (not shown on the adventure map). Should he be pursued to that chamber, he fights to the death.

Use the collected treasure already specified in Dungeon Magazine #141 from locations 1 and 2 of the Hidden Shrine of Tamoachan as the ogre mage's treasure.

### D: Brotherhood Blockade

These pirates can be anyone, whether Hattians formerly associated with the Storm Soldiers or Heldanners who have been cast out of the Heldannic Knights. They will fly either a Thyatian or Heldannic flag and claim to have a letter of marque from the Heldannic Knights to confront vessels sailing into Pearl Island waters. Whether that letter is authentic or not the players should get a bonus to their Sense Motive check to know something is wrong. Lavinia isn't expecting any blockade so there is no prior warning as mentioned in the encounter and two pirate vessels attack.

#### **Red Route –**

Takes place just outside Dwair coastal waters.

#### **Blue Route –**

Takes place just after they depart Tamoachan.

As written the blockade encounter is very easy for 5th level PCs, and it was designed that way with the idea that not every encounter should be a life and death struggle. If the PCs capture the ship you can discourage them from selling it by having potential buyers give only low-ball offers considering its poor condition. If the PCs put efforts into repairing it then it can pay dividends for them later at Farshore, but if they don't bother it can sink during one of the two storm encounters.

#### **E: Ruins of Fort Greenrock**

This encounter can be skipped. Should you wish to give them another opportunity to earn a full or partial Dawn Council affiliation point that this encounter provided, you can have the Dawn Council offer the PCs a diplomatic or spy mission in Ravenscarp.

#### **F: River Menace**

This is the encounter with the aquatic hydra, location is the same for both red and blue routes. This river is named the Black River in

the 1018 Mystaran almanac by Thyatians who explore it. As described in the almanac there is no waterfall and the river is navigable for some distance inland. Lavinia will recommend sailing both ships upriver a distance in order to collect fresh water, you can have the hydra attack at any time. The Jade Ravens can assist if this encounter is too tough as the adventure assumes the PCs will be 6th level by this time. Should the PCs find the shipwrecks underwater, the elven corpse mentioned will be a water elf from either Sasserine or Minrothad.

#### **G: Renkrue**

**Red Route** - This small hunter/gatherer village on an island becomes any one of a number of villages or settlements on the south coast of Dwair. The local Nuari are friendly and all the suggested events for Renkrue in the adventure will work well here. The Blue Nixie can disembark its people in a nearby village if you haven't developed many of the NPCs there so there isn't as much interaction with that crew.

**Blue Route** – A diversion to the Pearl Islands isn't far out of the way, so the Sea Wyvern could still stop off on Dwair. But if not, Renkrue could be on a tiny island off the north-east coast of the Leopard Land region of the Hinterlands jungle. The missionaries were cleric followers of St. Cuthbert.

In addition to the suggested Renkrue encounters, here are some other possible encounters that can happen on the Pearl Islands.

Should a PC member of the affiliation Zelkarune's Horns decide to capture something on the island with the intention of shipping it back to Sasserine for the gladiator arena, a giant draco lizard is a good

candidate and may be the only large common predator of the Pearl Islands. A good diplomacy roll can convince one or more of the locals to assist.

Should PCs decide to do some pearl diving, either on the Pearl Islands or while in the Thanegioth Archipelago, you can use these ad hoc rules to determine their success. The identify spell in 1st through 3rd edition always had a 100gp pearl as one of the spell components. 3/3.5E in particular turned up the whole magic item trade mini-game in order to keep PCs properly equipped for their level, a lot of players enjoy it including mine (much to my occasional irritation). So the identify spell gets heavily used and some players may wish to try finding their own supply.

The PCs will presumably trade any pearls not of sufficient quality to the locals in exchange for 100gp pearls. Using the trading rules found in the Darokin/Minrothad Gazetteers, you can allow a single roll on that table for trading the locals some of their pearls. For pearls, on the Pearl Islands the base modifier is -3 (meaning tends to be cheaper than list price). This would be further modified by how successful pearl diving expedition went.

Each PC that participates in pearl diving would make one Swim check followed by one Search or Survival check to see how much they found, if anything. The Swim check provides bonuses to the Search/Survival check. A DC 10 result on the Swim check provides a +2 bonus to the subsequent Search/Survival check, with an additional +2 bonus for each higher DC reached by increments of 5. So a +4 bonus to the check at DC 15, a +6 bonus at DC 20, and so on.

The Search/Survival check (player's choice) has the following modifiers in addition to the

bonus provided by the Swim check...

+2 racial bonus for water elves (this stacks with an elf's +2 bonus to Search checks)

+4 circumstance bonus for an Augury spell cast (does not stack with Divination)

+6 circumstance bonus for use of Water Breathing spells

+10 circumstance bonus for a Divination spell cast (does not stack with Augury)

A DC 20 result or higher means the PC finds enough pearls to influence the trade modifier by an additional -1. They find some low value pearls which they trade in. A DC 40 result means in addition to that they find a single 100gp pearl themselves. An additional 100gp pearl is found for every additional +20 on the DC result of the Search/Survival check.

A village like Renkrue will, of course, only have available a fixed number of pearls for trade. Divide the maximum gp limit as specified in the 3.5E DMG, around 200gp, by the final discounted price for a 100gp pearl to get the number of 100gp pearls the PCs can trade in.

#### **H: The Pearl Current**

This is the point where both routes join up for the final part of the journey, this and the rest of the geographical entries are the same location for red and blue.

This encounter can be skipped, but there have been suggestions by Mystara fans that the reason the Thanegioth Archipelago is infrequently visited is due to difficult currents to navigate as one proceeds west away from Ochalea.

#### **I: Ruja**

This is the eastern-most island of the Thanegioth Archipelago.

**J: The First Storm**

This sends the PC's ship off north into the Sea of Dread, while the Blue Nixie manages to hold to its east-south-east course. Any other ships part of the voyage also scatter, but will make their way safely to the colony unless they were already in poor shape. Here is a good spot for water elves to use their navigational sense.

**K: Journey's End**

Blown far off course, the heroes encounter this Sargasso as they sail back towards the Isle of Dread. The first caravel the PCs find, the *Rage*, is a small Thyatian warship which was part of the Thyatian armada during the Twaelar war. The last entries before the *Rage* was ensnared in the Sargasso indicate it was separated from the rest of the armada in 1016 AC.

Vine Horror stat block errata: Initiative +0, AC 18(+8 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 18, DR 5/bludgeoning

**L: The Second Storm**

This blows up soon after they get out of Journey's End. They get blown toward the coral reef to the northeast of the Isle of Dread. The PCs may spot Emraag the Dragon Turtle out enjoying the storm, an encounter with him here results in the Sea Wyvern being pushed into the coral reef. Emraag devours a sailor or two that falls into the water and departs just after bellowing above the storm in Aquan, "No tribute, no passage!"<sup>10</sup>

**M: Shipwrecked on the Isle of Dread**

They get their ship off the reef and limp toward shore...and the next adventure.

**W: Wumingdou**

This Ochalean town is an optional location to visit, the last ship harbor available to repair and restock and possibly sell any captured pirate ships. This was also Lavinia Vanderboren's home after she was sent away from Sasserine to study, so a longer stop for the sake of a side adventure can easily be added.

**MINOR ENCOUNTERS**

Most of the minor encounters don't fit well for the suggested routes along the Davania coast. I wouldn't expect independent coastal forts, only small forts found close to the different city-states. Ruins can be found along the Davania coast further east of Ravenscarp.

For the three minor encounters The Great Web, The Sacred Forest, and The Vast Burning, the best places to use those would be the Jungle of the Tiger Men along the south coast of Ochalea (Red Route), or Davania coastline close to the Yasuko Tribal Lands (Blue Route). Both have been largely unexplored by past writers, so who knows what lurks in those areas.

<sup>10</sup> Credit for the idea of this early appearance of Emraag and quote goes to Turin the Mad of the Paizo Message Boards.

## DUNGEON MAGAZINE # 114

### BACKDROP: THE ISLE OF DREAD

More than two years before the Savage Tide AP was started, Paizo published an adventure set on the Isle of Dread, along with a campaign backdrop article to support the adventure. The backdrop article served as a gazetteer for the Isle of Dread, although it was designed for Greyhawk rather than Mystara. The backdrop article itself does not contain much information that won't be found in the Savage Tide series, but there are a few additional tidbits of information including more detail on the village of Tanaroa. Here is a good location to address some general details on the Isle of Dread which are not directly addressed in the Savage Tide Adventure Path.

#### Map Fixes

There was a mistake made in X1, between the size of the Isle of Dread on the Known World map, versus the size of the Isle of Dread on the main island map which has the numbered encounter locations. The main island map used a 6 mile per hex scale which makes the Isle of Dread approximately 240 miles long and 110 miles wide. While the larger scale Known World map assumed the Isle of Dread would use a 4 mile per hex scale<sup>11</sup>, meaning the Isle of Dread would be approximately 160 miles long and 75 miles wide.

The maps used in the Savage Tide AP assume the 6 mile per hex scale. You can adjust that back to the standard Known World assumption by treating all island distances as 1/3 shorter than the AP maps and the island still is quite

<sup>11</sup> As shown on [this map of the Isle of Dread](#)

big even at the smaller scale. Or keep it at the 6 mile per hex scale and remember the Isle of Dread is significantly larger when you use larger maps such as maps of the full Thanegioth Archipelago. In the latter case the Isle of Dread is now noticeably larger and longer in the north and south direction and you can also stretch out the whole island chain a bit further east and west so that the islands keep the same distance from each other

#### Timeline

This timeline is designed to use a minimum of early history for the Thanegioth Archipelago and the Isle of Dread. This is to maximize utility and avoid conflicting with other fan materials. It does use material from the Mystaran Almanacs to document details leading up to the suggested start date of the Savage Tide campaign. The new events in the timeline follow the suggested history of the Isle of Dread in the Savage Tide campaign, namely that a human empire was established over 1300 years ago, defeated a city of aboleth soon after, and then was destroyed 1000 years ago by the unleashing of the first Savage Tide.

These time periods are very flexible, the 1000 years could easily be 900, 800 or 500 as needed, so feel free to adjust them.

**Prehistory:** Eastern Thanegioth is a single huge island at this time  
 ~7800-7200 BC Y'hog Carnifex colonize the lands which will become Thanegioth. Troglodyte servitors work plantations there.  
 ~7200-7100 BC Carnifex abandon the troglodytes and plantations, some troglodytes depart for other lands, some remain.

**2800 BC** The Otieno begin establishing themselves in the northern Sea of Dread..

**2750-2500 BC** Eokai migrate from the Davanian coast northward, some settle on Eastern Thanegioth.

**2500-2200 BC** Tangoro people migrate from Minaea to the Serpent Peninsula.

**2450 BC** Kopru migrate to Eastern Thanegioth and begin to re-establish their empire, which they call Adhuza. They begin enslaving some of the current inhabitants, including the Mawa and aranea.

**2450-1950 BC** The Mawa people slowly migrate away from Eastern Thanegioth.

**2300 BC** Adhuza, the kopru empire, is on the ascendant and near the peak of its power.

**1720-1700 BC** Kopru Empire is in steep decline, Thanegioth is now an archipelago.

**1200 BC** Tanogoro migrate east from the Serpent Peninsula, some arrive at the Eastern Thanegioth Archipelago.

**1000 BC** Nithians discover Ierendi islands and the Makai people, some Nithians may also discover Thanegioth Archipelago.

**614-603 BC** The great Thyatian, Kerendan and Hattian tribes flee Milenian aggression by embarking on ships heading north for Brun. Some end up marooned in the Thanegioth Archipelago.

**597 BC** The kopru invite the aboleth to build a city under the Isle of Dread, in exchange for aboleth assistance in helping the kopru rebuild Adhuza

**500 BC** The Nithian Empire vanishes.

**378 BC** A thriving human civilization comes into prominence in the Eastern Thanegioth Archipelago, developing architecture, magic and theology. It encompasses many of the tribes on the

archipelago including those on the Isle of Dread, with its people able to partially subdue the thunder lizards on the island. Their capital is eventually built on the central plateau of the Isle of Dread.

**350 BC** The aboleth seize control of kopru territory, enslaving and partially dominating the kopru

**304 BC** The kopru begin launching brazen open attacks on the human civilization above them, in the hopes of provoking a retaliation that will overthrow the aboleth's power.

**303 BC** War erupts between the aboleth and the human civilization, the aboleth are defeated with the deployment of Tlaloc's Tear.

**300 BC** During the exploration of the Sea of Dread, the sea-gnomes of Deepreach discover the Twaelar civilization in the southern area near Thanegioth.

**100 BC** Alphatian conquest of the Pearl Islands triggers Nuari migrations into other areas of the Sea of Dread.

**33 BC** Under instruction from Demogorgon, the kopru begin cultivating the first shadow pearl.

**8 AC** The shadow pearl is complete and placed where the humans will find it.

**12 AC** The first savage tide is unleashed by the shadow pearl, the devastation wipes out the capital, and the human civilization collapses back to Stone Age technology. Most of the survivors are on the peninsula of the Isle of Dread behind the Great Wall. Other subjects on other islands become independent and go their own way. Demogorgon's influence over the Isle of Dread is established, and only continues to increase.

**700-800 AC** A reliable sea-route from



Brun to Davania is eventually charted as part of a period of exploration by Brun nations, some mariners call it the Strait of Dread.

**832 AC** Bugbears from Hule shipwreck on the island, they soon ally with the aranea.

**850 AC** One expedition from Brun drifts off west from the Strait of Dread, but makes its way back, reporting a chain of islands rich in ivory, gold and gems.

**900 AC** Twaelar Merrow Empire established as they finish subjugating aquatic tribes in the seas surrounding the Thanegioth Archipelago.

**965 AC** Rory Barbarosa makes peaceful contact with the natives on the Isle of Dread, and maps the coastline.

**970 AC** Rory Barbarosa murdered before he can return to the archipelago, his maps and ship log are disregarded.

~**1000 AC** Barbarosa's map and ship log are rediscovered and interest in exploring the eastern Thanegioth Archipelago is kindled.

**1012 AC** The kopru receive an emissary from Demogorgon, and begin work to produce quantities of shadow pearls.

**1016 AC** The city-state of Kastelios establishes a trade treaty with Thyatis and begins opening its trade routes with Thyatis.

**1016 AC** A group of three small Thyatian war galleys establish a waystation on the easternmost island in the Thanegioth Archipelago.

**1016 AC** After a major naval battle with the Twaelar, the Thyatis armada lands at village of Mora on the Isle of Dread for recovery and resupply. Thyatis establish a military base near Mora.

**1017 AC** Twaelar attack Ravenscarp and Mora, the Mora base is badly damaged. The Twaelar soon realize the costs of the war

are too great so first an armistice is established and then a peace treaty is signed. The Twaelar recognize the Thyatian claim to the Thanegioth Archipelago. A Twaelar consulate is established at Ravenscarp and the Mora base.

**1017 AC** Colonists from the city of Kastelios found a colony on the westernmost island of the Thanegioth Archipelago, Mykonos.

**1017 AC** Thyatis begins colonizing islands on the Thanegioth Archipelago.

**1017 AC** A disturbing number of Thyatian officers go missing at the Mora base.

**1018 AC** A massive storm hits the Isle of Dread peninsula, and a great demon appears near Mora, unleashing its full fury on the Thyatian base. The demon does not manifest long, but causes great damage and loss of life. The Thyatian governor and highest ranking military officer agree to abandon the Mora base and relocate all Thyatian personnel to other islands further east on the chain.

The Twaelar also relocate their consulate to a safer island under Thyatian control.

**1018 AC** The Vanderborens depart Sasserine on two ships to found a colony on the Isle of Dread.

**1019 AC** An Ochalean trade combine sets up a colony on a previously uncharted island between the Thanegioth Archipelago and Ochalea proper.

**1019 AC** The Vanderborens conclude peaceful negotiations with the natives living on the peninsula and islands on the southeast corner of the Isle of Dread, and found the colony of Farshore on the small unoccupied island of Temute. They leave the colony to return to Sasserine to resupply, but lose one of their ships on

the return journey. Further misfortunes increase the delay of their return.

**1020 AC** Under the subtle influence of Thanatos, the Heldannic Knights establish a small colony on the jungle island due west of the Usi village.

**1021-1022 AC** Beginning of the Savage Tide campaign... Vanderborens are murdered and their daughter Lavinia discovers the hidden colony and makes plans to return to reinforce the colony.

groups, with possibly different ethnic mixes for each island or cluster of islands in the chain. On one island the Tanagoro and Oltec may have warred with each other to extinction, leaving the Makai to settle the island and preserve their identity so it mirrors that of the Makai on Ierendi. On another island the dangers may have forced Makai, Oltec, Tanagoro and others to ally and intermarry so as to survive. A few Nithians may have intermarried on the island chain and their diluted bloodline escaped Immortal notice, and some of their descendants may have been the ones to start the meteoric rise of the civilization that defeated the aboleth.

## Who are the Natives of the Isle of Dread?

This has never been officially defined, and so this conversion will only make suggestions. The Tanogoro and Makai are likely early inhabitants but the Oltec may have been even earlier human inhabitants. Ochalea is fairly close to the island chain. Traladarans and Thyatians have both crossed the Sea of Dread on their way from one continent to another, so some are invariably going to end up in the Thanegioth Archipelago. This is true for anyone crossing, and is likely the reason there are a number of small diverse groups on the island, they get shipwrecked there.

You can also use the historical timeline in the previous issue of *Threshold*<sup>12</sup>, which provides some details on the people who have inhabited the Eastern Thanegioth Archipelago. In such a case, in addition to the mix of Makai, Tanagoro and Oltec, there would also be the Eokai, Mawa and Oteino people.

So the natives of the Thanegioth Archipelago are likely a mix of a few different human

Because Paizo used the term Olman to describe the natives on Greyhawk, for simplicity this conversion uses the term Oltec. While this may not be true for all of the Thanegioth Archipelago, on the Isle of Dread on Mystara, the human civilization which rose to a great height before being brought down by the kopru has many of its cultural and technological aspects in common with the Oltecs. The natives that still live on the Isle of Dread have preserved those cultural aspects as well.

<sup>12</sup> Simone Neri, *The History of Ierendi and Minrothad*, *Threshold The Mystara Magazine* #3

## DUNGEON MAGAZINE #114

### OPTIONAL ADVENTURE: TORRENTS OF DREAD

More than two years before the Savage Tide AP was started, Paizo published an adventure set on the Isle of Dread, along with a campaign backdrop article to support the adventure. This adventure takes place on the peninsula, near the town of Mora. It features a corrupted Oltec Zombie Master in league with kopru who are unleashing a devastating magical storm on the island as they complete a ritual to summon a powerful servant of Demogorgon.

The adventure as it stands needs nothing to convert it to Mystara in terms of encounters. But should you decide to incorporate this adventure into the Savage Tide AP, here are some suggestions.

#### MONSTER ENCOUNTERS

Bullywugs appear in this adventure as dominated servants of the kopru. Once again you can use the frogfolk modifiers provided in Adventure #2. Perhaps the Temple of the Frog once had a presence on the Isle of Dread, or perhaps some of its frogfolk found a home on the island long ago.

#### Thyatians Abandon Base Near Mora

In the Mystara almanacs, Thyatis establishes a base on Mora in 1017 AC as part of their war with the Twaelar Empire. After they win, they start establishing plans to colonize the Thanegioth Archipelago. By the time of the Savage Tide AP, the Thyatians have relocated to another island in the Archipelago. The reason why is due to the kopru, but this

adventure can be used to flesh out the specifics.

The kopru grow concerned about the Thyatians, and dispatch some of their number to the peninsula. The kopru begin by dominating some Thyatian officers, but eventually use the plot of this adventure to succeed in badly damaging the Thyatian base. The demon servant summoned only manifests for a short time, but it is enough to convince the Thyatians that they must relocate before they try again.

Now with the colony of Farshore seeing increased activity, a few kopru decide to try the ritual once again.

#### Using this Adventure with the Savage Tide PCs

Should you wish to integrate this adventure into the Savage Tide AP, the ideal time is during the Tides of Dread adventure, when the PCs must explore the island and build up the colony of Farshore to protect it against the upcoming attack of the Crimson Fleet. Completing Torrents of Dread can be a way to secure Oltec help and further Oltec allies in the coming battle. However, this adventure is designed for 6<sup>th</sup> level PCs, while the PCs are expected to be 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> level while completing Tides of Dread.

Should the PCs have somehow managed to avoid being shipwrecked when they first came to the island, they will have avoided most of the fourth adventure. In such a case this adventure can help fill in and provide the necessary experience to put Tides of Dread back on track.

## Using this Adventure with the Jade Ravens

As an alternative to having the PCs complete this adventure, the players could instead dispatch the Jade Ravens, and possibly Lavinia, to complete this adventure. Should the players like the idea they can each take over an NPC to complete this adventure while their PCs are completing other tasks on the Isle of Dread. In that case you can use the Jade Ravens and Lavinia's stats from the Farshore backdrop article where they are 7<sup>th</sup> level characters.

## Using this Adventure to Document Thyatian Defeat

As a darker way to introduce the Isle of Dread, instead of playing this adventure during the time period of the Savage Tide campaign, you instead run this adventure before the campaign, or as a flashback during the campaign. You can give the players Thyatian characters to play as they try to put a stop to the kopru plan. This works best if the players themselves already have some knowledge of the Isle of Dread and know about kopru, otherwise it may not be worth spoiling them on who the kopru are. In this scenario the PCs are likely to fail and perhaps even die, feel free to stack the opposition against them. Once the adventure is over the players will have some dread and grudges against the Lords of Dread to carry over to the Savage Tide campaign.

## Substituting Thyatians for Encounters

Feel free to substitute some or all of the frogfolk warriors with Thyatian soldiers that the kopru were able to isolate and enslave. Some of those the kopru captured were elite

frogmen from the Marine Amphibious Division<sup>13</sup>.

### Thyatian Frogman CR 3

LN Human fighter 3

Init +6, Listen -1, Spot -1

AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 18

hp 25 (3d10+3)

Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +0

Spd 30ft

Attack: mwk trident +7 (1d8+2) or mwk

shortsword +6 (1d6+2) or ranged harpoon

gun +7 (1d8)

BAB +3, Grp +5

Str 15, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 12

Combat Gear: Potion of cure light wounds, flask of alchemist fire, frogsuit

SQ: Resist fire 10, Resist cold 10, Poison Gas immunity

Feats: Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Reload, Weapon Focus(harpoon gun), Weapon Focus(trident)

Skills: Climb +4, Intimidate +5, Jump +7, Swim +7, Tumble +5

Possessions: Combat Gear, Masterwork Trident, Masterwork Shortsword, Harpoon Gun, Frogsuit

The Thyatian frogmen wear a frogsuit which provides full plate protection along with fire and cold resistance as well as poisonous gases. It does not restrict movement and allows full movement underwater with no armor check penalty. The harpoon gun functions as a light crossbow and may be used without penalty underwater or in heavy rain.

A Thyatian marine has the stats above with the following modifications.

<sup>13</sup> [Thyatian Frogmen](#) are a fan creation by James Ruhland

**Thyatian Marine CR 3**

Human fighter 3

Initiative +6, Listen -1, Spot -1

AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16

hp 25 (3d10+3)

Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +0

Spd 20ft

Attack: mwk shortsword +7 (1d6+2) or heavy crossbow +7 (1d10)

BAB +3, Grp +5

Str 15, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 12

Combat Gear: Potion of cure light wounds, flask of alchemist fire

Feats: Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Reload, Weapon Focus (heavy crossbow), Weapon Focus (shortsword)

Skills: Climb +7, Intimidate +4, Jump +7, Swim +4, Tumble +5 (Note apply a -6 armor check penalty when appropriate.)

Possessions: Combat Gear, Masterwork Shortsword, Heavy Crossbow, Banded mail

hodgepodge of new races that live in small enclaves on this island who are introduced for the first time to D&D including the aranea, kopru, phanatons, and rakasta. Odd to think of all these races as making their first appearance at the very same time as D&D Known World countries like Thyatis, Glantri, Ylaruam, Rockhome.

The original X1 could be played in any number of ways, I suspect the default for many of us was first a visit to the peaceful natives on the southeastern peninsula followed by a typical mapping hex-crawl to explore the island in order to find all the major encounters and then a treasure hunt in the lost city on the central plateau of the island. One page has some alternative suggestions, but the cover artwork of X1 suggested another possible starting point..both the blue and orange covers depict a party arriving on the island from the sea only to encounter a Tyrannosaurus Rex. (Or is that an Allosaur on the blue cover?)

**DUNGEON MAGAZINE #142****ADVENTURE #4:  
HERE THERE BE  
MONSTERS**

The fourth adventure in the Savage Tide AP is the first adventure set on the Isle of Dread. Going back to review the original adventure, you can see just how much effort Paizo writers and editors made to keep their 3.5 adaptation true to the original module. The original X1 featured a sandbox campaign on an island with a Lost World theme. You have both dinosaurs and prehistoric mammals and birds featured in either fixed encounters or wandering monster tables (or both). You also get a

So this adventure in the Savage Tide AP takes that latter theme and runs with it. Shipwrecked off the coast and without support, the PCs and surviving NPCs have to hike it down the east coast of the island. First encounter on the Isle of Dread is a hungry TRex.

In preparation for this article, we went through all the fixed monster encounters and the wandering monster tables in the original X1 in order to compare the original to the monsters used in this AP. Full details of that analysis appear in the conversion notes for the next adventure where Paizo put in their own random encounter tables, but conversion notes for the planned encounters in this adventure are based on that analysis.

## Making the Journey Instead of Waiting for Rescue

You need to be prepared in case your PCs decide to sit tight on the beach and wait for rescue. It is possible through sending spells or other magic that the party is in touch with Lavinia, whose ship the Blue Nixie should be arriving or have already arrived at Farshore.

There apparently was something written up about this by the author of the adventure, but it got cut for lack of space. You can have Lavinia giving them a report of a badly damaged Blue Nixie limping into Farshore at the time they contact her, and have her ask them to try and make their way south to get closer while repairs are made. If Lavinia already knows about Emraag the Dragon Turtle, that is even more of a reason to start moving. If you use the suggestion of Emraag's appearance at the end of the last adventure, the PCs will have a reason to get out of the area to avoid the Blue Nixie suffering a similar fate as the Sea Wyvern.

## MONSTER ENCOUNTERS

The beach and jungle the PCs must enter on the way to the mountains are the hunting grounds of a monster from the 3.0 Fiend Folio called Terror Birds. Sure enough, they made an appearance in the original X1 as Phorohacos or "Sword Beak" in the wandering monster tables and in the monster appendix at the back. The PCs will likely know the name terror bird from the Isle of Dread ecology notes that they helped Lavinia recover from the Vanderboren vault in the first adventure of this AP, but for fun you have the NPC Urol Forol insist that the proper term is Sword Beak. Or maybe Axe Beak, at some point it got changed in one of the Creature Catalogs.



*Terror Bird*

Most of the remaining encounters in this adventure include appropriate monsters which showed up in X1 somewhere, whether it be from fixed locations (the gargoyles from the aerie on the vulture-head east peninsula), or wandering monster tables (you can roll up to 3 mummies appearing on Wandering Monster Table 1 from the orange X1). Of those few that aren't in the original material we have a mix of classic D&D monsters (like the black pudding) and others which appear in Mystara fan material (like the spirit naga).

So there really isn't a need to change much in this adventure, and as it stands it captures both the X1 feel and a feel of being part of Mystara. This is also true for the next three adventures all set on the Isle of Dread. Still, there is room for some changes to add in more Mystara details in a few of the encounters.

## The Lone Aranea

It was an interesting choice to make the only set encounter with aranea in the Savage Tide AP be a role-play opportunity instead of a standard fight. I am happy with the encounter itself, although I am unhappy with how

aranaea got converted to 3rd Edition D&D, something that wasn't Paizo's fault.

It was an innocent mistake, someone simply found the 2E AD&D stats for aranea in the Savage Coast Monster Appendix and updated the monster for 3E in the Monster Manual. Unfortunately what they didn't know is that the original aranea was never a shapechanger...that was specific to aranea from Herath who are native to the Savage Coast.

That idea came from Bruce Heard during his Princess Ark series, but aranea elsewhere in Mystara lacked such magic. That would include aranea living in subterranean regions bordering Shadowelf lands, the Isle of Dawn, and, of course the Isle of Dread. The non-shapeshifting aranea 2E version is in the Monstrous Compendium Mystara Appendix, but apparently that was overlooked. So this encounter has the PCs meet an aranea in human form, surrounded by spiders, who is interested in talking. They most likely won't realize she herself is a spider until she leaves.

For those who prefer any encounter with aranea on the Isle of Dread to be done in spider form only, even though that increases the likelihood your PCs will start fighting first and asking questions later, here is a version of Lithira who is a spider-only aranea. Rather than using the 3.5 Monster Manual's baseline, this uses the Pathfinder version of an aranea<sup>14</sup>, which essentially advances an aranea two extra hit dice and caster levels as a magical beast first.

I then added two more levels of sorcerer to her in order to give her access to 3rd level magic including the tongues spell. She will cast that first in order to properly communicate with PCs, to make it a little easier

to have this be a non-combat encounter as intended.

Since she is described as old, the middle and old age stat modifiers have been applied. Thus her Str, Dex and Con are at -3 and Int, Wis, and Cha are at +2. This gives her an extra +5 skill points for her 5HD and +8 skill points for the two sorcerer levels.

#### **Lithira** CR 7

N Aranea sorcerer 4

Initiative +6, Listen +7, Spot +7

AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 17 (+4 armor, +2 Dex, +3 natural)

hp 38, (5d10) + (2d4)

Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +8

Spd 40 ft, climb 20ft

Attack: Bite +8(d6-1 plus poison) or web (+8 ranged, DC 14, hp 5)

BAB +7, Grp +6

Str 8, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 16, Wis 15, Cha 18

BAB +7, Grp +6

Feats: Eschew Materials, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Weapon Finesse(bite), Improved Counterspell

Skills: Climb +13, Concentration +10, Escape Artist +7, Jump +12, Knowledge(arcana) +8, Listen +7, Spot +7

Sorcerer Spells (CL 7th)

3rd (5/day) - Hold Person(DC 17), Tongues

2nd (7/day) - Blur, Invisibility, Mirror Image

1st (7/day) - Charm Person (DC 15), Color Spray(DC 15), Mage Armor (1 already cast), Silent Image (DC 15), Sleep (DC 15)

0th (6/day) - Daze (DC 14), Detect Magic,

Flare(DC 14), Ghost Sound (DC 14), Light,

Mage Hand, Resistance

<sup>14</sup> [Aranea](http://www.d20pfsrd.com), described at www.d20pfsrd.com

The following box text can be used as they approach the clearing in the center of the ruins where the aranea and spiders are to be found. Aside: I am not sure if aranea were ever officially given a power to control or at least direct spiders and giant spiders, but that seems to always be a universal assumption by game writers that use them<sup>15</sup>.

*As you approach the center, you see a throne made of webs and bone. A spider the size of a small pony clings to the throne, its greenish-brown body extending over the back rest even as its front legs crouch in the seat. A massive odd-shaped lump is notable on its back, something you have not ever seen on a spider before. It moves its front limbs, and you realize they end in flexible digits...almost like fingers!*

A spellcraft check with a -2 penalty will tell a PC with the skill that a tongues spell is being cast.

Assuming conversation is opened, the PCs hear the aranea with the voice of an old woman. It is likely she is aware of Thyatian incursions to the island, so instead of saying "I have not seen your like in an age.", she might say, "I have not seen your like in a generation." or "40/80 seasons", instead of "generation".

Should combat begin Lithira will favor Hold Person and should she paralyze all the PCs she will start (a one-sided) conversation again, while allowing her spiders to climb all over them in order to make them sweat.

<sup>15</sup> The first time aranea were given the ability to control other spiders was in GAZ13 *The Shadow Elves*.

In addition to Lithira's spider companions, she also has a bugbear bodyguard. The original X1 had bugbears and aranea as friendly, with bugbears patrolling the ground below the aranea web lairs. Nowhere else on Mystara can bugbears be found having cordial relationships with aranea, so next is a little historical background on how bugbears came to the Isle of Dread and why they have partnered with aranea.

## Bugbears on the Isle of Dread

In the year 827 AC, a high-ranking Hulean military official returned from Davania with a calculated plan. The city of Sasserine had always been able to withstand assaults by Hulean/Garganin naval and land forces, in large part due to its defensive fortifications. But this official had observed that its plantations and farms outside the city were much more vulnerable, albeit difficult to reach due to the surrounding swamp and jungle.

For the next five years, Hule embarked on an unprecedented and extensive military training program, recruiting the most aggressive and warlike bugbears that lived in the nation. Despite this being the period of the "Long Conquest" enough gold and resources were provided such that several large companies of bugbears, nearly a thousand in total, were able to complete the program. Taking advantage of a bugbear's natural stealth, they were now trained to survive in jungle and swamp terrain, as well as guerrilla warfare tactics.

A small fleet of ships was assembled to transport these bugbears first to Garganin, and from there to the jungles near Sasserine. There the bugbears would begin launching small scale attacks on vulnerable Sasserine



targets as well as build alliances with local frogfolk. They would work to bleed Sasserine by a thousand small cuts until the next major Hulean assault on the city could be conducted.

But the meticulous plan came to nothing when the small fleet was nearly annihilated by a fierce storm as it crossed the Sea of Dread. Only three shattered ships survived, the rest lost with all hands. The remaining ships were lashed together and the survivors floated in the sea for two weeks. Eventually the human sailors were eaten, along with some of the weakest bugbears.

The ships washed ashore on the Isle of Dread. The numerous dangers of the island took a further toll on the survivors, but their training, size and abilities allowed them to persevere. Eventually the bugbears came into contact with the aranea, and soon an accord was reached. The aranea are the dominant partners in this alliance, occasionally even using the bugbears as a food source, but overall this alliance has allowed both races to prosper and survive.

The bugbears have lost most of their Hulean cultural heritage, they even allow the aranea to name their young.

#### **Thuraniran CR 5**

N Bugbear rogue 2/ranger 1  
 Initiative +1, Listen +4, Spot +4  
 AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15 (+1 Dex, +3 natural, +2 leather armor)  
 hp 39, (3d8 + 3d6 + 12)  
 Fort +5, Ref +9, Will +3  
 Spd 30ft  
 Attack Morningstar +6 melee (d8+2) or Composite Longbow +7 (d6+2Fort +5, Ref +9, Will +3)  
 BAB +4, Grp +6  
 Str 15, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 9

Special Actions: Sneak attack +1d6, trap finding, evasion, wild empathy

Combat Gear: Potion of cure light wounds

Feats: Alertness, Weapon

Focus(Longbow), Track, Iron Will

Skills: Climb +5, Disable Device +6, Hide +11, Knowledge(nature) +2, Move Silently +11, Survival +4, Listen +4, Spot +4

Favored enemy: Animals

Thuraniran was assigned to Lithira when he was a young whelp. He started as a hunter and eventually became her most trusted bodyguard. When Lithira was exiled he chose to follow her rather than abandon her, and continues to serve as her protector and companion.

Thuraniran is well-hidden thirty feet away inside the remains of a building and currently has his bow trained on the party. He will not fire unless Lithira is attacked directly. Should this happen his first shot will target a PC who is flat footed, preferably a spellcaster. He will then switch targets to any animal companions among the party before continuing to target spellcasters.

Should the party detect him while conversing with Lithira he will reluctantly emerge from his hiding spot to stand near Lithira while remaining silent.

The final major location in this adventure is a shrine dedicated to Demogorgon. A couple of encounters in that shrine will get some further treatment.

### **Fiendish Rock Baboons**

The final section of this adventure is a shrine dedicated to Demogorgon. In the shrine there

is a clan of fiendish baboons which attack as a mob, and while the Savage Tide AP mentions rock baboons elsewhere on the Isle of Dread, Paizo didn't distinguish them at all from normal baboons in the Monster Manual. So in the shrine they applied the fiendish template to the standard baboon from the Monster Manual, then made them a mob, rules for which are found in the 3.5 DMG II.

Rock baboons did feature in the original Isle of Dread, this conversion upgrades the mob of baboons to rock baboons.

Upgrading the fiendish baboons to fiendish rock baboons doesn't significantly increase the power of the mob, as mob rules make a number of stats fixed, including number of creatures(48), hit dice(30). base attack bonus(+22) and Wisdom(10). So using the 3.5 baseline stats for a rock baboon the statblock changes in the following ways...

Strength increases by 1 to 16.  
 Constitution increases by 2 to 14.  
 Fort save increases by 1 to +19.  
 Grapple increases by 1 to +37.  
 Climb increases by 1 to +11.  
 Listen increases by 1 to +5.  
 Trample now does 2d6+4 points of damage.

Everything else stays the same. You could up the 165 hit points of the mob to take into account rock baboons have an extra hit dice compared to ordinary baboons, make it say 195 or 225 hp. But be careful especially if the players have never fought a mob or swarm before as this encounter has resulted in at least one TPK for a group playing the campaign.

According to the DMG II mob rules, once the mob is taken down to 0hp the mob is broken with 60% casualties, half of those 60% dead and the other half at 0hp. That leaves about

19 fiendish rock baboons with some hit points left that could continue the fight as individuals if you are so inclined. Slap the fiendish template onto a rock baboon's 3.5 stats and you are good to go.

For anyone using BECMI/RC D&D, there is a precedent for something similar to these mob rules. A rough conversion to BECMI/RC D&D could be done as follows-<sup>16</sup>

Take this mob and break it into four squads of 11-12 rock baboons each. Each squad attacks as a HD monster of the total hit dice of all the rock baboons remaining in the squad. 11 rock baboons would attack as a 22-HD monster, for example. Assign a penalty to the to-hit roll to take into account the baboons are feral and uncoordinated. A -4 or -6 to hit would be good. A -4 to hit means that each attack by the squad has a THACO of 8, thus an attack hits AC0 on an 8 or higher.

Importantly each baboon squad has to roll a dice for their effective number of attacks each round. That die has to be the same size or smaller than the number of baboons in the squad minus the leader. So an 11 baboon squad will roll d10 for their number of attacks each round. When one baboon is killed, that squad now rolls a d8, and so on until there are no more than 4-5 baboons left in which case they fight as individuals, or split up and buttress the remaining squads.

At full strength with four squads, the baboons will be able to make roughly 22 club attacks and 22 bite attacks each round doing d6 and d3 hp of damage respectively for each hit. Assuming they hit 60% of the time, that translates to about 65hp of damage per round

<sup>16</sup> This conversion is based on the squad based combat rules introduced in *M5 Talons of Night*.

in total. This will naturally be divided up as squads split up to attack different characters. Use those numbers as a baseline and adjust according to your party's strength.

### Ilzytik the Spirit Naga

Another encounter in the shrine is Ilzytik the spirit naga. I wouldn't consider a spirit naga native to the Isle of Dread, but spirit nagas are native to Ochalea<sup>17</sup>, so let's give her a name change and some background as to how she came to the island.

Shek Xingjuan served a powerful evil spirit in Ochalea who moves among human society undetected. Serving him as his foremost assassin, Shek's skills were instrumental in building and maintaining his power. Devoted and loyal to him, she regarded her relationship as something more than just servant and master.

His last assignment for her was to put to death a sea merchant and his closest companions when they were far away from Ochalea. She stowed away on their ship and completed the murders soon after the ship arrived at the Thanegioth Archipelago. She had been told a one charge teleportation helm would then transport her back home safely, but to her shock the device did not function. She barely escaped the ship with her life, feeling rage and despair over being abandoned to fate.

She began to wander the islands, eventually making her way to the Isle of Dread, in hopes of finding new allies who could eventually help her achieve revenge. Only able to make contact with the exile Olangru so far, she bides her time hoping to achieve greater power through Demogorgon and his minions.

<sup>17</sup> See p25 of the fan-made *Gazeteer of Ochalea*, written by Giampaolo Agosta

As part of her tactics, the text of the adventure says, "Once alerted, she casts disguise self, changing her appearance to that of a zombie naga so as to trick opponents into underestimating her."

I never heard of a "zombie naga". I do know of a bone naga which is an undead type of naga. I think the author meant applying the zombie template to a naga, which technically is a "naga zombie". Considering that most PCs will not have encountered a naga before I am not sure how they are supposed to underestimate the naga zombie. But I do see this tactic being useful if she can get the PC cleric to waste a round turning undead and possibly another PC throwing something only effective against undead at her. If you are willing to stretch the spell definition a bit, she could disguise herself as a giant snake instead.

### NON-IMMORTAL, NON-EXALTED "LEAST" DEMONS/FIENDS

Although there is the small possibility of encountering dretches in the second adventure, the masters of the shrine in this adventure are the first significant demons in the Savage Tide campaign. The demons here are bar-lguras and designed to be a powerful challenge for 8th level characters. This fits with earlier editions of AD&D and how Greyhawk and the Forgotten Realms portrayed demons.

But the perspective on demons/fiends for Mystara was quite different due to the rule set, where there needed to be challenges for 30+ level characters and Immortal-level PCs. In the Master level modules there were a couple of demon Immortals that could be killed by a very high level party wielding at least one artifact. In the Immortals box set

the demons got a power boost being Immortals themselves, a major "tribe" in the Sphere of Entropy, able to go toe to toe with Immortal PCs. This put them out of reach of mortals except in the most unusual circumstances, such as the use of truenames(see the box set itself for details).

Much later, the Wrath of the Immortals box set pushed these demons down a bit to "Lesser Fiends" who are Exalted creatures, a level between Immortals and mortals. These exalted demons still have access to enough power points to gain 36th level spell-casting, however. It was possible for mortal PCs to take down an exalted lesser fiend if they won initiative and put enough damage on it before it could cast something...since their hit points weren't too high. But otherwise an Exalted demon played intelligently is likely to lead to a TPK for most mortal parties. Banning certain spells, such as timestop shenanigans, would of course dramatically change probability outcomes.

Regardless, if you look through all the products for Mystara you can find hints at the assumption that there really are hordes of lesser/least demons in the Abyss that don't even reach the level of Exalted. Mostly I would chalk that up to the built in assumptions of writers that were drawing on general D&D lore. In GAZ3<sup>18</sup>, for example, there is a beautiful wizardess who offers to marry the man who can kill the demon that scarred her face. Such a goal was presented as possible to be achieved. There are also imp familiars, who are not always referred to as Immortals.

In any case, should you adhere to the original Immortals box set cosmology or Wrath of the Immortals cosmology, or a mixture between the two, you need to figure out what you are

going to do. IMO, there certainly is room for "standard" demons that make up most of the hordes in the Abyss. This conversion goes forward with that assumption, along with the idea that some of the demons have achieved exalted status making for exceptionally powerful vrock or succubi, just to provide two examples.

Other extra-planar races like slaad(Dungeon Magazine #141 and #146) as well as a yugoloth(Dungeon Magazine #146) also make appearances, so keep that in mind for your campaign's cosmology.

## DUNGEON MAGAZINE #143:

### ADVENTURE #5: TIDES OF DREAD

This adventure begins on Farshore, the colony founded by Sasserine in the "safe" area of the Isle of Dread, that being the southeastern section where the more peaceable natives live. This adventure is the most non-linear of four set on the Isle of Dread, and closely follows the spirit of the original X1. The main goal in this adventure is to gather resources and make alliances in order to defend Farshore from attacks by the Crimson Fleet, with the major assault providing a satisfying conclusion to the adventure. To accomplish this, the PCs begin exploring the island and meeting the various inhabitants, along with plenty of wandering monsters. It is time for some serious hex-crawling, and the first few parts of this conversion will analyze the wandering monster tables in both the original X1 and this adventure.

So first let's break out X1. This being the first adventure for the Expert box set you find

<sup>18</sup> GAZ3 *The Principalities of Glantri*

plenty of references on the three wandering monster charts to creatures in the basic and expert set monster chapters, including, but not limited to, cave bears, centaurs, giant crocodiles, cyclops, dire wolves, black, green and red dragons, dryads, prehistoric elephants, ghouls, hill and stone giants, hydras, living statues, giant lizards, lizardmen, lycanthropes, mummies, neanderthals, rhagodessas, robber flies, rocs, rock baboons, giant scorpions, skeletons and zombies, giant snakes and spiders, giant toads, treants, trolls, wights and wraiths, and wyverns. That is in addition to all the dinosaurs and prehistoric mammals like the great saber-toothed cat and the megatherium (a twenty foot tall giant ground sloth).

There are a few fixed encounters featuring monsters which don't appear as wandering monsters for whatever reason...they include sea snakes, water termites, pirates, hippogriffs, gargoyles, bugbears, ogres, troglodytes, and giant crabs and oysters.

One interesting fact is that the south eastern peninsula behind the wall is covered by Table 1 which has just conventional D&D monsters. You only start to see the prehistoric creatures once you leave that area, with prehistoric mammals (Table 2) predominant in the southern areas of the island but north of the great wall, and dinosaurs (Table 3) predominant in areas north of the central river which cuts in a northeast/southwest direction across the island and central plateau. There isn't much in the way of explanation for how they tend to stay segregated like that. Triceratops do appear in both tables, and even on the central plateau (!) although the central plateau encounter tables for this AP do not appear until Dungeon #145.

The Savage Tide AP shifts the encounter tables around a bit to go for a more consistent theme. This issue also begins to detail more of the history of the Isle of Dread in the Savage Tide campaign. It explains that the Isle of Dread originally did not have dinosaurs, but instead they came later, along with demons when Demogorgon's influence began to sway heavily over the island. Many of the local fauna were wiped out by this invasion, but a few species persisted, including wild boars, rock baboons and terror birds.

It then provides three wandering monster tables of its own. The first table is for the area behind the great wall, called Islands and Peninsula encounters. This covers the same area as Table 1 in X1, the "safe" part of the Isle of Dread. The second table is Aquatic encounters, which covers the seas surrounding the Isle of Dread. X1 only used fixed encounters for the sea. And third is the Mainland encounters, covering the rest of the Isle of Dread. The Mainland encounter table has separate entries for each of the major terrain types, including jungle, swamp, savannah, mountain and the interior lakes.

For the Savage Tide Isle of Dread, most of the prehistoric mammals can only be found behind the great wall (Islands and Peninsula), often as the dire form of the animal from the 3.5 Monster Manual. Only terror birds and dire bats made it onto the Mainland encounter table. Dinosaurs appear on the Mainland encounter table and in the surrounding seas Aquatic table.

With regard to the origin of dinosaurs on the island, I prefer staying true to X1 with the idea that dinosaurs have always been there and did not go extinct there as they did elsewhere in the world. One could explain

this by way of the Carnifex who preserved them or that the Immortal Ka did so.

## Island and Peninsula Encounters Table

The idea that prehistoric mammals can be found in this area and the central plateau, out of reach of the carnivorous dinosaurs, makes sense. There is one substitution suggestion and a few window dressing changes to tweak this list for Mystara.

For all the dire animals, use the Monster Manual stats for the creature but re-skin it to make it more fitting as a giant version of the creature or a prehistoric creature or even just bring back a BECMI classic.

Dire Tiger becomes a Saber-tooth Tiger (The dire tiger is CR 8, while the Frostburn book has a CR 5 Sabre-tooth Tiger.)

Dire Boars become Giant Boars<sup>19</sup>.

Dire Apes become advanced White Apes.

Dire Rats become Giant Rats.

The only creature to consider tossing out entirely is the third entry in the table, the ahuizotl. It is essentially an aquatic leucrotta. Instead you could try putting normal boars on the table, and swapping entries with the dire boars so it is more likely to encounter the normal sized boars than the giant ones.

03-08 1d8 boars

09-10 1d4 dire boars

That way the natives can have hunting be a little safer.

Another nice touch Paizo did was to give specific names to the snakes and giant spiders by using real world species rather than just

use "huge spider" or "large viper". This lets you look up the real world species for more description. The real life shrieking spider is disturbing enough, the giant one may cause some fear.

Should you want to mix in some more D&D basic giant spiders and giant lizards into this table in the spirit of the original X1, statistics are easily found on Pandius or a trusty Rules Cyclopedia.

## Aquatic Encounters Table

This one has a good mix of dangerous giant creatures as well as dinosaurs. This is consistent with the Mystaran almanacs which state aquatic dinosaurs exist around the Thanegioth Archipelago.

One suggestion is to replace the first entry in the list, which is an Octopus Tree from the Fiend Folio. Any intelligent race would want these things wiped out in any area they happen to find them. Instead you can try this encounter with members of the Twaelar Empire, the underwater empire that controls much of the area around the Thanegioth Archipelago. This encounter is based on description of Twaelar forces in conjunction with the 3.5 Monster manual, and consists of a base patrol that has gotten close to the Isle of Dread. Note that merfolk are called merrow in Mystara, and the 3.5 D&D merrow are actually called aquatic ogres in Mystara.

The merrow patrol appears on a percentile roll of 01-02 on the Aquatic Encounters table.

<sup>19</sup> Giant Boars appear in both *B10 Night's Dark Terror* and *GAZ12 The Golden Khan of Ethengar*

**Merrow Patrol Leader CR 6**

LN Elite (Merfolk) Humanoid (aquatic) bard 6  
 Initiative +2, Listen +5, Spot +2  
 AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12  
 hp 36 (6 HD)  
 Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +6  
 Spd Land 5ft, Swim 50ft  
 Attack: mwk trident +6(d8+1) or mwk heavy crossbow +7(+8 in 30 ft range) (d10/19-20)  
 BAB +4, Grp +5  
 Str 13, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 16  
 Special Actions: Bardic Music, Countersong, Fascinate, Inspire Courage +1, Inspire competence, Suggestion  
 Combat Gear: Wand of Bless, Wand of Mage Armor  
 SQ: amphibious, Bardic Knowledge +6, low-light vision  
 Feats: Dodge, Great Fortitude, Point Blank Shot  
 Skills: Balance +6, Bluff +7, Concentration +7, Hide +6, Jump +2, Listen +5, Perform(sing) +13, Sense Motive +4, Spellcraft +5(decipher scrolls +7), Spot +2, Swim +9, Tumble +7, Use Magical Device +9(for scrolls +11)  
 Bardic Spells (CL 6th)  
 2nd (3/day) - Animal Messenger, Heroism, Hypnotic Pattern  
 1st (4/day) - Cause Fear(DC 14), Charm Person (DC 14), Cure Light Wounds, Summon Monster I  
 0th (4/day) - Flare, Know Direction, Mage Hand, Message, Resistance, Summon Instrument  
 Extra Languages: Thyatian, Olman(Thanegioth Archipelago)  
 Possessions: Leather Armor, Masterwork Trident, Masterwork Heavy Crossbow

**Shock Trooper Aquatic Ogre CR 5**

N (Merrow) barbarian 2  
 Initiative +1, Listen +4, Spot +2  
 AC 18, touch 10, flat-footed 17  
 hp 70, (4d8 + 2d12 + 27)  
 Fort +11, Ref +2, Will +1(+3 raging)  
 Spd Swim 50ft  
 Attack: mwk longspear +12 (d8+9)  
 BAB +5, Grp +16  
 Str 24, Dex 12, Con 18, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 6  
 Special Actions: Rage 1/day  
 Combat Gear: Partial Carapace Armor  
 SQ: Darkvision 60 ft, low-light vision, uncanny dodge  
 Feats: Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus(longspear)  
 Skills: Intimidate +2, Listen +4, Swim +13\*, Spot +2

\*The Climb +5 ogres get is changed to Swim +5 for aquatic ogres in the Twaelar Empire, they also get the same racial bonuses for Swim as merfolk(+8 racial bonus to Swim checks and they can take 10 for a check when swimming).

10 Merrow Warriors  
 (Merfolk) hp 8, Monster Manual page 185

The Twaelar Empire does not normally send its patrols too close to the Isle of Dread, but this patrol has taken an interest in the PCs and their ship, having determined that they are not with Thyatis, which is the only nation's shipping the Twaelar have agreed not to harm after the recent 1015-1017 AC war. They are cautious as the patrol leader is a veteran from that war.

The merrow swim alongside the ship (or approach the ship if it is stationary) staying

just inside range with their heavy crossbows, with the ogre and half the merrow hidden deeper underwater. The patrol leader calls out to the captain and PCs, demanding to know their business. He then demands that they depart the area immediately, wanting their ship to either turn around and head back, or, if they are currently repairing the Sea Wyvern, to abandon the wrecked ship.

The PCs may use diplomacy, the merrow patrol leader is unfriendly. If he can be made at least friendly he will leave them in peace. If only made indifferent the patrol will not attack but will resort to other measures (see aftermath of a fight breaking out).

Should diplomacy fail to move the patrol leader at all, the entire patrol will engage except for the ogre, who will remain hidden near the patrol leader, protecting him should anyone attempt to engage the leader in melee. The entire patrol remains in the water to benefit from the improved cover (-8 to AC, +4 to Reflex saves). The merrow warriors will snipe at crew and support NPCs first rather than target the main combatants (PCs). The merrow patrol leader will have already pre-cast bless on his men and mage armor on himself, he will use his singing and magic to support his fellows.

Any merrow that gets wounded will go underwater and flee. Should any be incapacitated a fellow merrow will disengage and swim the victim to safety. Once half the patrol has fled the rest will withdraw and flee, regrouping later.

In the aftermath of hostilities, the patrol leader sends a message for reinforcements, and begins to use his patrol to shadow the PCs and attempt to drive local aquatic monsters into their path. This effectively raises the

percentage chance of an aquatic encounter from now on (from 4% to 10%). This will continue indefinitely, although there will be no encounters during any time period when the ship is at Farshore or in Gallivant Cove (Emraag's domain). This ongoing harassment only stops when one of the following conditions occurs...

- 1) The patrol observes or finds strong evidence\* the PCs have killed any kopru.
- 2) The patrol observes or finds strong evidence\* the PCs have killed any devilfish.
- 3) Emraag the Dragon Turtle is slain by the PCs. (The PCs encounter him in Issue #144.)
- 4) The PCs figure out what is going on and manage to approach the patrol and either wipe it out or re-engage with diplomacy successfully.
- 5) A Twaelar military company arrives to destroy the PCs ship. Note this company will not arrive if conditions 1-3 are satisfied, or if the merrow patrol is successfully made friendly at some point with diplomacy.

\* Strong evidence - The patrol comes across the location where kopru or devilfish were slain within three days of the PCs having been there.

For situations 1) or 2) the Twaelar decide that the PCs are enemies of their enemies and leave them alone to see how much they can weaken each other. The Twaelar may return at a later date, but likely not until after the Savage Tide AP is over.

For situation 3) the Twaelar will figure out who slew Emraag and then avoid tangling with the PCs as Emraag was greatly feared and a powerful enemy.

For situation 4) should the patrol be wiped out the chance of future aquatic encounters



will decrease back to 4%, but the Twaelar military company will still arrive at some point to destroy the PCs ship. They have an accurate description and will be able to find it.

For 5) this has the danger of turning the campaign from a focus on the kopru to fighting the Twaelar. The PCs should be able to avoid this result, so it is up to you decide how long before this military company arrives. The company should be four times the size of the patrol, with 4-6 aquatic ogres and some domesticated giant saltwater termites who are trained to adhere to a ship hull below the waterline and try to sink it.

## Mainland Encounters Table

There is no distinction between the north and south regions of the island separated by the main river, but there are separate tables for different terrain features. Dinosaurs dominate the mainland, along with a few wandering demons, but you can still find a number of classics from the original X1 as well. They even added a few monstrous plants, and while one might quibble with the presence of the red sundew and the tendriculous, it isn't a bad idea to have a few rare plants around that can worry even a tyrannosaur. The greenwise is reminiscent of the Cestian gobbler and might be a distant relative.

Other than throwing in some boars or giant boars onto the table somewhere, here are some cosmetic suggestions.

Dire bats become giant bats.

Aranea have a wizard build rather than a sorcerer build<sup>20</sup>.

Bullywugs become frogfolk.

Baboons become rock baboons<sup>21</sup>.

<sup>20</sup> A v3.5 D&D conversion for the [Aranea](#)

<sup>21</sup> A v3.5 D&D conversion for the [Rock Baboon](#)

As a complete modification, the Brotherhood scouts on the encounter table become a band of Heldannic Knight scouting the island. The stat block below modifies them from monk/clerics to fighter/clerics built in the classic style as they were presented by Bruce Heard back in Dragon Magazine. These guys are ready to hack off some dino legs or carve up some PCs with their greatswords.

### Heldannic Knight Scout CR 5

LE Elite Human fighter 2/cleric 3

Initiative +6, Listen +5, Spot +3

AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 18

hp 40 (5 HD)

Fort +8, Ref +5, Will +6

Spd 20ft

Melee mwk greatsword +10 (2d6+4)

BAB +4, Grp +8

Str 18, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 16,

Cha 9

Atk Options: Combat Reflexes, Death Touch, Smite 1/day(+4 attack, +3 damage)

Special Actions: rebuke undead 2/day(+1, 2d6+2)

Combat Gear: Mwk Greatsword, Full Plate Armor, See adventure

Spells Prepared: (CL 3rd, +8 touch, +6 ranged touch)

2nd - bull's strength, death knell, sound burst(DC 15)

1st - bane, endure elements(precaster), inflict light wounds, shield of faith

0 - cure minor wounds(2), guidance, resistance

SQ: spontaneous casting(inflict spells)

Feats: Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Weapon Focus(greatsword)

Skills: Concentration +8, Heal +4, Intimidate +3, Knowledge(religion) +6,

Listen +5, Survival +5

The map of the Isle of Dread in this issue marks the Heldannic Knight (SB) encampment on a small island not too far from Farshore. Most the knights in this encampment are followers of Thanatos. By 1020 AC Thanatos has managed to make some headway into Vanya's Heldannic Knights after earlier successfully infiltrating the Hattians.

As mentioned in the adventure these HK scouts are a vanguard searching for hidden magic and relics, and will likely only try to murder the PCs. However, a PC with the Heldannic Knight affiliation should still have a chance for a peaceful settlement.

These Heldannic Knights have been influenced by Thanatos to come to the island so he can keep a closer eye on what Demogorgon is doing. The Savage Tide isn't subtle, but Thanatos can't complain about the unleashed chaos and is aware of the distribution of shadow pearls. Still, Thanatos does suspect that Demogorgon may also be planning to use the unleashed power to score a coup and/or unseat the Entropic hierarchy. As a result, Thanatos is preparing his own contingency plans.

## INTRODUCING THE TOTEMIC DEMONSLAYER EARLIER

Paizo created a custom prestige class for the Savage Tide AP, the Totemic Demonlayer, published in Dragon Magazine #354. Unfortunately, there was a communications error between the Dungeon adventure writers and the Dragon writer who created the prestige class. The Dungeon authors were expecting a 5 level prestige class, but the Dragon author made totemic demonlayer 10 levels.

This in and of itself isn't a problem...unless a player wants to pick up all ten levels of this class by the end of the campaign. The problem is that the players are first introduced to the totemic demonlayer in Dungeon Magazine #145, by an NPC they rescue in Issue #144. Issue #145 expects the PCs to be 13th level at the start. So if you want no more than 6 or 7 levels in the class, you can leave that introduction as is.

But if a player wants to start this off at level 10 and go through all ten levels, then you should have the NPC, Jakara the totemic demonlayer meet the PCs during this adventure, as they complete quests needed to prepare the colony for the final Crimson Fleet attack. You can review the information he provides in Issue #145, and have most of his conversation occur in this adventure instead. He will not yet have the scroll tube or the stone disk to give to the PCs at this point. Also, the missionary Noltus will not have undertaken his journey to the central plateau, you can have Jakara tell him that Noltus is still seeking allies elsewhere on the island mainland, or perhaps he is searching for any sign of rakasta.

Jakara can volunteer to find Noltus in order to carry their plea for him to return to aid Farshore should they think of that, but Noltus will not be able to return in time and Jakara will have to be rescued in the next adventure.

Before Jakara departs to find Noltus once again, he teaches any PCs interested as well as the local native shamans, and the Church of the Whirling Fury, the magic of the tattoos and the prestige class.

## Undeveloped Encounter Locations

In addition to the wandering encounters, there are a number of encounter areas which get a brief sentence or two of description but nothing else, leaving DMs to develop the material as they see fit. A number of these correspond to original encounter locations in X1.

### Blackfen

The presence of frogfolk may suggest that the Temple of the Frog once established a presence on the Thanegioth Archipelago in the ancient past.

### Fireshriek Isle

For references to dire apes on the island you can use stronger, larger version of white apes, which are extinct elsewhere.

### Rat's End

While the Crimson Fleet sent one of their men to take over this pirate den, most of the pirates who live here are a mix of deserters from the Thyatian navy and criminals from Mykonos (the Kastelios colony) as well as a few refugees and criminals from various nations whose ships have visited the Thanegioth Archipelago.

### Rivenskull Caves

This is the location of the neanderthal caves from X1. The full text states...

*"several dozen caverns connected by narrow fissures, Rivenskull Cave is inhabited by five warring tribes of savage humans, throwbacks devolved from Olmans due to exposure to the mysterious primal fogs that sometimes visit the island's reaches."*

Considering the Savage Tide Isle of Dread posits an Olman empire that encompassed the entire island in the past, before dinosaurs arrived, this is a pretty good explanation for how there are neanderthals now on the island.

For Mystara though, neanderthals were presented as more benevolent with their Lawful alignment, and treated more like the demi-human races rather than as a humanoid race. They even got their own D&D class write-up back in Dragon Magazine #118.

If you wish to preserve some of that original Neanderthal feel, you can keep the warring tribes of neanderthals, but split them into two camps. A few tribes have been corrupted by the Abyssal fogs on the island, but at least two tribes have managed to avoid any demonic taint so far, and preserve the old ways.

The neanderthals, like the dinosaurs, have lived on the Isle of Dread since pre-history, managing to carve out their own small niche in their sacred caves. As the Oltec civilization came to dominate the island, they established peaceful trade with the neanderthals, but largely left them alone and segregated, only incorporating a small community of neanderthal workers in their capital city on the central plateau.

When the capital city was destroyed and the Oltec civilization fell, the neanderthals were once again cut off from any modern humans except for the occasional Oltec that would make the perilous trip beyond the great wall. But when the Abyssal fogs corrupted some neanderthals, even this limited contact ceased.

The 3.5 D&D Frostburn supplement provides the stats for Neanderthals as 1st level warriors. For any Neanderthal encounters, here is a stat block to bring them in line with the 2HD Neanderthal from the Rules Cyclopedia.

**Isle of Dread Baseline Neanderthal**

N Medium Humanoid  
 Neanderthal Warrior 2  
 Initiative +0, Listen +2, Spot +2  
 AC 13, touch 10, flat-footed 13  
 hp 18, HD 2d8+7  
 Fort +5, Ref +0, Will +0  
 Spd 30ft  
 Melee Greatclub +5 melee(d10+3) or  
 spear +2 ranged(d8+3/x3)  
 BAB +2, Grp +4  
 Str 15, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha  
 10(savage neanderthals have Cha 8)  
 SQ: +1 attack bonus with primitive  
 weapons, Climate tolerant  
 Feats: Toughness  
 Skills: Climb +4, Jump +4, Survival +4  
 Possessions: Hide Armor, Greatclub, 3  
 Spears

melee(2d8+4)  
 BAB +6, Grp +14  
 Str 19, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 12,  
 Cha 13  
 Special Actions: Rage 2/day  
 SQ: +1 attack bonus with primitive  
 weapons, Climate tolerant, Uncanny  
 Dodge, Improved Uncanny Dodge, Trap  
 Sense +2  
 Feats: Toughness, Iron Will, Power Attack  
 Skills: Climb +10(+12 raging),  
 Craft(primitive tools and weapons) +4,  
 Handle Animal +5, Intimidate +11, Jump  
 +10, Survival +7  
 Possessions: Mwk Hide Armor, Mwk  
 Greatclub, 5 Mwk Spears

For every nine neanderthals encountered, one Neanderthal will be a leader type, who is much larger.<sup>22</sup> Note that this is an exception to the 3.5 rules by keeping the neanderthal leader as a humanoid type(as opposed to giant) despite being size Large.

**Isle of Dread Leader Neanderthal**

N Large Humanoid  
 Neanderthal Barbarian 6  
 Initiative +0, Listen +1, Spot +1  
 AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13  
 hp 68, HD 6d12+21  
 Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +5(+7 raging)  
 Space 10ft, Reach 10ft  
 Spd 40ft  
 Attack: Mwk Large Greatclub +11  
 melee(2d8+4) or Large spear +7  
 ranged(2d6+4/x3)  
 Full Attack: Mwk Large Greatclub +11/+6

Neanderthals are likely to have pets, in the Frostburn accessory they keep sabre-tooth tigers as pets, in Dragon Magazine they keep white ape as pets. Should the PCs interact with more than one Neanderthal tribe the type of pets they have is one easy way to give each tribe a different personality.

**Zotzilaha's Wrath**

Zotzilaha is the Monster Ruler of firebats, an exalted but not Immortal creature of the sphere of Energy. His alignment is chaotic neutral, not chaotic evil. He was known to a few older cultures as Camazotz. The aspect should be considered a mortal identity deliberately not at full strength so as to test anyone entering his lair.

**Phanaton Village**

Should a PC openly display any spider totems or other spider symbolism while visiting with the phanaton village, the phanaton chieftain will be outraged. It will take a DC 20

<sup>22</sup> For details on neanderthal leaders, see the *D&D Rules Cyclopedia* and *Dragon Magazine* #118, p62-63.

Diplomacy check to smooth things over. The only alternative is for the offending PC to kill and eat one of the large spiders the phanatons keep as livestock. Either will mollify the chieftain and he will volunteer his warriors as explained in the adventure.

## Temple of the Jaguar

The origin story of the rakasta presented in this section is an Oltec myth. The rakasta did not originate from mutating werejaguars on the Isle of Dread, instead they are rakasta<sup>23</sup> like elsewhere on Mystara who arrived on the Isle via shipwreck. That said, the part about the origin of the skinwalkers may very well be true, what they are now may have first originated with lycanthropy.

## Reclaiming the Sea Wyvern

Like other kopru, you should consider giving Skephilipika the additional abilities of fire resistance and faster movement speeds. See the conversion notes for Dungeon #144 for more details.

## Final Battle for Farshore

The adventure assumes that the PCs battle the Crimson Fleet at Farshore two months after they first arrive at the colony. This is easily adjusted based on your campaign, but keep in mind the small fleet is traveling from the pirate headquarters at Scuttlecove. You will need to be sure the fleet has enough time to prepare, travel and stop at the north end of the Isle of Dread before making the attack on Farshore.

One of the ships has a small contingent of yuan-ti supporting the pirates. These creatures

<sup>23</sup> See *Mystara Monstrous Compendium Appendix*, p91

have some precedent on Mystara in fan works, such as the Serpentine Empire and in the *Mystaran almanacs* it is revealed there are some yuan-ti amidst the Manacapuru in Davania. If you prefer something else, then manscorpions<sup>24</sup>, devil(were)swine<sup>25</sup> or diaboli<sup>26</sup> would all make good substitutions. The yuan-ti will also appear in the eighth adventure, so you will want to make the same changes there.

Any pirates captured will eventually be willing to give up information about Scuttlecove and the Crimson Fleet when they finally realize there will be no more attempts to capture Farshore and there is no hope of rescue. This process will take weeks or months. This would be a good way to provide historical background to the players on any NPC villains the PCs are likely to face in *Dungeon Magazine #146*, such as the leader of the Crimson Fleet, Cold Captain Wyther. They can also start to hear rumors about the fleshforges of Lemoriax, which transformed Vanthus.

## Additional Crimson Fleet Captains

Only one pirate captain, Vanthus Vanderboren, commander of the fleet, is given unique statistics in the final battle. The adventure does not mention the other captains, assuming they are no different from the pirate crew stat blocks. Should you wish to distinguish these other captains, you can utilize the stat blocks for Scuttlecove thugs found in *Dungeon Magazine #146*.

<sup>24</sup> See *Rules Cyclopeda*, p191

<sup>25</sup> See *Mystara Monstrous Compendium Appendix*, p76

<sup>26</sup> See *Mystara Monstrous Compendium Appendix*, p26

Included below is an optional additional captain, Vanthus' second-in-command, a baldandar who joined with the Crimson Fleet and underwent the process to become a lemourian. A lemourian is a type of half-fiend detailed in the adventure. The baldandar commands the caravel *The Kraken*.

NE Medium Outsider CR 11

Lemorian Baldandar <sup>27</sup>illusionist 3

Init +9, Listen +10, Spot +10

AC 20, touch 15, flat-footed 15 (+5 Dex, +5 Natural Armor)

hp 56 (6d8+6+3d4+3)

Fort +6, Ref +8, Will +7

Spd 40ft

Attack: 1 claw +10 (1d8+2)

Full attack: 2 claws +10 (1d8+2) and Bite +8 (1d6+2 + poison) and Tail Sting +8 (1d6+2 + poison)

BAB +5, Grp +7

Str 15, Dex 21, Con 12, Int 18, Wis 16, Cha 20

Atk Options: Smite Good 1/day(+9 damage)

Combat Gear: Wand of Lightning(CL 6th) (9 charges), Wand of Magic Missile(CL 3rd) (12 charges), 2 potions of cure serious wounds

SQ: Immune to poison, Resist acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10, Spell Resistance 19, DR 5/magic

Spells Prepared: (CL 3rd, +6 touch, +9 ranged touch)

2nd - mirror image, scorching ray

1st - charm person(DC 15), color spray(DC 15), shocking grasp

0 - dancing lights, daze(DC 14), ghost sound, message, resistance

Spell-Like Abilities: (CL 15th)

At will - fly, invisibility

1/day - confusion(DC 19), magic jar(DC 20), polymorph

Spell-Like Abilities: (CL 9th)

3/day - charm monster(DC 19), command(DC 16)

1/day - dominate person(DC 20), fear(DC 19), suggestion(DC 18)

Feats: Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Scribe Scroll, Weapon Finesse

Skills: Bluff +11, Concentration +17, Diplomacy +11, Disguise +23, Escape Artist +10, Hide +15, Intimidate +12, Knowledge(arcana) +13, Listen +10, Profession(sailor) +14, Sense Motive +10, Spellcraft +18(+20 for illusions), Spot +10, Survival +7, Use Rope +5(+7 for bindings)

Illusion(Ex): At will and as a standard action, a baldandar can duplicate the effects of the Veil, Mirage Arcana, and Persistent Image spells. The illusions last as long as the baldandar concentrates, and for ten minutes after it stops concentrating. In all other respects, these effects are treated as if cast by a 15th level sorcerer

Poison(Ex): Any creature bitten by a baldandar must make a fortitude save vs DC 14 (Con based) or fall unconscious for 10-40 minutes. If hit by its poisonous stinger a target must make a DC 15 Fort save or suffer the Wisdom damage explained in the adventure under the Lemorian entry.

Tactics: The baldandar's main role in the attack on Farshore is to demoralize and confuse the inhabitants of Farshore by using Persistent Image to first create three additional caravels that enter the bay. The first, third and fifth ship approaching

<sup>27</sup> See *Mystara Monstrous Compendium Appendix* p11 and the 3rd Edition updates for Baldandar by [Jamie Baty](#) and by [Robert J Schwab](#)

Farshore will be an illusion. As the pirate crews embark for shore in smaller boats the baldandar will create additional illusions of small boats full of pirates in an attempt to protect the crews from incoming fire and magic at the time when they are most vulnerable. The baldandar has a rat familiar currently watching safely from a nearby shoreline.

Under no circumstances will the baldandar join any attack on shore, preferring to stay on his ship wrapped in a disguise as an ordinary crewman. Should his ship be attacked he will attempt to defend it to the best of his ability, but upon losing half his hit points he will use invisibility and fly to retreat to the nearest friendly ship and either blast away at range or resume a disguise. Should Vanthus fall, the baldandar will order a retreat of the remaining ships, abandoning anyone who cannot flee. Should it become impossible to flee on ship the baldandar will use flight and invisibility once again, or even use polymorph to turn into a fish or shark and retreat by sea. If all else fails, a 200 gp gemstone in the ship's hold will serve as a focus for magic jar. Slaying the baldandar does not affect VP results unless the PCs somehow manage to do so before the pirates first storm the beach. Should that happen award the PCs +50 VP.

Should he escape the baldandar may make an appearance at the Crimson Fleet headquarters in *Dungeon* #146.

## DUNGEON MAGAZINE #143:

### BACKDROP: FARSHORE

In addition to the fifth adventure in the AP, this issue provides a detailed Gazetteer of the colony Farshore which the PCs must help develop and defend. The colony rests on the small island of Telmute, which was avoided by the local natives, although it is surrounded by the seven villages of the Oltec.

#### Thief in the Warehouses

Rather than an ethereal filcher stealing from the warehouses, the creature is a small shargugh<sup>28</sup>. This shargugh is able to use trees and other living plants to teleport, and some of those plants are stored in the warehouses. Or perhaps freshly cut lumber is something the shargugh can use for a short time.

In either case, once PCs discover the thief, they will need to use diplomacy to come to some kind of peaceful resolution. Killing the shargugh will bring down a curse on the Farshore colony to such an extent as to make Telmute completely barren for farmland and game.

By default the shargugh's attitude to the PCs is unfriendly. Should he be even slightly wounded or gravely insulted (DM's judgement call) by any resident of Farshore, his attitude will be hostile.

#### Farshore Chapel

All the publicly honored Immortals of Sasserine have some space for a shrine dedicated to them in Farshore Chapel. Vesserin is a full-blooded water elf rather than

<sup>28</sup> See *Mystara Monstrous Compendium Appendix*, p98.

a half-elf, and dedicated to the patron Immortal of the Church of the Whirling Fury. His four human acolytes honor respectively - Hel, Thor, Asterius and Protius.

## The Eighth Oltec Village

Under the Farshore Hall of Records entry is the description of a sidequest for investigating the mysterious disappearance of the Oltec village which once inhabited the island of Telmute. A village war party once went beyond the Great Wall and discovered an idol of a great ape which they brought back to their home. Their village vanished before dawn the next day, and all that was found was the idol, which was buried for fear of its curse. If the PCs locate the site, they find some treasure and a holy symbol dedicated to Zagyg.

All of this is a clear reference to the Greyhawk adventure module WG6 Isle of the Ape, which is set in a demiplane created by Zagyg. The implication is that the Oltec villagers were transported to the Isle of the Ape and are most likely the barbarian tribe encountered early in that module.

Adapting Isle of the Ape is beyond the scope of this conversion, but should you run this sidequest exactly as written, the holy symbol that is found will be recognized by the PCs as Bozdogan(Loki), the patron Immortal of Garganin.

## Jade Ravens

Liamae Teslikaria is now a multi-class sorcerer and favored soul<sup>29</sup>. She is a favored soul of the Immortal Tyche. This changes her bonus Weapon Focus feat from shortbow to light mace. She still has a masterwork shortbow,

<sup>29</sup> The Favored Soul base class is detailed in v3.5 D&D *Complete Divine*.

but has a masterwork light mace instead of a masterwork dagger.

## DUNGEON MAGAZINE #144

### ADVENTURE #6: THE LIGHTLESS DEPTHS

This adventure takes part in the Underdark of the Isle of Dread, which never was treated or explored in the original module. Thus this adventure breaks entirely new ground going where no D&D writer has gone before. As such this conversion will be more accommodating with novelties, since the caverns deep below the Isle of Dread may well contain creatures that exist nowhere else in Mystara.

### The Aboleth Presence

The historical background for the Underdark city the PCs explore in this adventure is designed for Greyhawk where aboleth are the underwater masters. On the other hand, for Mystara the aboleth have never been officially established, while the kopru and the fan created Y'hog Carnifex have had powerful empires in the Thanegioth Archipelago in the distant past. In truth the Carnifex are the Mystara equivalent to the aboleth on other D&D worlds, except the Carnifex aren't aquatic and they are no longer present.

Rather than accept the history as presented in this adventure, where the aboleth came first and the kopru came later, this conversion will keep both but keep the kopru who have had an established empire in the distant past.

The aboleth themselves may be alien visitors who came to Mystara at the invitation of the Carnifex, or they may be creations of the



Carnifex, no one knows as there are no records. But there were very small enclaves of aboleth amidst the Carnifex who managed to hide and survive when the Immortals purged the Carnifex from Mystara. Never being great in number, and in frequent war with the kopru, the aboleth have not been as great a threat on Mystara as they are on other worlds.

The kopru on the Isle of Dread, in a calculated decision, offered an alliance with the nearby aboleth in the hopes these creatures could help rebuild the kopru empire. Thus the aboleth were invited into kopru territory, and granted a great cavern within which they built the great aboleth capital city of Golismorga.

In time the aboleth used their position to gain the dominant hand in the balance of power, and the kopru were, for a time, partially bound in servitude. But the kopru, realizing they could not displace the aboleth, turned to indirect means to throw off their chains. The kopru stepped up their attacks on the surface of the Isle of Dread, where the local Oltec empire was ascendant and strong. They deliberately spread terror and made their appearance known, in order to provoke the powerful Oltec priests and their Immortal patrons, counting on the retaliation falling unevenly onto their aboleth masters.

This gamble succeeded. When Tlaloc's Tear struck, all aboleth in the city and surrounding area were rendered helpless and dormant. In a bloodless victory the kopru regained their status as Lords of Dread and took over Golismorga. They began to try and extract the secrets of city which the aboleth had hid from them.

This background actually changes the likely consequences of the adventure conclusion to a brighter outcome. Should the Tear be

destroyed, rather than assuring the return of aboleth dominance, it restarts a war between the aboleth and kopru that will leave both groups in a weakened state as the aboleth won't have the numbers to ensure victory.

## Underdark Encounters Table

This encounter table has no corresponding table in the original X1 module to compare with, so the monsters which are new to Mystara have to be judged on a case by case basis. Most of the encounters are creatures known in Mystara or demons whose presence is explained by Demogorgon's influence on the island.

### Destrachans

This new creature introduced in 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition is one of those aberrations that seem almost too bizarre to include. But its appearance and abilities almost suggest that the aboleth or kopru created these things from magical experimentation and surgery on local dinosaurs just so they could have some anti-magical guardians in place to stop potential invaders from above. So I recommend these stay with exactly that background, they won't attack the kopru.

### Dark Nagas

These not only appear in the encounter table but they also have a presence in Golismorga. These dark nagas may be descendants of allies or pets of the Y'hog Carnifex, and in more recent millennia have survived as autonomous allies of the kopru. There is mention of nagas in the Serpentine Empire, but should you wish to make a substitution I would suggest using nagpas<sup>30</sup>.

<sup>30</sup> See *Mystara Monstrous Compendium Appendix*, p82

### Phase Spiders

The only link to Mystara which phase spiders have is that in the monster entry for planar spiders<sup>31</sup> it suggests that planar spiders may be related to phase spiders. The presence of phase spiders here in the Underdark suggests they don't live here but come to this location to hunt.

### Cloakers and Gibbering Mouthers

Both of these creatures are associated with the Dimension of Nightmares rather than being native to Mystara. Considering the presence of the Nel'thaggu in Golismorga it is clear the experiments of the aboleth and the trauma of the Tear have resulted in a weakening of the barriers between the Dimension of Nightmares and Mystara. Should you not wish to use either of these monsters, a malfera<sup>32</sup>, mujina<sup>33</sup> or a nuckalavee<sup>34</sup> would make a reasonable substitution.

### Troglodyte Priests and Laogzed

The troglodytes in the adventure worship Laogzed, and just about all the troglodytes that will fight the PCs are clerics. A good substitution would be the Immortal Bachraeus, or perhaps they directly worship an Outer Being as other troglodytes elsewhere in the archipelago have been known to do.

Going forward with the Immortal Bachraeus, you can modify the domains of the troglodyte lepers, replacing their Death and Destruction

domains with the Chaos and Entropy<sup>35</sup> domains.

They lose their smite attack and death touch, but chaos spells are cast at +1 caster level and they gain a single ranged touch attack once per day at +2 (3d8) half the damage is sonic damage and half unholy damage. Spells can be left as is, although you can opt to swap out the chaos domain spell Shatter for the entropic domain spell Vision of Entropy<sup>36</sup> for all troglodyte lepers outside of location A3 (where the shatter spell will be useful).

Irgzid Uzeye, the troglodyte priest who can ally with the PCs, makes the same spell domain changes as well. His once a day ranged touch attack is +6 (4d8) and swap out the Death Knell spell for Vision of Entropy or Shatter.

### Hamlet of Barbas

The mongrelfolk in this location have such a good explanation for why they are here and how they came to be, that I can't find a good reason to swap them out for another humanoid race common to Mystara. I suggest leaving them as is. As a bonus, some will resemble rakasta!

### Hall of the Dreamers

The skeletal remains of the long-dead kuo-toa explorer changes to the skeletal remains of a kna<sup>37</sup>, an adventurer of some renown in the Twaelar Empire. His coral signet ring is easily recognized there. Some shattered potion bottles are among the remains (air-breathing).

<sup>31</sup> See *Mystara Monstrous Compendium Appendix*, p103-104

<sup>32</sup> See *Rules Cyclopeda*, p191

<sup>33</sup> See *Mystara Monstrous Compendium Appendix*, p81

<sup>34</sup> See *Mystara Monstrous Compendium Appendix*, p85

<sup>35</sup> See *Fiendish Codex I, Hordes of the Abyss*, p89

<sup>36</sup> See *Fiendish Codex I, Hordes of the Abyss*, p96

<sup>37</sup> See *Mystara Monstrous Compendium Appendix*, p68

## Holashner

Holashner is an Elder Evil that burrows through the earth and is highly regarded by the aboleth, who built a ziggurat in its honor in Golismorga. Holashner becomes one of the most powerful, if not the most powerful, Burrowers that Thanatos sent to Mystara. It may also have been, or still is, an Outer Being. While Holashner is largely inactive due to Immortal magic, it has been able to spawn several offspring in a long-term plan to free itself, one of these spawn is the bilewretch encountered later in the adventure.

## Kopru Fire Resistance and Movement Speeds

While neither the original X1 module nor the v3.0 Monster Manual II entry for the kopru gave them any sort of fire resistance, their background strongly suggests it. The kopru in X1 are found in boiling mud geysers. Kopru were later given the equivalent of a permanent clerical resist fire<sup>38</sup> in BECMI/RD D&D. So I would recommend granting them the ability Resistance to Fire 10 at the very least, or some higher score as you deem appropriate. The kopru behemoths (advanced kopru) and NPC Ulioth can have an even higher resistance to fire.

I also recommend granting them their original X1 swimming and land movement speeds, which was a 50 ft swimming speed per round (compared to 40 ft in 3rd Edition D&D) as well as a giving them a 10 ft land movement speed per round (compared to 5ft in 3rd Edition D&D).

## Kopru Slaves

Should you use the suggested historical timeline for the Isle of Dread, the kopru likely have some captured Thyatian slaves from the short time period when Thyatis established a base on the island. Having a few Thyatian slaves show up in Golismorga as thralls of the kopru, will give the PCs an extra goal should they try and rescue them. A few Oltec slaves are another possibility.

## Extra Golismorga Encounter

This city is completely alien and only parts of it are under kopru control. It is quite clear some of the buildings are alive in some fashion, although the adventure does not provide a combat encounter with a building. You can use this encounter anywhere in the city.

The particular building which the PCs are passing by is a Scamille. It is an amoeba like creature similar to a mimic which can only take one form, the aboleth created a few gargantuan and colossal sized scamilles for some of their structures. Unlike a normal scamille, this scamille's lower half is permanently stuck in its alternate form, and anchored in place, allowing it to attack with only three pseudopods, instead of the normal six. Should it be reduced to 0hp, it will go immobile in building form and play dead. Should it be brought to -10 hp or less, the magic holding it in place will end, leaving it to collapse as a giant dead amoeba.

<sup>38</sup> See PC3 *Creature Crucible The Sea People*, p22-23

Scamille<sup>39</sup> (Living Building)  
 N or NE Gargantuan Aberration CR 13  
 Initiative +5, Listen +20, Spot +20  
 AC 23, touch 5, flat-footed 23  
 hp 513 (41d8+287)  
 Fort +14, Ref +14, Will +27  
 Space/Reach: 20ft/20ft  
 Spd 0ft  
 Full Attack: 3 slams at +37 (6d6+11)  
 Base Atk +30, Grp +53  
 Str 33, Dex 8, Con 25, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 13  
 Special Actions: Adhesive punch  
 SQ: Alternate form, amorphous, darkvision 60ft., light vulnerability, tremorsense 60ft  
 Feats: Alertness, Improved Initiative, Investigator, Iron Will, Greater Fortitude, Lightning Reflexes, Improved Natural Armor(x5), Endurance, Diehard  
 Skills: Diplomacy +16, Disguise +30, Gather Information +12, Knowledge (history) +20, Knowledge (local) +17, Listen +20, Search +9, Sense Motive +16, Spot +20

**Adhesive Punch (Ex):** Each round, a scamille may designate one of its pseudopods to become adhesive. A target successfully hit by that pseudopod takes normal damage, and the scamille immediately starts a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If the grapple succeeds, the scamille may hold the victim and inflict damage automatically each round. Due to the adhesive on the pseudopod, the scamille receives a +8 bonus to all grappling checks with that pseudopod.

**Alternate Form (Su):** The scamille is effectively camouflaged as an object of its form, and it gains a +10 bonus on Disguise checks.

**Amorphous (Ex):** A scamille in its natural form has immunity to poison, sleep, paralysis, polymorph, and stunning effects. It is not subject to critical hits and, having no clear front or back, cannot be flanked.

**Light Vulnerability (Ex):** Any spell with the Light descriptor cast at a scamille will prevent the scamille from forming its pseudopods and attacking for one round. Those effects are in addition to any other damage the spell may inflict. The scamille automatically fails any saving throw against a spell with the Light descriptor.

**Tremorsense (Ex):** A scamille can automatically sense the location of anything within 60 feet that is in contact with the ground, so long as it is touching the ground itself.

Should the PCs encounter another scamille, the second one will be friendly but can only converse in Aquan or the Aboleth language.

## The Ziggurat Shrine

In the chamber where the PCs face off against Ulioth, the kopru leader, they will note that strange maps appear to have been more recently etched on the sections of partial stonework on the floor. A DC 35 Knowledge (geography) check is enough for the PC to recognize these as maps of the Twearlar underwater empire and regions of the Sunlit Sea. There are six black circles marked around what would correspond to underwater city locations. The kopru have smuggled shadow pearls into those cities, this is in addition to those pearls delivered to the

<sup>39</sup> See *Mystara Monstrous Compendium* Appendix p95 and Jamie Baty's 3rd Edition update for [Scamille](#)

Crimson Fleet which the PCs will learn about in the next two adventures.

## DUNGEON MAGAZINE #145

### ADVENTURE #7: CITY OF BROKEN IDOLS

This adventure focuses on the evil at the top of the central plateau and gives the PCs a chance to shatter Demogorgon's hold on the Isle of Dread for good. This adventure is spot on in its portrayal of the central plateau, and the only changes to be suggested are just minor details and a few pieces from the original X1.

#### The Missing Missionary

As was mentioned in *Tides of Dread*, this section may change if you already introduced had Jakara introduce his totem magic to the PCs. But here he comes back to thank them for their rescue, and to tell them where he last saw Noltus Innersol, the missing missionary.

Instead of Pelor, Noltus is a priest of Ixion. This adventure mentions he was from Sasserine which is fine, but based on his name having his origin be from Thyatis works just as well.

The disc which Noltus found and Jakara gives them is referring to a minor artifact, a magic bow, which appears later in the adventure. The bow's usefulness to the AP actually stirred up some dissatisfaction among groups playing it, so there are some suggestions on how to change it later. If you change it to another weapon, the disk depiction will need to change as well.



*Disk of the Three Immortals*

The disk also portrays the three gods Tezcatlipoca (god of the moon), Tonatiuh (god of the sun) and Quetzalcoatl (god of the air depicted as human and a serpent). This trinity of Immortals in Mystara becomes Kalaktatla (better known as Ka), Oztitotl (better known as Ixion), and Orontiuah (better known as Odin). Orontiuah is the ancient Oltec name for Odin, but he is known among the natives of the Isle of Dread by the name Oloron, Lord of the Skies. This is consistent with X1, where Umlat, tribal cleric of Mantru on the central plateau, worships Oloron.

#### The Central Plateau

The Central Plateau Encounters table is just about perfect as is. Comparing it to the Central Plateau Wandering Monsters table in X1 I see everything important is already there and nothing that obviously needs to be taken out. You could pull out the chuuls which are an aquatic encounter if you don't like this monster introduced in 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition.

Certainly if you need more variety, you can add back in some cave bears, pterodactyls (smaller version of the pteranodons), normal boars, prehistoric elephants, dire wolves or even just a generic animal herd. But it hardly seems necessary. One element from the original X1 table that I think should be added in is the Tremor entry, achieved only on a roll of double 6 there. For this conversion II would suggest picking a good time or using it should you roll a duplicate of an earlier encounter.

Tremor: Minor quakes that vary in severity on the central plateau and last 10-30 seconds. Roll a d6.

1-4: Minor Shock- No effect

5: Major Shock- Characters knocked off their feet, 30% chance of falling if climbing cliffs

6: Sever Shock- Trees tilt, rocks fall, small cracks appear in ground, characters knocked off their feet, 5% chance per character of taking 3d6 damage from falling trees if in forest, 60% chance of falling if climbing cliffs

## Lizardman Camp

The leader of the lizardmen, Rissashtak, also a cleric of Pelor in the adventure, becomes a cleric of Ixion having studied under Noltus. Ixion and Pelor are so close in purpose that there is no need to change Rissashtak's clerical domains, they match perfectly with Ixion.

## Taboo Temple

The temple itself gets a few cosmetic changes.

At the Temple Entrance (Location 2), the collapsed statue of a serpent portrays Kalaktatla; the bas reliefs are of Oztitiotl (depicted with a sun) and Orontiuuh (cloud).

At the Vault of the Sun and the Moon (Location 13), the three figures represent Kalaktatla (feathers), Oztitiotl (sun) and Orontiuuh (cloud). The moons, stars, and suns are unchanged. (The Oltecs were into astronomy.) It should be noted that the images that appear are being generated by magic embedded in the room itself, magic created to hold the artifact weapon in safekeeping, rather than being actual messages from the Immortals. As such, the first bit of the message should probably be modified as follows.

*"The time when this place was holy is long gone, and there are no longer any among our children's children who recall what has been lost. So be it. Still, we can help you, strangers, in this fight that is both revenge for the past and hope for the future. Heed our words."*

Should any of the PCs be native to the Isle of Dread, the address above will change slightly to acknowledge they are not strangers, but the last of their children's children.

## The Nimbus Bow

As presented, the Nimbus Bow is both an artifact and a powerful shocking burst longbow which has even greater powers against dragons, reptilians and creatures with the Earth subtype. Why is that a problem? Because there are few such creatures awaiting the players in the remaining adventures of the Savage Tide campaign, and the one set of opponents which the players can expect to see at horde levels are demons...which are immune to electricity in 3.5. As one player put it, "No thanks, I will keep the evil outsider bane longbow I found earlier."

The adventure writers stated they didn't want the Nimbus Bow to become the central focus of the campaign, but I think they went a little too far. So what can be done? Well, if you do have an archer, and you want to keep the bow, you could change the damage type to sonic, so the bow is blasting with thunder instead of lightning, to keep with the storm theme.

Or, if you have another character who will benefit, you can change the bow to a completely different weapon altogether. Something suited for a particular PC. If any PC is native to the Isle of Dread, they should be favored before others. The new weapon keeps the control winds, summon nature's ally and warp woods spells but its other powers can be changed to fit your campaign.

## Skinwalkers

The Oltec natives on the central plateau that have fallen to kopru corruption have all been turned into skinwalkers as the PCs start this adventure. To create a skinwalker, an Oltec is flayed with a demonic lash, and then burned alive on a pyre. Just before death, the skin of a jarilith (a demonic lion) is thrown into the fire. The skinwalker is the merging of the two into one.

Instead of a jarilith, the skinwalkers may have a rakasta skin, making their creation that much darker. Should the PCs have taken an interest in the rakasta, but been unable to find any living rakasta earlier in their searches of the island, this can be revealed to them at an appropriately horrific moment.

## Taboo Temple Kopru

As these kopru have gained the fiendish template, this should boost their fire resistance up even higher than that listed in their stats. You can even go all the way and just give them

fire immunity. See the kopru entry in the previous adventure for justification.

## The Ledger

According to the ledger the PCs find, at least thirty-five shadow pearls have been delivered to the Crimson Fleet for distribution in the outer world. Discounting the one that was destined for Sasserine, you have thirty-four major cities in Mystara that are in great danger...make the most of it. Any major city the players happen to be attached to, especially from previous campaigns, should be threatened. An opportunity to get a complete or partial list of deliveries may be possible at the Crimson Fleet headquarters.

The ledger should also make note that the kopru kept an additional six pearls for themselves. As mentioned in the previous adventure, these six the kopru have delivered to underwater cities of their enemies.

## Khala the Two-Headed

The master villain on the Isle of Dread is an aspect of Demogorgon, a uniquely powerful demon that appears to be a cross between Demogorgon and a kopru. The closest thing that Immortals have to an aspect would be an avatar, but even avatars are restricted from materializing on the Prime Material Plane. So here are some suggestions for alternative origins for Khala.

One choice is to make Khala a mortal identity of Demogorgon. This is a bit of a cheat, since technically an Immortal's mortal identity has to be mortal, but BECM D&D never had any demon less than exalted so there was no possibility of a demon mortal identity. This does work if you assume lesser demons than exalted exist as discussed earlier in this article, although as a mortal identity Khala is

a bit underpowered and a battle against Khala essentially has the PCs fighting the final villain of the campaign much earlier. That may or may not be to your taste.

Another possibility is Khala is a lesser fiend who is on the path to true Entropic Immortality under Demogorgon's patronage. He may even be one of Demogorgon's own spawn. There is a canonical precedent for exceptional mortals who have an Immortal for a parent.<sup>40</sup> So having Khala being the offspring of Demogorgon and a kopru and being the key to Demogorgon's hold of the Isle of Dread is accounted for in the Isle of Dread timeline.

## DUNGEON MAGAZINE #146

### ADVENTURE #8: SERPENTS OF SCUTTLECOVE

The first sentence of this adventure sums it up best... "The vile city of Scuttlecove is the home of murderers, thieves, demon worshipers, peddlers of vice and monsters."

#### Placement of Scuttlecove

The most important thing is to locate a place for Scuttlecove. In Greyhawk it is 1200 miles away from the Isle of Dread, but you can place it even farther away and still have time for the Crimson Fleet to make a two month journey to Farshore from Tides of Dread. You can even give more leeway if you assumed that the Crimson Fleet had already been planning an attack on Farshore even before the PCs arrived at the Isle of Dread. Your main concern is to

have the place be isolated enough or at least be tolerated by the local powers that be.

Some suggestions would be the island of Lesser Ne'er-Do-Well, an island off the coast of Jaibul, Minaea, the anarchic countryside of Surshield, or the far side of Oceania away from the night dragons. Lastly, if you set Sasserine on Davania in one of the two swamp hexes suggested earlier in this conversion, you could go ahead and set Scuttlecove in the other.

#### BACKGROUND if USING NE'ER-DO-WELL

In AY 2002, as the young Pharaoh Ramenhotep XXIV took the throne of Thothia, ending the long domination of the cult of Arachne Prime on his people, a number of other cults -- tolerated by the mystic followers of the Spider's Web, mostly because they were too small and weak to be a threat -- realised that the kingdom was about to become unsafe for them as well. Two of these cults were small circle of "ur-priests" known as the Holy Triad and the cannibalistic monks called the Order of Dire Hunger, allies both by necessity and inclination. They fled Thothia at the same time, eventually coming to the Alatian island of Ne'er-Do-Well.

After performing certain services for King Koryn the Harpist, the Holy Triad received permission to make a home for themselves on the lightly populated island of Lesser Ne'er-Do-Well. The Big Dipper may have assumed that the Holy Triad would simply focus on their own, esoteric pursuits and pose no real problems for him. He was unpleasantly surprised when the community that grew up around their palace became a serious rival to his own Crossroads, a place

<sup>40</sup> The NPC Vix from the adventure *HWQ1 The Milenian Sceptre* is a daughter of an Immortal, with exceptional powers.



where people could indulge in pursuits that made the "normal" depravity of Ne'er-Do-Well seem tame. Koryn has long sought to bring Scuttlecove back under his control, but has to tread lightly to avoid arousing its populace -- many of whom possess dangerous powers -- against him.

Around AC 1015, the Holy Triad withdrew to their mansion, no longer interacting with the public except through their agents, the monks of Dire Hunger. A year later, the brothel called Porphyry House opened its doors. Within only a few months, it underwent a change of ownership, as the "black nymph" named Tyralandi allied with a group of adventurers to defeat the cult of Demogorgon that operated behind Porphyry House's doors. (She then turned on and betrayed the adventurers, and they all died screaming. Who says there's no such thing as a happy ending?)

Soon after, the monks of Dire Hunger discovered (and inadvertently revealed to the rest of Scuttlecove's factions) that the Holy Triad had vanished without a trace. There was no "tremendous storm that left hundreds dead"; they had simply disappeared without explanation. Since then, the city has been in a state of civil war. Koryn the Harpist has been subtly aiding the faction called the Protectorate, because they seem like the least dangerous of the various groups, but he must be sparing in his aid, since the factions would unite against an outside influence like him, and Koryn is not at all sure that he'd be able to survive such a conflict. (And much like a certain distant, deceased cousin of his, he's No-Man's-Fool.)

## Background if using a remote location such as Davania or Oceania

A particularly depraved small circle of Alphatian wizard "ur-priests" known as the Holy Triad managed to escape the destruction of Alphatia, bringing along with them their bodyguard and servants, a group of cannibalistic monks called the Order of Dire Hunger. This circle already had an alternate home carved out some years before, the city of Scuttlecove, which the Holy Triad had started to found a new society, abducting a variety of citizens from other nations until they had a sustainable population. They quickly took full-time control from the other factions, including the Crimson Fleet. But this would only last a few years (see prior entry for the rest of the details starting in 1015 AC).

## Crimson Fleet Base War Room

Here the PCs will find among the logs and ledgers no less than 35 different cities to which a shadow pearl has been delivered. Be sure to include on this list any cities that the players may be attached to from previous campaigns set on Mystara, to make it more personal. For a sample list of cities you can refer to Table 2. A note may be found that the pearl destined for Sasserine was lost with the destruction of the hidden base at Kraken's Cove. Another note may be found that the ship approaching the city Tanakumba in the Divinarchy of Yavdlom was ambushed as if their arrival was expected when they reached the coastline, with the ship and pearl barely escaping capture.

Table 2: Cities with Shadow Pearls

City	Country	Continent
Spearpoint	Kingdom of Surshield	Bellissaria
Slagovich	City-State of Slagovich	Brun
Ylaruam City	Emirates of Ylaruam	Brun
Hattias	Empire of Thyatis	Brun
Kerendas	Empire of Thyatis	Brun
Machetos	Empire of Thyatis	Brun
Retebius	Empire of Thyatis	Brun
Tel Akbir	Empire of Thyatis	Brun
Thyatis City (2 pearls)	Empire of Thyatis	Brun
Shireton	Five Shires	Brun
Freiburg	Heldannic Territories	Brun
Oceansend	Heldannic Territories	Brun
Ierendi City	Kingdom of Ierendi	Brun
Halag	Kingdom of Karameikos	Brun
Kelvin	Kingdom of Karameikos	Brun
Mirros	Kingdom of Karameikos	Brun
Jaibul	Kingdom of Jaibul	Brun
Minrothad City	Minrothad Guilds	Brun
Zeaburg	Ostland	Brun
Athenos	Republic of Darokin	Brun
Darokin City	Republic of Darokin	Brun
Selenica	Republic of Darokin	Brun
Sayr Ulan	Sind	Brun
Soderfjord	Soderfjord Jarldoms	Brun
Norrvik	Vestland	Brun
Garganin	City-State of Garganin	Davania
Kastelios	City-State of Kastelios	Davania
Ravenscarp	Empire of Thyatis	Davania
Redstone Castle	Empire of Thyatis	Isle of Dawn
Dunadale	Exarchate of Heldun	Isle of Dawn
Newkirk	Exarchate of Westrouрке	Isle of Dawn
Trikelios	Kingdom of Trikelios	Isle of Dawn
Seashield	Kingdom of Aquas	
Skyreach	Kingdom of Ar	
Beitung	Ochalea	

Should you wish to wrap up the adventure path on Mystara instead of following the storyline of the last four adventures, the PCs can arrive here before many savage pearls have been distributed. A small handful of savage pearls may still need to be recovered from a few cities, and the guardians of the pearls will test the limits of even high-level adventurers.

Regardless of where the campaign goes from here, prominent NPCs from threatened nations will be keenly interested in this information. Powerful rulers and/or adventurers from Thyatis and elsewhere will learn of the general threat from the pearls and seek out the PCs to barter for more information and advice.

## BACKDROP: SCUTTLECOVE

### NPC adjustments

Tyralandi is a servant of the Entropic Immortal Masauwu.

Lars Landicaster is a human forester rather than a ranger. His sympathies lie with the Church of the Whirling Fury which makes even more sense if you make Carlitha Starbrow the Immortal behind the church. Lars does not feel he has abandoned Illsundal or Thyatis, but does what he can to pursue their ends here in Scuttlecove. That he has not lost his spellcasting ability seems to indicate he is correct.

Substituting Mystara Immortals for Greyhawk Gods

The House of the Black Rider is dedicated to Demogorgon in his aspect as the patron of diseases. This particular cult of Demogorgon is actually not allied with the Crimson Fleet and the Seventh Coil, which has kept it relatively small and powerless. Many in the city worship an Immortal they believe is Incabulos, patron of disease, but they are actually honoring Demogorgon.

Cults of Vecna are mentioned as working in the city, they can be replaced by small cabals worshipping either Alphaks, Atzanteotl, Loki, or Masauwu (or all four).

## DUNGEON MAGAZINE ISSUES #147-#150

The remaining adventures leave Mystara behind as the PCs proceed to take the fight to Demogorgon on the Outer Planes. Should Threshold magazine make a visit to the Outer Planes in the future you can expect a Part 2 to this article. In the meantime you can find C Richard Davies ideas on the remaining adventures at Pandius<sup>41</sup> and expect conversion notes by David Keyser to continue in the future at the Piazza forums.

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<sup>41</sup> <http://pandius.com/stmyst9.html>

## DRAGON MAGAZINE ISSUES #348-#355

### SAVAGE TIDINGS ARTICLES

Dragon Magazine provided support for the Savage Tide AP in the format of at least one article (and sometimes two) per month as each Dungeon issue was released.

#### Issue #348

This issue detailed the affiliations in Sasserine including their affiliation tables. Some adjustments can be made.

For Church of the Whirling Fury, should you substitute Carlitha Starbrow for Gwynharwyf, the following adjustments can be made to the table.

Add an entry for *Is a Waterelf* with a score modifier of +1. *Makes a pilgrimage to the Court of Stars* should be changed to *Makes a pilgrimage to Carlitha Starbrow's home plane*. Remove the entry *Member of champion of Gwynharwyf prestige class*.

Replacing the Scarlet Brotherhood with the Heldannic Knights, make the following adjustments to the affiliation table and the benefits table.

*Purebred Suel* is changed to *Purebred Hattian*. Remove the evasion and improved evasion entries and replace with *Cleric of Vanya* with a score modifier of +1. Replace *Recovers a lost artifact of the Suel Imperium* with *Recover lore or artifacts of Vanya*. Remove the *Is good* entry.

In the benefits table, the gang of four cousins is modified to be four veteran soldiers that are warrior 4. The honor guard entry is modified to be four Heldannic Knights that are fighter 2/cleric 6.

The Seekers are an organization known on the continent of Davania, and have spread into nearby regions of the Sea of Dread. They have not yet opened a lodge on Brun.

#### Issue #349

This issue details the surrounding environs of Sasserine, which would need to be modified based on where you decide to locate the city. The Dungeon of Rust and Fire and the lair of the red dragon Hookface could be located near the border of Emerond where some hill/jungle terrain is located.

The Misroi Plantation is a reference to the Ravenloft Domain Lord Anton Misroi, who rules the Isle of Terror Souragne and first appeared in the Ravenloft adventure RQ1 Night of the Walking Dead.

#### Issue #350

This issue focuses on the sea voyage. References to the Jeklea Bay, Azure Sea, Pearl Sea and Vohoun Ocean should be changed to the Sea of Dread. The regional feat Vohoun Eye is renamed Dread Eye. The Emerald Crest Guild affiliation is introduced, this guild has a presence in every city-state along the coast of Davania as well as Ochalea and the Pearl Islands. For inspiration and further development you can use the real-world Hanseatic League for ideas.

**Issue #351**

Larissa Vanderboren's journal uses Greyhawk calendar dates. The year changes from 593 CY to 1019 AC using the Sasserine timeline. Table 3 provides suggested date conversions for Mystara using the Thyatian calendar.

**Issue #352**

This issue provides more information on the Oltec. Some information on the Usi tribe was inadvertently dropped, and the Dream Seer feat mentioned in the Oltec affiliation table was not described.

The Usi tribe is a very warlike tribe and these Oltec have always been standoffish and distant from the other tribes. This has become even more so recently, and they have withdrawn almost all contact. [DM Note: This is due to the presence of the nearby Heldannic Knights, who have been visiting the tribe once per week to preach, convert and awe the Usi with their divine magic.] The Usi are known to respect both tattoo magic and divine magic.

Dream Seer Feat : +2 bonus to resist mind affecting effects, except the nightmare spell where you have a +4 bonus to save. May use the Sippery Mind rogue class feature once per day. You may also cast the *Dream* spell once per week as a spell-like ability. Prerequisites: Oltec Human, or the feat Friend to an Oltec Tribe.

If one of your PCs has the Church of the Whirling Fury affiliation, they can raise their score by searching for Noltus for at least two weeks. But this affiliation suggestion has no details or payoff for this effort. Should a player take this action, and you plan on introducing the NPC Jakara earlier (see Introducing the Totemic Demonslayer Earlier entry), you can slightly modify how the PCs meet Jakara. Instead of Jakara seeking them out, you can have the PC search for Noltus but find Jakara who gives them his information as a reward for their effort. Jakara will also journey with the PC back to Farshore in order to teach and spread the word on his tattoo magic.

*Table 3: Greyhawk to Mystaran Date Conversions*

Greyhawk Date	Suggested Thyatian Date	Seasonal period
6th of Wealsun	1st of Klarmont	Early Summer
24th of Wealsun	18th of Klarmont	Early Summer
7th of Richfest	1st of Felmont	Midsummer
10th of Reaping	10th of Felmont	High Summer
22nd of Reaping	22nd of Felmont	High Summer
5th of Goodmonth	5th of Fyrmont	High Summer
19th of Goodmonth	19th of Fyrmont	High Summer
15th of Harvester	15th of Ambyrmont	Early Fall
1st of Sunsebb	1st of Kaldmont	Winter

**Issue #353**

This issue provides a substantial number of upgrade options for the PC ship the *Sea Wyvern*. A number of these upgrades include extremely rare materials (such as adamantine) or potent magical enchantments. The latter will prove crucial in order to navigate the Sea Wyvern in the outer planes in the final adventures of the Savage Tide AP.

To explain how these upgrades become available, have a few merchant ships visit Farshore including some merchant-princes from Minrothad. In addition or as a possible alternative, the local Thyatian ruler in the Thanegioth Archipelago may also visit at this time. Vivianna Romanones and her Crimson Guard<sup>42</sup> are aware of the PCs and their

struggles against both the Crimson Fleet and the kopru. She offers some magic to the PCs while explaining the wisdom of accepting protection from the Empire of Thyatis. She would like to have Farshore willingly join Thyatis but won't make a direct offer for alliance unless she believes the PCs are amenable.

Assuming they are not, she will provide access to some Thyatian naval magic in exchange for gold, but with no other obligations at this time. She continues to observe to see if the PCs can overcome the kopru, but will visit them once again in person to learn more from the PCs as soon as they realize the worldwide threat of the shadow pearls.

<sup>42</sup> The NPC Vivianna and Crimson Guard are fan creations by James Ruhland.



### FROM THE VAULTS OF PANDIUS

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

**YOUR OPINIONS?**

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

Or by email to the Editorial address: [Threshold.Mystara@gmail.com](mailto:Threshold.Mystara@gmail.com)

Please begin the subject line with the tag “[LETTER]”



FROM  
THE VAULTS  
OF PANDIUS

## Nations of the Spindrift Sea

by John Calvin

### FOREWORD BY THE AUTHOR:

Eerie and alluring, the dark interior world of Matera that Sharon Dornhoff, Geoff Gander, and others, envisioned almost 15 years ago continues to fuel my imagination even to this day. In this issue of *Threshold* we will explore the Hollow Moon's largest ocean, the Great Spindrift Sea, and delve into the nations and cultures that live along its shores.

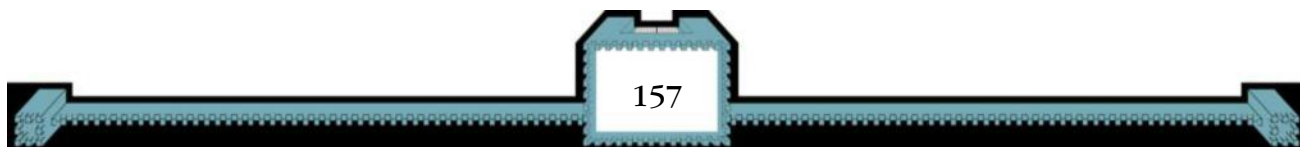
### LUNAR PROPERTIES (GETTING RE- ACQUAINTED)

The Hollow Moon is a vast and strange setting, and many of its properties are quite alien when compared to a world like *Mystara*. This section will help readers become acquainted with all the bizarre characteristics of the moon

that inhabitants of the interior of Matera take for granted.

### Crystal Fractures

When the prehistoric comet crashed onto the surface of Matera, the impact was strong enough to fracture the entire Crystal Firmament. Although the most violent fractures - those large enough to allow voidships passage from space into the interior of Matera - are only located around the impact site at Mare Orientale, the fractures from the impact stretch across the moon's entire surface. These can be seen when the light from the sun shines on the Farside, and they have been used by Materans for eons to help tell the time. As the sunlight passes over specific areas of the Farside new fractures are illuminated while others fade away. Materans keep track of these fractures just as their counterparts on *Mystara* track the movements of constellations in the night sky.



## Great Spindrift Sea

The Great Spindrift Sea lies directly in the center of Nearside and takes up a great portion of the Midlands. It is the largest body of water in the Hollow Moon and connects nations of the Midlands to the Northlands, Southlands, and Duskward Rimlands.

### Crystal Seabed

Like most of the seas in the Hollow Moon, the Spindrift Sea's floor lies directly atop the crystal firmament. Portions of the seabed are covered in a layer of encrusted basalt. This layer, formed long ago after the great cometary impact at Mare Orientale, rises up from the sea to form the many islands that dot the Spindrift, and it is kept geologically active by the tidal forces of Mystara and Patera. The rest of the seabed is crystal - the same crystal that comprises the Firmament and the Crystalbarrens.

### Glacial Fringe

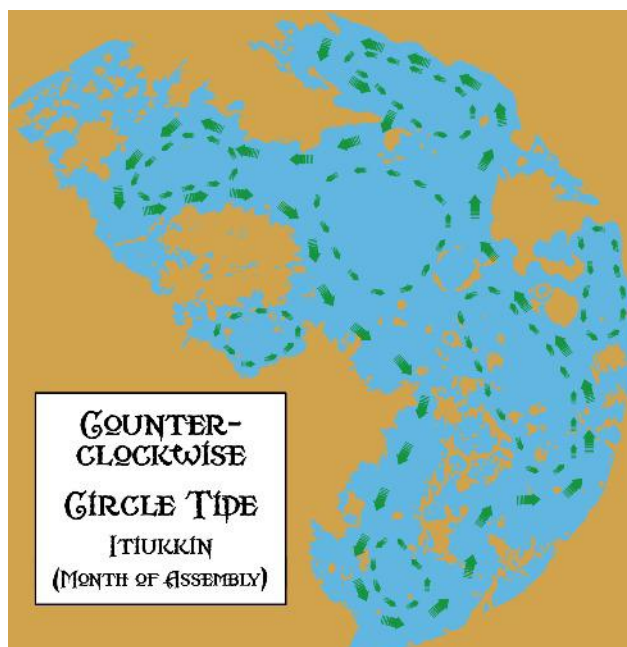
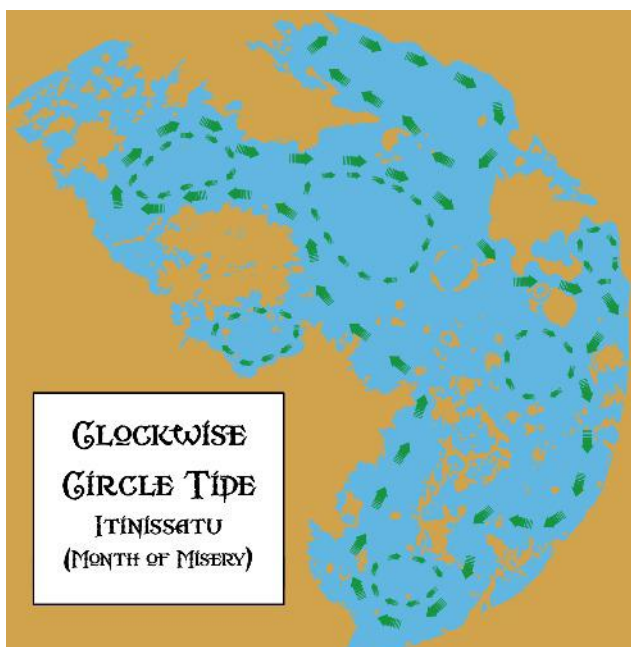
Where the edge of the Spindrift Sea meets the unnatural cold of the crystalbarrens, the sea itself turns solid. Massive amounts of ice build up along this border creating a curving glacial wall that separates the sea from the crystal it sits upon. This icy layer usually ranges from 10 to 30 miles, but is prevented from forming on the seabed itself due to the tremendous pressures of the water there.

### Fulldark

Oddly enough, during Fulldark, when the sun lies directly beneath the Nearside and the Hollow Moon receives its least amount of light, is when the Spindrift Sea is the brightest. Sunlight filtering through the crystal seabed illuminates the sea from the bottom up.

### Circle Tides

Circle Tides occur twice per Materan year, and cause the waters of the Spindrift Sea to





all circulate in one direction for a period of three days. The first Circle Tide happens in the month of Itiukkin and spins the waters in a counter-clockwise motion, while the second Circle Tide in Itinissatu spins them in a clockwise motion.

## Seshay-Selene

**Alignment:** Lawful (OD&D); CG (AD&D)

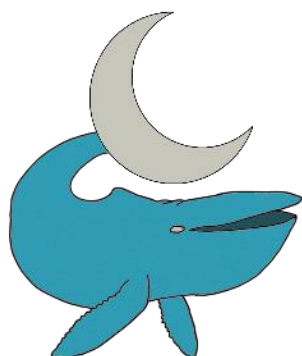
**Sex:** Female

**Race:** Humpback whale

**Clerical Alignment:** Any non-evil but LN

**Followers' Alignment:** Any (placated by many evil lunar races)

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



**Interests:** Materan weather, Materan seas, tides, whales, migration, natural and biological cycles

**Worshipped in:** The Hollow Moon, all oceans

Once a grey whale living in the oceans of Mystara, Seshay-Selene attained immortality after creating a new migrational culture for her people - the Unending Sojourn. Her intimate knowledge of tides, seasonality, and celestial workings made her the ideal candidate to run the Hollow Moon (after Ixion declined the honour, seeing little benefit in guiding a world with no sunlight).

Many of the undersea races still worship her, though she is little known by the surface folk... at least on Mystara. Inside of Matera

she has many names. To the Albheldri (and the Nithians before them) she is Nephthisi, Goddess of the Moon, while to the cryions of the Crystalbarrens she is known only as the Great Stormspume. Shark-kin of Crisium and Humorum call her Moonsinger, in the fashion of the long lost Aquarendi (which when translated into the elven tongue is Seshay-Selene). She has other names as well - most often related to silver, or moonlight, or singing, or to the endless crashing of the waves against the shore.

## MATERAN NATIVES

Materan natives are not restricted by the Spell of Remembrance in the same way as natives of the Hollow World are by the Spell of Preservation. Although they will remember their culture and its proclivities, they are not bound by them, and thus it is much easier for DMs to run a group of native Materan PCs. New armor, weapons, or tools - all are fair game to native Materan PCs.

Matera is not a humano-centric setting, and in fact humans are in a distinct minority (and at a distinct disadvantage inside of the dark world). Luckily most races are fairly tolerant of the different species living around them. It is easy for adventurers from different cultures to join forces and work together.

## Nephthisian Guidance

As the "right hand" for Seshay-Selene, the Nephthisian priestesses hold a unique role in the Hollow Moon setting. Believing that they speak and act for their Immortal patroness - who they believe created and rules over the interior of Matera, they see it as their solemn duty to nurture and care for both the world, and the cultures living there.

Though based in Albheldri, Nephthisians have missionaries spread out across the Nearside, always striving to bring communities together in order to work towards Seshay-Selene's goals for their homeworld. As such they act as counselors and advisors, and it is not beyond them to gather like minded folk together to complete their assigned tasks. Thus adventurers are routinely employed the Nephthisians and may be true believers in their cause, patriots of their own nations, or simply mercenaries paid to do a job.

### Shared ENEMIES

Plots requiring multi-species cooperation in the Hollow Moon can be driven by enemies just as easily as they can be driven by some shared ally, such as the Nephthisians. Both the pteryx, and the Adhuzan Dominarchy (controlled by the kopru) can serve as some pretty spectacular enemies in the Midlands. The kopru are always trying to expand their territories and their influence, and once the pteryx begin to stir from their aeries in the Apennines, no one is safe.

Not all antagonists in the Hollow Moon are mortal. Several evil Immortals have taken an interest in the Hollow Moon, including Thanatos and Demogorgon. Though typically in hiding, their servants are sprinkled throughout the interior of Matera, having infiltrated nearly every Hollow Moon culture to varying extents. Thanatos especially works towards the downfall of the cultures descended from Nithia (both Thebit in Adhuza, and the Nephthisians in Albheldri), while Demogorgon is obsessed with causing as much mayhem through the pteryx as possible.

### Plain Old Greed

Many cultures, including Adhuza, Albheldri, Aran, Cacklogallinia, Taurus, Vesper, and even the Trogs of Putrescence, are driven by a need to improve themselves. In many, this is expressed by explorers, merchants, and even adventurers. Such folk are driven to travel through vale and dell, across twisted and volcanic mountain ranges, and over every sea in the Hollow Moon. Explorers and merchants constantly seek out new routes to open up new trading possibilities, or to give them an advantage over their competitors. Vessels in the Hollow Moon traverse land, sea, and some even fly the skyways (the fabled silver ships of the Nephthisians and silk dirigibles of Aran). Still, wherever goods and riches are transported, folk will have to defend themselves against the predations of pirates, bandits, and other brigands.

Likewise adventurers are not unknown in these lands, for the Hollow Moon has a long and varied history, and though cultures persist thanks to the Spell of Remembrance, many nations have risen and fallen inside the moon. As such there are countless ruins scattered across the Nearside, waiting to be explored by those daring - or foolish - enough. Abandoned Adhuzan outposts, ancient stongholds of the once great troglodyte empire, even a handful of pteryx repositories lost to time.

### The Hollow Moon: The Spindrift Sea



## NATIONS OF THE MIDLANDS

The Spindrift Sea is the largest single body of water in the Hollow Moon, and its central location in the Midlands plays a key role in the politics and dynamics of the region. It connects the Midlands and Southlands to the Duskward Rimlands and the Northlands, and vessels from half a dozen different nations or more ply its waters.

Two of the most powerful nations in the Hollow Moon lie along the shores of the Spindrift Sea, namely the Pteryx Apennines, and the Adhuzan Dominarchy, but even more distant nations like Taurus and Cacklogallinia have a presence here.



*Aardovai Warrior*

## Aardovai Rilles

### Arrival Date

2200 BC.

### On the Outer World

The aardovai developed in the Yazak Steppes region along the savage coast. Encroaching Oltecs, and later humanoids, drove them from their ancestral lands eastward toward the southern coast of Brun. The aggressive nations in that area (namely Intua and Taymora) easily dominated the primitive lupins and eventually drove them to extinction, though pockets may have survived in Sind and Hule until about 1000 BC..

### In the Hollow Moon

Aardovai territory is located on the broken marshy promontories of “the Rilles” that juts out into the southern Spindrift Sea. A narrow strip of land connects the Rilles to the elven Vesperlands of the southeast. The Sukate Fen dominates the central and eastern Rilles, while the Spaasuka Bog covers most of the western territory.

### Culture

A small, primitive, lupin breed similar to modern hunter and vermin hunter breeds, the aardovai are nomadic. All aardovai in the region are organized into four major clans, the Mnisukai, Wiyakai, Ainilai, and Tokai, each of which controls roughly a quarter of the Rilles. All of the tribes share a common heritage and culture, including a belief in Lakoahnu - a many legged, insectile, god who dwells in the heart of Mount Sotepeta and watches over their lands, taking care of their people. Among other things, Lakoahnu blesses the highly ritualized giant termite

hunts, upon which the aardovai rely for much of their resources and sustenance.

Though all aardovai worship Lakoahnu and hunt the giant termites of the region, that is where their similarities end. The Mnisukai, who dwell along the eastern shores of the Rilles, are the most sedentary and maintain a permanent settlement all year round. From there the Mnisukai patrol their territory in leather canoes and occasionally conduct trade with visiting gnomish steamships. The Wiyakai, in the south, are the most receptive to outsiders and often deal with elven hunters and trappers from Vesper. Most distant and isolated are the Ainilai, though they are not as hostile toward outsiders as the Tokai. Of all the tribes, the war-like Tokai are feared the most. They have been known to attack unwary seafarers, Vesper elves, and even neighboring aardovai tribes.

### Fire Times

During Fire Times, the aardovai tribes gather into larger semi-permanent settlements, while the most courageous warriors brave the wilds to hunt fledgling termite queens on their maiden flights. It is also during these times that trade is conducted with outsiders - mostly Vesper elves and steamship traveling gnomes from as far away as the Tauran Mounts.

### Adventure Ideas

- Times have been hard for the Mnisukai tribe, and its larders are nearly empty. As the next Fire Time approaches, it is obvious that something is wrong with the giant termites of the area. None of the nests are preparing for the flight of the new queens. Unless the PCs can determine the cause of the termite's plight and remove it, the tribe will surely starve.

- Aardovai families have been flocking to the call of the strange white fox known as Ghost Sister, who lives near the ruins of Taakglesk. Ghost Sister warns that the spirits of the troglodytes who once ruled this land are becoming unrestful, and will soon lead forth an undead army to slaughter the four tribes. The PCs must brave the dangers of the ruins in order to stop this foul plot.
- The Tokai are being driven into a murderous frenzy by some unknown power. Once their bloodlust peaks, they will descend upon the other tribes in slaughter. All signs point to something foul in their native hunting grounds of Yupemni Kaska that is feeding their madness. Can the PCs discover this mystery and put a stop to it before the aardovai fall into war?

## Adhuzan Dominions

The Adhuzan Dominarchy is intended to be one of the major antagonists of the Hollow Moon setting. It is a monolithic nation composed of many dominated cultures, and it is the intention of the author to revisit this land in more detail in the future with a dedicated article.

### Arrival Date

1800 BC to 950 BC.

### On the Outer World

The Adhuzan Dominarchy has had many incarnations on Mystara dating back to before the rise of Blackmoor. Its last incarnation was on Vulcania where the kopru brought together satrapies consisting of merfolk, dwarves, minotaurs, and humans from various cultures. When the satrapies began to



*Adhuzan Montage*

destabilize (due in equal parts to natural disasters and foreign attacks), the immortals rushed to save their unique culture. Various immortals have added other dominated cultures to the Hollow Moon over the centuries since then.

**In the Hollow Moon**

Adhuza stretches from the Spindrift Sea, home of the Twaal merfolk, to the Straight Wall of Thebit. The Aiwadrazuh mountain range runs that entire length, supporting several human populations along its base. Beneath its surface are heated lakes of water and lava, and the secret domain of the kopru who rule this land. To the west they are bordered by the Crystalbarrens of the Cryions, to the east by the elven Vesperlands and the hin of Shaergarde, and to the south by Cynidicea and Toroldorsk.

**Culture**

Twaal merfolk form the backbone of the empire. Their territory stretches across the western half of the Spindrift Sea and they are

connected to the dominions of the Midlands through man made canals and secret underground waterways. Just beneath the Twaal in the social pecking order of the empire are the men of Limor and Vareinya. They serve as merchants and ambassadors to the rest of the world, as well as forming the majority of the Adhuzan military. In

the south, descendants of Nithia, and the inheritors of that nation's once mighty magical legacy, pursue the arcane arts in Thebit.

Other races have also been brought into the fold. The satrapy of Kogalor is the homeland of dwarven craftsmen and artisans, whose fabled forges draw their power directly from the molten magma beneath the Aiwadrazuh mountains. The city state of Labrys is the home of minotaurs, many of which serve as elite shock troops and elite martial forces in the Adhuzan military, Orc slaves are also common throughout the Dominarchy's territory, their spirit and savagery long ago ground down by their masters.

Beneath the facade of it all lie the kopru, who control their puppet states from hidden thermal pools that are common along the Aiwadrazuh range. Masters at what they do, the kopru use subterfuge and manipulation more often than not to command their subjects, though outright mental domination is employed when necessary (the kopru use strategically placed colossal statues to help

boost their mental powers across their territory). Their subjects have been engineered over the centuries to be more susceptible to the kopru's powers, and in fact many of the human figurehead-rulers even have a merfolk ancestor - much like the Queen of Aquas on Mystara does.

### Fire Times

Fire Times are mild in Adhuza, because many of the underground volcanic vents are controlled (and manipulated) by the kopru. They still need to vent some of the volcanic power, but they can shunt activity to areas of their territory that are less populated. Alternatively they can also use it to punish populations that have displeased them (or somehow managed to break free of their control).

Mount Ammonius is the exception to this rule, and belches forth poisonous gasses on an annual basis that can drift over large swaths of land. Although its active period is well known, now one ever quite knows where the winds will carry its poison. Mount Flammarion, in the north, doesn't erupt quite as often (once every two years), but it sends goutts of fire and flaming rock into the air which often fall in Labrys, but have been known to reach faraway Vareinya and Limor.

### Adventure Ideas

- A small band of Vesper elves has infiltrated Thebit, and are planning to destroy the Straight Wall. Should they succeed, the massing hordes of cryions prowling around on the nearby crystalbarrens will swoop in to pillage and plunder the ancient city of Thebit.
- The statue of Adhuza-M'Thaz in Labrys has been desecrated by dissidents. The

PCs must brave the maze-like wastelands of Labrys to remove the rebels, and find and repair the statue (lest the kopru lose much of their control over the surrounding minotaur population. Alternatively, the PCs may have been sent to destroy the statue, in which case they must defeat forces loyal to the kopru in order to carry out their mission.

- Strange fumes have begun seeping out from the Plains of Ammonium. Though not quite deadly, the gases do induce a semi-catatonic state in those breathing them, resulting in entire populations who exhibit mind numbing, zombie-like traits. The fumes are in fact caused by the kopru deep in the heart of the Aiwadrazuh Range, who are experimenting with ways to make their populations more pliable and easy to dominate. The PCs must journey to the heart of kopru lands and assault their underground stronghold before the kopru can succeed in their plot.

## Albheldri Islands

### Arrival Date

691 BC

### On the Outer World

The Albheldri culture is actually a combination of two outer world cultures, the Nephthisian priestesses (who were an ancient religious sect in Nithia) and the Albharendi albinos of the Ierendi Islands. Allies of a sort on the outer world, it was the Albharendi who granted the Nephthisians sanctuary on their islands when the sect was being persecuted by the ascending priesthood of Rathenos. During the last years of Nithia, once it had fallen completely under the corruption of



*Nephthisian Priestess*

Thanatos, the priestesses and their allies were once again persecuted. Following the proscriptions of their Immortal patroness, the Nephthisians build ships that could sail the dark Void in the sky and fled to the moon. While not all the Albharendi could flee with them, several populations were taken up by the immortals and deposited in the new homeland inside of Matera.

### **In the Hollow Moon**

Although the arrival of the Vareinyans and Limorans of Adhuza preceded the Albheldri, the albinos and their allies had one distinct advantage over their human cousins - their eyesight was already adapted to living in the dark. Because of this the Albheldri spread across the Nearside, and have since integrated themselves into many of the nearby cultures as counselors and advisors. Taurus gnomes,

aardovai of the Rilles, hin of Shaergarde, and others all welcome council from itinerant Nephthisian priestesses.

The Haemus Islands remain the power base for the Albheldri culture, and the center of their population on Nearside. Their shipwrights are known throughout the Midlands, and merchants and traders from Albheldri ply the waters from the Spindrift Sea to Mare Tranquillitatis and further Duskward.

### **Culture**

Albheldri culture is the amalgamation of two Mystaran cultures - Nephthisian cultists from ancient Nithia, and albino Albarendi mystics of Ierendi. Deeply spiritual, the Albheldri people live their lives in the service of Seshay-Seline. The Haemus Islands afford the Albheldri relative protection from foreign aggressors and allow the populace to live and practice their religious beliefs in peace.

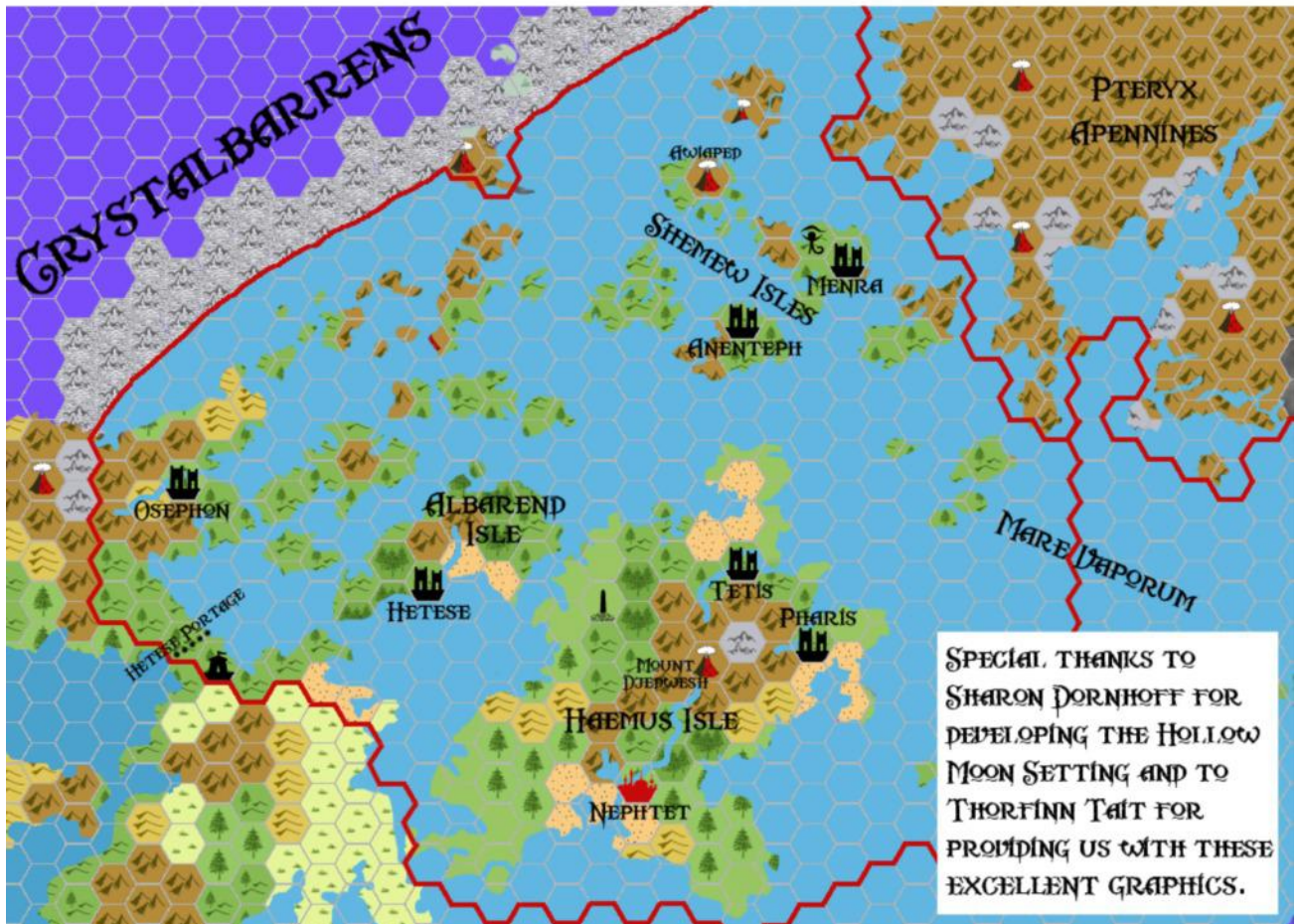
Master shipbuilders, the Albheldri are also well known for their mysticism, and there are several mystical orders scattered throughout the islands. Most of these fall under the auspices of the Order of the Moon, which was established in ancient times on Mystara as a way of controlling those infected by Taymoran lycanthropy. The founders of the Order were able to regulate lycanthropy by tying its magical effects to the phases of the moon, and through training and magical items were able to give those afflicted by lycanthropy some modicum of control over their lives. Today in Albheldri lycanthropes are considered blessed by Nephthisi, and the Order of the Moon sends its mystical shapeshifters across the Nearside to further the goals of their immortal patroness.



# HOLLOW MOON

BY JOHN GALVIN 2009

# ALBHELDRI ISLANDS



Although spiritual life is dominated by Nephthisi, other immortals also hold sway in Albheldri culture. Bastet, Maat, and even Pflarr, have devotees throughout the islands and beyond. Many Nithian immortals also have pocket followings, though not all of them are welcome. The Cult of Rathanos is frowned upon by the dominant Nephthisians because of their patriarchal chauvinism and active plotting to bring down the followers of Nephthisi.

### Fire Times

Fire times happen fairly infrequently in Albheldri, although when they do occur they can be extremely violent. Mount Djedwesh erupts once every 50 years, causing the populations of Nephtet, Tetis, and Pharis to evacuate. Most move to the southeastern shores of the island and to Albarend and Shemew islands just before the event, leaving those three cities as virtual ghost towns for a full lunar month.

Mount Awiaped erupts once every year, but its effects are very minor. A small, steady

plume of ash and gas seep from the mountaintop, and thin rivulets of magma pour into the surrounding sea. These times are sacred for the Cult of Rathanos, who use them to meet in secret inside the heart of the volcano.

### Adventure Ideas

- The Cult of Rathanos has discovered a means to control some of the volcanic vents connecting Mount Awiaped to the Pteryx Apennines and is planning to use that power to destroy a pteryx city. The Cult of Rathanos plans to seize control after the pteryx destroy the entrenched Nephthisian theocracy. Unfortunately for the cult, should they actually succeed, there may be very little left for them to take control of.
- An ancient Taymoran artifact resurfaces in the mystic fortress of Menra, causing all lycanthropes in the area to lose control of their shapeshifting abilities and mental faculties. The Order of the Moon is sending a band of adventurers to find and destroy the artifact before its members lose all control and a new lycanthropic curse is unleashed upon the islands.
- The Immortal Nephthises (Seshay-Seline) has been sending dreams to her priestesses telling them to once again sail the stars. Adventurers are gathered together to explore the caverns beneath Hetese, where the fabled silver ship, Moonlight, awaits rediscovery. Once freed from its current guardians, the ship and its crew will be tasked with taking Nephthises' word throughout the Hollow Moon and possibly beyond.

## Devilfish

### Arrival Date

1650 BC

### On the Outer World

The devilfish were undersea nomads that migrated across the seas of Mystara raiding and pillaging the tritons, merrow, and other races that lived there. Shortly after the fall of Taymora, the devilfish became infected by a strain of undersea vampirism which spread through their culture like wildfire. To preserve their original culture, a small group was moved into the Hollow Moon before they could become infected.

### In the Hollow Moon

The devilfish thrive in the waters of Mare Vaporum, where the floor of the Spindrifft Sea is covered by basalt runoff from Albheldri and the Pteryx Apennines, and very little light shines through from the crystal bedrock, even during Fulldark.

### Culture

Nomadic raiders, devilfish culture is cyclic, and based around times of feast and famine. During most of the lunar year, the warm waters of Mare Vaporum team with life, and devilfish raiding parties are content to remain within to hunt. During this time their numbers increase, rising to a point that is almost unsupportable. When the Circle Tides come (in the months of Itiukkin and Itinissatu respectively), devilfish society is thrown into chaos. Tidal forces caused by Mystara and Patera cause the waters of the Spindrifft Sea to rotate, siphoning the warmer waters out of Mare Vaporum and jetting them around the sea. Though the Circle Tides last for only

*Devilfish*

three days, their effects on the region last for much longer.

During these times, swarms of starving devilfish make a mass exodus from their traditional hunting grounds, and begin to raid and pillage across the entire Spindrift Sea. Both undersea dwellers and surface going ships are at risk from the ravenous locust-like hordes of devilfish, but such activities take a toll on their numbers as well. Within a month, devilfish populations are greatly reduced (either through starvation or violence) and when they return back to Mare Vaporum their numbers are much more sustainable.

Though savage and unpredictable, smaller devilfish communities can be reasoned with on occasion. Small kelp farming villages on the outskirts of Twaal controlled waters will often send tributes to local devilfish tribes in

return for being overlooked during their depredations, but sometimes more sinister pacts are made with the creatures. A handful of pirates operating in the Spindrift Sea strike bargains with the devilfish, who will track merchant vessels and even help bring them down - the pirates take the plunder and the devilfish take the vanquished crews.

### Fire Times

Though relatively mild in this region, activity from undersea vents and volcanic runoff from the Apennines increases two to three fold once every twenty years. Such an influx of heat sends the local ecologies, including the devilfish, into overdrive. During these years the devilfish populations can become so bloated that they nearly turn the Spindrift Sea black when making their exodus on the Circle Tides. Afterwards, the waters of the Spindrift Sea choke on the toxicity of dead devilfish corpses, crashing neighboring fishing societies and causing widespread famine both under the sea and above it.

### Adventure Ideas

- PCs are stranded on a small island during circle tide and the devilfish swarm the waters around them. A shipwrecked boat on a nearby island may be their only means of escape, but in order to access it the PCs must figure out a way to cross the devilfish infested waters to reach it.
- A small village of Twaal kelp farmers has been suffering the depredations of local devilfish for decades now, and they fear their village will be overrun as the 20 year cycle of the Fire Times approaches and devilfish populations explode. The PCs are asked to help the Twaal defend



their village, and must prepare to survive an assault from overwhelming numbers.

- Mauro pirates have been attacking and sinking Nephthisian merchant ships for several months, and the priestesses believe they are receiving help from a local tribe of devilfish. The PCs are tasked with finding the pirates and their allies, and putting a stop to them. The savage tribe of devilfish are actually worshippers of Thanatos, and are gathering surface dwellers for use in a sacrifice that will create a new breed of vampiric devilfish. If they are not stopped, such an undead plague could destroy all life in the Spindrift Sea.

## Mauro Isles

**Errata:** In Threshold Issue #2, the Hollow Moon timeline states that the Mauro rakasta are placed in the Hollow Moon in BC 400. This is actually in error. Myoshima is founded on Patera in BC 400, but it is not until 800 years later, in AC 400 (when Myoshima is finally united under a single leader), that rakasta are placed on the Mauro Isles inside of Matera.

### Arrival Date

400 AC

### On the Outer World

Rakasta fleeing from Mystara in BC 400 established the city of Mara on Patera. The banished rakasta spent the next few centuries dominating their new homeland, conquering tribes of primitive rakasta and creating a kingdom of feudal lords throughout the Myoshima Islands. In AC 300 civil war breaks

out among the Myoshimans as various daimyos attempted to unite all of the feudal lords under one ruler. After a century of fighting, Daimyo Hirameki succeeded in uniting all of the warring clans, but not before several are whisked away to the Hollow Moon by the immortals.

### In the Hollow Moon

Being very similar to the Myoshima Islands on Patera, the rakasta clans placed here took little time to subjugate the territory. The Mauro Islands consist of several ancient craters and caldera strung together in the western Spindrift Sea. The three major populations are centered on the islands of Hyoto in the north, and Shimtora and Raitochi in the south. The central crater chains are more sparsely populated, although their waters are shallow and support a wide variety of fish. The soil on these islands also tends to be more fertile, though the dangers of the Fire Times in these areas is greater as well.

### Culture

The Mauro rakasta are primarily fishermen, and ply their trade from a flotilla of ships as well as along the shores of their country. Many villages lie along the coast, and are composed of wooden stilt houses designed to weather circle tides that raise the sea levels twice a year.

All rakasta in Mauro, regardless of their station, owe fealty to one of the great daimyos of the land. The three most powerful are Anori, Kageoku, and Taniokura, all of whom employ sizable military forces led by powerful samurai, warriors with braided fur and tattooed pelts. Samurai warriors are the only rakasta in Mauro that are allowed to bear iron

weapons - for others owning such tools is little more than a death sentence.

Shamans and oracles are abundant in the country, and are often sought after to provide advice on every aspect of daily life, from where to fish, when to harvest crops, and even when to make war upon a neighbor. Mauro rakasta are fond of stories, especially those related to their ancestors, and take great pride in crafting songs and ballads that can last for hours on end. Though aware of the greater world, most pay it little heed, being focused instead on their family, their honour, and their lord. Even the daimyos, more intent on fighting one another than any outside force, largely ignore the nations surrounding them - though on occasion one or more of them has sent tributes to Adhuza to curry favors or buy support for local conquests.

### Fire Times

Most of the Mauro Islands sport some number of craters and calderas, many of which are active throughout the year. Because of this, and because there are very few real volcanoes in the Spindrift Sea (relative to the rest of Nearside), Fire Times tend to be mild in these lands. The one exception is along the rim of Bangu Kureta, which sports several live volcanoes. These spit out goutts of ash on a regular basis throughout the year, but once every 20 years more violent eruptions throw chunks of burning basalt into the sky.

### Adventure Ideas

- Rumbings along the Bangu Kureta during the latest Fire Times have awakened evil spirits deep in the earth. Filled with bloodlust, and a seething hatred for the living, these spirits wage a campaign of terror against the villagers and fishermen of Hyoto. The PCs must

brave the treacherous terrain and poisonous vapors of the great crater to find the spirit's lair and destroy them before entire villages are carried off to be devoured.

- Daimyo Taniokura has claimed the title of shogun, and is amassing a large army of samurai to attack his neighbors. Several villages have already fallen prey to his forces and soon the other major clans will be forced into an alliance to stop him. Unfortunately the shogun has sold his honour to Adhuza, and is little more than a kopru puppet. The PCs are sent to discover from where the shogun's newfound power issues and to put a stop to it before all of Mauro falls to war.
- The court of Daimyo Anori is thrown into turmoil after a stranger is found washed up upon the shores. After nursing the stranger back to health, Daimyo Anori gives him the run of his palace and then promptly secludes himself behind closed doors while his sons bicker and fight for the aging rakasta's title. When the PCs determine that the stranger, a mordigswerg dwarf, is behind the entire fiasco, they must put an end to his treachery before the entire island falls to infighting.

### Marsh of Putrescence

Marsh of Putrescence troglodytes are one of the few Hollow Moon cultures originally detailed by Sharon Dornhoff and Geoff Gander, and as such there is a plethora of information that can be found on the nation already in the Vaults of Pandius.

**Arrival Date**

Mystaran Origin: First wave - Brasol Range of Davania, c. 12,500 BC (Shovelfaces); Second wave - Northwestern Davanian plains, c. 7,000 BC (Longlegs)

**On the Outer World**

Two distinct troglodyte cultures were moved from the outer world to the inside of Matera, on two different occasions. The Shovelfaces lived in the Brasol Range of Davania, allies of the pteryx in the war against the carnifex, and were transported to Matera along with the other defenders of Attyx just before that last bastion of freedom fell.

Longlegs troglodytes were transported to the Hollow Moon later. They lived in the northwestern plains of Davania and served the dreaded Y'Hog carnifex, albeit unwillingly. As Y'Hog was pressed by enemies on all sides and ready to fall, the Longlegs rebelled. Unfortunately for them the enemies of Y'Hog made little distinction between the carnifex and their servitors (even those who no longer served the carnifex) and rather than let these courageous creatures be destroyed the Immortals moved them to Matera.

**In the Hollow Moon**

A fitting home for the troglodytes, the Marsh of Putrescence stretches outward from the Pteryx Apennines and into the crystalbarrens of Mare Imbrium, with a small stretch of beach bordering the northern coast of the Spindrift Sea. Shovelface clans dominate the marsh's interior, running along the massive cliff face bordering the towering Apennines to the east. Later arrivals, the Longlegs created abodes along the outskirts of the marsh, bordering both the crystalbarrens and the Spindrift Sea.

**Culture**

Troglodyte culture is far from monolithic, or peaceful, as the two troglodyte species living in the area do not get along. The older of the two species, the Shovelfaces, believe that it was the pteryx who saved them from the carnifex and brought them to the Hollow Moon to escape destruction. They share their former allies' disdain for non-reptilian races, and in general distrust strangers. Few outsiders (even other troglodytes) are ever allowed within their territory, and they will meet any uninvited guests with suspicion and violence.

Longlegs troglodytes are far more open to outsiders, and are in fact who most Materans think of when troglodytes are mentioned. Merchant vessels ply the waters of the Spindrift Sea to do trade with Longlegs along the coast of the Marsh, and anyone wishing to traverse the length of the swamp (to gain access to northern lands) do so under their auspices.

Little known to most outsiders, there is yet a third population of troglodytes living within the confines of the Marsh of Putrescence. Mixed bloods form a buffer zone between the Shovelfaces and the Longlegs. Though every bit as isolationist as their Shovelfaced kin, these mixed bloods are more apt to warn off intruders rather than attacking them outright.

**Fire Times**

The Blue Smokies, the marsh's two semi-active volcanoes belch forth a deep blue-tinted vapour during Fire Times, causing nearby ground to become soggy and un-farmable. Hot-springs and noxious sulphur-tainted geysers also become more active during these times, and many trops in the area (mainly Longlegs) must either live on

stores stockpiled throughout the rest of the year or migrate southwest along the border of the crystalbarrens.

### Adventure Ideas

A caravan of merchants from the Spindrift Sea has hired the PCs to act as guards and guides through the Marsh of Putrescence. Men from Thebit to the south have heard of the fabled works of the Mordrigswerg and have brought crates of spices and precious metals to trade with the dwarves. The PCs must protect them from the perils of the crystalbarrens as well as from the Shovelface clans that block their route.

Troglodyte kingdoms once spanned the majority of Nearside, and there are still those among the Longlegs that wish to reclaim that former glory. The PCs are tasked with journeying to the fabled ruins of Attyx and retrieve artifacts that could be used to unite the clans... and from there to conquer the nations around the Spindrift Sea.

A blood feud has broken out among two families of neighboring Shovelfaces, and threatens to expand to allied clans. What started as an argument over who brewed the best bur-reed moonshine has quickly devolved into an all-out war. PCs need to brave the Marsh's interior and find a way to stop the feud, but may be in over their heads.

## Vesper

### Arrival Date

1400 BC

### On the Outer World

Elves living near the vicinity of Glantri have had a dark and perilous past, being driven beneath the ground on at least two separate occasions - first after the Great Rain of Fire,



*Vesper Elf*

and again after an ancient Blackmoorian artifact was detonated circa BC 1700. One group of Schattenalfen, having rejected the enticements of Atzanteotl, finally achieved their dreams of living on the surface. Small numbers, and increasing attacks from humanoids (mostly influenced by Atzanteotl), doom the elves to extinction on Mystara.

### In the Hollow Moon

Vesper elves are most densely populated along the shores of Sinus Medii, but their territory stretches from Mare Vaporum bordering the Albheldri Isle in the north, all the way to the Hypparq Sea in the southwest. The northern lands hold some of the largest grass plains in the Hollow Moon, and are separated from the rest of Vesper by the Rima

Ariadys, a vast gorge running east to west across the entire Vesper Peninsula.

Moving south, the grasslands turn to coniferous forests, which in turn become vast swaths of giant fungal forests along the coasts of Sinus Medii. The center of Vesper is dominated by the Rhanqal Mountain Range that stretches from the shores of Sinus Medii to the Hypparq Sea, and holds a myriad of cold and crystal clear lakes amongst its many dells and valleys.

### Culture

The Vesper elves are organized into several different city states throughout their territory, each controlled by one or more ancestral clans. City states are very competitive with one another, especially those situated along the Sinus Medii. Rivalry amongst the states can become very heated, and even on occasion lead to outright war, though all of Vesper is quick to band together when facing outside threats.

Though each of the city states have their own rulers and customs, one common factor binds all the elves in Vesper together - the relic-keepers. Gifted to the elves upon their placement into the Hollow Moon, their relic is called the Prism of All Colors, and is located deep within the sacred temple of Angkar. The Prism's magic affords the keepers the power to see things as they truly are - a rare gift for those living within the dark confines of the Matora's interior. Such powers are also especially beneficial for a people living so close to the Adhuzan Dominarchy, for it allows the keepers to see who has been dominated by the kopru.

### Fire Times

Most elven cities in Vesper are built far enough away from the active volcanoes in the region as to not be affected by the Fire Times. Mount Kodyn erupts once every five years, sending a great plume of ash over the shores of the Spindrift Sea. The Caldera Horrocks, near the Temple of Angkar on the shores of the Hypparq, erupts once every 157 years. The devastation it causes is enormous, but the elven relic-keepers at Angkar use their clan relic to protect the ancient temple from destruction.

### Adventure Ideas

- Monsters have once again begun to creep out of the Valley of Horrors, and the PCs are sent to investigate. A new Cult of Atzanteotl has formed around the Great Flying Viper, a half-dragon, half-viper, that is gathering minions and preparing to attack the fortress of Hyccal.
- Vareinyan pirates haunt the Hypparq Sea, raiding and pillaging villages along Vesper's territory. When the PCs are sent to stop the attacks, they find that the pirates have an unexpected ally - the Nixie Queen has secretly dominated them and is using them to gather all the elven males in the area.
- The relic-keepers have discovered a kopru plot in the very heart of Angkar, and task the PCs with rooting out those corrupted by the creatures. Three kopru puppets, hand-picked and slowly dominated over the last few hundred years (so as to not be detected by the Prism's powers), are now close enough to the Prism of All Colors to poison it permanently. Should they succeed, the Prism will no longer be able to protect Vesper from the mind



dominating powers of the kopru, and city by city, the elves will fall. PCs must uncover the conspirators and stop them... but who can they trust?

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# City of the Ogre King, part 2

## The lower ruins of Kotesh

### *Secrets of Koskatep, level 2a*

by Francesco Defferrari (Sturm)

This level can be reached only by going down from room 3 of Level 2 B (the former Akropolis of Kotesh and later temple of Ixion, in Issue 3 of Threshold magazine). PC's will find themselves in **Level 2 A, Ancient Kotesh**:

**Random Critters** table and **Wandering Parties** table of the level above still apply here. On a roll of 1 on 1d6, roll 1d20 on the Random Critters Table. There is also a 1% chance on 1d100 in each room that a Wandering Party will be encountered.

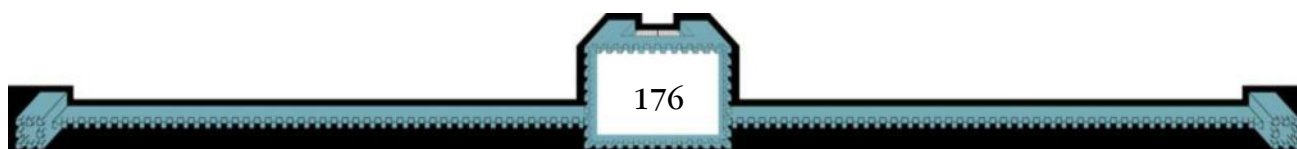
This city was inhabited by ogres, giants and followers of Nyx, humans and otherwise, for 7 centuries from 603 BC to 95 AC. Its layout is very particular as it had no streets:

**Dark green areas** were once courts and other spaces open to the sky, i.e below roof level, while part of the life of the city took place over the roofs of the houses (depicted below in white). The wooden stairs once connecting the roofs with the courts have collapsed long ago. The courts are mostly buried by earth and debris and therefore impassable, or mostly so.

**White areas** are the houses of the ancient city, that normally only had access from the rooftops, except for areas 2 and 3, that were under the Akropolis (Level 2 B) and therefore had doors. They were sliding stone slabs doors, so could be difficult to spot (1-2 on 1d6) and many are jammed, so are depicted in the map as secret doors.

As the city is now buried under level 1, many houses obviously no longer have access from the roofs. There are however, several passage between the houses that didn't existed in the original city: they were created during the battle between ogres and Ixion's followers, usually by clerical or wizardly magic, so they are no door but only rubble from fallen and broken walls. White areas are the ones whose walls were broken, so can easily be accessed.

**Light green areas** are a particular case: these are the houses that, like the white ones, had access from the roof, but lost it when The Last One buried the city in 227AC. Their walls however were not broken down when the Followers of Ixion conquered the city, and



many were only partially sacked or left exactly as the ogres and giants had abandoned them, so if PC's are somehow able to break into these houses they will find the original objects of 8 centuries ago (if humans reused the house) or even of 1000 years ago (if they

were abandoned by the ogres or giants and never used again by the humans). Random critters could still have found a way to enter any of these rooms (1 on 1d6 as above), as well as Wandering Parties.



**1 - The North East tower.** A fireball was thrown inside the tower during the battle between the ogres and Ixion's followers. The remains of the five ogre warriors that died here were never removed. The Last One has animated them as **zombies**, waiting for intruders to enter.

The Last One will send the zombies against the Darkers and they'll defeat them, and give the weapons to their ogre allies. The tower will remain empty until extensive reparations of Level 2 can be started, which could take some years, after which it is probably used as a storeroom.

**2 - The Under Palace.** This area was underground even before the landslide that buried ancient Kotesh, as it was under the Acropolis with the Ogre King's palace. It housed mostly kitchens, storerooms and servants quarters. As troops of the ogre kingdom fought hard here to avoid the fall of the palace, the rooms are heavily ruined and buried. Ixion's followers however cleared them of bodies, so just common objects and random **critters** (see table for Level 2 B) may normally be found here. There are sliding stone doors between the rooms of this area, but they are often difficult to spot and jammed. These are indicated as secret doors in the map, even if they really aren't.

The Darkers will not immediately find the six vampires, but when they do they'll try to bring them to their side. The choice is very difficult for the six because by now they have developed a strong friendship that is more important to them than their former religious allegiances.

**3 - The Barracks.** This area housed ogre soldiers at the time of the Ogre Kings. It was almost destroyed completely during Ixion's invasion and left so. Now

1 - The zombies are equipped with ogre arms of almost a thousand years ago, some rusty but others in good condition and very interesting to modern ogres and historians.

2 - When The Last One attacked however he killed several of Ixion's followers here, and he buried in one closed room here two young men and two young women, close friends: Ilya, Midin, Irina and Malina were turned into vampires, then Neva and Martin, followers of Nyx in later centuries, were forced to join them too. Now they live in one of the apparently closed rooms, from time to time forced by The Last One to kill intruders. If turned there is a 50% they'll break free of the bond with Him.

Another room still preserves Kotesh's library, mostly in parchments, tablets and papyrus, with books that could be priceless to scholars and very useful to adventurers too, as they describe in detail nearby human and inhuman cities, now lost and in ruins.

3 - The remains are too broken to be animated as skeletons but the Last One will raise 10 ogre wraiths

burnt skeletons can still be seen among destroyed arms and the usual debris.

The Darkers will be able to bring the wraiths to their side, as they were ogre followers of Nyx. They will remain here as guardians for them.

**4 - The Former Gate** The entrance of the ancient city was completely buried by the landslide. The ogre-built gatehouse was demolished in the attack by the followers of Ixion, and without giant and ogre workers it was rebuilt in much smaller proportions, and evidently with a much less sound structure. The area is impassable.

The Darkers will eventually clear the area of critters but will not excavate it as now the gate, being underground, is useless.

**5 - The South East Tower.** The tower was taken during Ixion's invasion and the defenders killed, their bodies later removed. The tower is completely empty.

If the Darkers discover the apparition they'll try to raise him as a full incorporeal to join their ranks.

**6 - The Foundry** A center of power in Kulfan's kingdom, the Foundry was the siege of the metalworkers, ogres who combined massive strength with quasi-magical knowledge of metalsmithing. It was gutted with magic by the followers of Ixion, although the massive outer structure resisted. Thus, the area looks blasted and scorched. The large amounts of metallic ores stored in nearby warehouses have attracted Rust Monsters, which can be found in both areas. There are a total of 12 **Rust Monsters** in this level. 2d6-3 of them can be found here at any time.

from them to be sent against intruders, or less if he decides so.

**4 - Digging into the debris,** critters hideouts could be found (see table), but also ancient arms of the ogre and giant soldiers, and even a few human sized, as there were followers of Nyx among the ones who fell during Ixion's invasion.

**5 - The only interesting thing here** is some graffiti done by ogres and human soldiers on the interior walls. The apparition of a human soldier will appear sometimes to talk, but he's immaterial and unable to attack. The Last One sometimes used him to convince unaligned adventurers that the followers of Ixion are violent and tyrannical, simply to create division and confusion.

**6 - All the metal weapons have** been long eaten, but there are some interesting carved wooden spear shafts in a corner.

Eventually the Darkers will chase the monsters away and the ogres and giants will rebuild the Foundry, but it will take time.

**7 - The South Court.** The former court is completely buried under the earth. Here ogres were killed during Ixion's invasion and priests and soldiers were buried during The Last One's attack, so there is a good supply of skeletons under here, ready to be animated. Some can be seen partially emerged.

The Darkers will place Aysin, an **incorporeal undead** cleric of Nyx (as Spectre, C7) to guard the place against further animations of dead bodies and random intruders.

**8 - The Great House.** This place was the common house of the metalworkers. Many were killed here when the human followers of Ixion invaded, their possessions and remains long gone. Later humans used the house as a barracks for short periods. Now **critters** and **rust monsters** often wander here.

The Darkers could discover the incorporeal undead before The Last One has a chance to use them, but as they were followers of Ixion in life they'll refuse to aid them. They could aid PC's loyal to the sun god.

**9 - Ore Warehouse** This large building served to store metallic ores during the days of the Ogre Kings, which were then transformed into weapons and tools in the Foundry (area 6). Rust Monsters have since consumed all of the iron ore, although some copper and tin ore can be still found here. 2d6-5 **Rust Monsters** are encountered here at any time.

7 - The Last One will animate 2d100 skeletons here to fight the Darkers.



*Aysin,  
incorporeal undead*

**8 -** The Last One hid some incorporeal undead (1d4 wights and 1d4 wraiths) here for future use, he'll not awake them for the initial Darkers invasion.

**9 -** The Last One will animate some rust monster skeletons here if he needs them.

The Darkers will clear the place of all the rust monsters, dead and alive.

**10 - The Darkers house.** This was the main headquarters of the Darkers at the time of the Ogre Kings, then it was used by Ixion's followers, then by the Darkers of Lord Vudar again, then by priests of Ixion (see level 1). Over the centuries The Last One managed to capture some of these folk, much to their misery, deforming their bodies and turning them into **intelligent undead**. There are now 22 of them, they look like sick gremlins or goblins and are capable of speech, but difficult to understand (treat as ghouls). If turned there is a 50% chance they will be freed from The Last One's bond.



The Darkers will obviously try to free the creatures and will promise them better bodies, but probably many of them will ask for a merciful death and nothing more.

**11 - The Long Court.** Between the temple of Nyx, metalworkers and stonemasons, this court was an important centre of the daily life at the time of the Ogre Kings. Later it was used for training by the followers of Ixion, but now is completely buried.

**10 -** The miserable creatures still have many objects and memories of their former lives, and are therefore an important source about the history of the first two levels.

**11 -** Many skeletons are buried here too, and The Last One can animate 2d20 in this area.

The Darkers will defeat the skeletons and bless the area to avoid further animations.

**12 - The temple of Nyx.** The main temple of the town at the time of the Ogre Kings also was the burial place of rulers for centuries. Indeed, in the crypt were buried Kulfan and several of his successors. The temple was partially destroyed by the followers of Ixion but they left the crypt undisturbed. Now it is a big room, eerily empty and silent.

The Darkers will destroy this monster too, and they will be able to call **Kulfan** back. The ancient ogre king will return as a powerful nosferatu in their service, and he'll arrange to have the temple repaired and his quarters here, for the moment. Kulfan has magical weapons and armor.

**13 - Ogre King's Armory** This area was originally the lower level of the Ogre King's palace, dug into the acropolis. It was used to store weapons and armor used by the King's elite warriors. This, and the adjacent areas, were preserved from the landslide, since they were already underground. The last battles of both wars were fought near, and in, this area. The Last One left a big **Bone Golem** (HD8) here made of ogre and human skeletons.

The Darkers will destroy the Golem, and eventually they'll refurbish this room as an armory.

**14 - The General House.** This was the house of top officials under the Ogre Kings and was used for the same purpose by Ixion followers afterwards. The Last One has used the bodies of a former ogre general and of a former Ixion general to build an unintelligent, but very scary, **undead** (As Nightwalker, HD15).

The Darkers will not initially encounter the Monster, The Last One will send it against them at a later time.

**12 - The Last One** tried many times, in vain, to reanimate the body of Kulfan, but was unable to open his tomb. He however built a huge monster with the bodies of all the other ogre and giant kings. The Body has ghoulish powers but 12HD and his 3.5 meters tall (11.5 feet). It is hidden in the crypt and will come out only if The Last One wishes so.

**13 -** The room has many signs of past battles but not much is left except for some rusty weapons and armor and old clothes which belonged to the followers of Ixion killed here in the past.

**14 -** The most interesting things that can be found here are stone and clay maps of Traladara at the time of the Ogre King and some leather maps of the times after, hidden among the ruins.



**15 - Soldiers Court.** In this court ogre soldiers practiced and trained, some died here during Ixion's invasion and their bodies were burned.

The Darkers will not bother to clear the place as it's now underground.

**16 - The Rain Market.** This huge area was divided into several stalls and served as a covered market for the city. It was abandoned and sacked when Ixion's followers invaded, and never cleaned or resettled. Centuries old remains of merchandise still litters the floor.

The Darkers will eventually collect all the interesting items left here and refurbish the market.

**17 - The Tailor House.** This was a warehouse containing cloths of all kinds, a workshop and a store at the time of the Ogres Kings. Ragged remains still lie around in the room, and **oozes** have several lairs here.

The Darkers will eventually clear the room and take the tapestries.

**18 - The Leather House.** Here leatherworkers had workshops and stores at the time of Ogre Kings. Strangely enough, among the occasional **beetle and giant rat**, there is still an **ogre cobbler** working here.

The Darkers will try to give Humgr a better corpse and he'll be very happy to have people around again. He'll not be hostile to PC's, not even if they openly claim enmity to Nyx, as he doesn't really care.

**19 - The Workers Houses.** Mostly ogre workers lived here or in the level below the room at the time of the Ogre Kings. Not much is left of the bedrolls and the meager personal possessions that once were here.

**15 -** Digging here some old weapons could be found, some valuable to collectors, and some random critter.

**16 -** For a scholar, a huge interesting variety of everyday objects from centuries past could be found here, as clothes, leather, carved wood and stones, mirrors, semi-precious stones, ceramic, ivory and metal medallions or figurines and much more.

**17 -** Stuffed in a corner there are two interesting and precious tapestries praising Nyx and the Ogre Kings.

**18 -** Humgr, the cobbler, was killed here by humans and forgotten, until The Last One raised him as an intelligent undead just for fun, but then forgot about him. He's not fully aware of being dead and of the passage of time. He feels a little alone, so he'll be happy to chat with anyone, even if people could for good reasons find him quite appalling as his corpse isn't in good shape.

**19 -** Hidden among the debris and the litter on the floor there is the only passage that allows access to Level 3 of Koskatep, a layer built

The Darkers will repair the stair as they will move quite often from one level to another.

**20 - The Small Palace.** This was in the past city the only thing similar to a tavern and an inn, as is evident from the many ruined bed rolls still lying around. It was partially burned and not much is left intact here. Some **rhagodessas**, with eggs and larvae too, have chosen the place as their main home and will try to chase intruders away.

The Darkers will not kill the rhagodessas but rather will charm and train them to be used as guardians.

**21 - The South West Gate.** As the other gates, this too is now completely buried. The two small towers on its side still have corpses of fallen ogre soldiers.

The Darkers will destroy the things.

**22 - The Great Tower.** This tower is the only part of ancient Kotesh that surfaces outside on the left side of Koskatep hill, but the old access in the roof is blocked by debris and earth.

The Darkers eventually will discover the access, repair it, and will always post **two ogres and one hill giant sentries** here, to look around and block the passage. They'll let Chuv live here, not realizing that he'll continue to be used as a spy by The Last One. Eventually that could get him killed.

by hutaakans and later inhabited by gnolls. The passage is a stair that was clearly repaired multiple times during the centuries but now it's not in the best of conditions.

**20 -** A curious adventurer's journal centuries old can be found in a corner. It's interesting as it comes from a group mixed of ogres, giants and humans who tried in vain to prevent the war that destroyed ancient Kotesh in 95 AC.

**21 -** The Last One made a little experiment mixing ogre skeletons and gelatinous cubes, so now there are 4 gelatinous skeletons in the towers. They aren't very dangerous so he forgot them, but he'll use them against the Darkers in their initial invasion.

**22 -** Chuv, an almost mad werebat, lives here secretly in a lair built just under the roof and hidden by wooden beams. The Last One had discovered him some time ago and now uses him as a spy and torments him, but Chuv would very much like to be left alone. He can communicate with all the normal and giant bats of the area, so he knows almost everything of the first 2 levels and somethings of Levels 3, 4 and 5 too.

**23 - The West Court.** Here was the biggest town market at the time of the Ogre Kings. Now it's a favorite place for **centipedes and carrion crawlers**.

The Darkers will defeat the skeletons and try to clear the place, but when The Last One attacks again he'll be able to animate 1d20 more skeletons here.

**23 - The Last One** will animate 1d100 skeletons against the Darkers here.



**24 - The Rich Houses.** This area of the city was decorated with wall reliefs and paintings, and the houses well furnished, as it housed ogre and giant chiefs, shamans, and wizards, at the time of the Ogre Kings. It was heavily damaged during Ixion's followers invasion but partially repaired, as some priests lived here using the old furniture. The Last One animated 1d8 human acolytes as **ghouls** to roam the area.

The Darkers will destroy the ghouls and slowly will search for all the precious items left here to sell them, while the place will be eventually resettled by ogres. Occasionally the female ogres and hill giants living in Level 2B could be exploring here.

**24 -** Much is left of the precious things the ogres and human priests had: necklaces, brooches, rings, clothes and much more, among the debris littering these rooms.

**25 - The Guildhall.** This building was originally a stonemason's guildhall. Ogres employed a small number of Stone Giants as stonemasons, and the giants built this hall as their own quarters. Thus, the hall is built in grander proportions than the rest of the city, and has withstood the destruction much better than other buildings. There is little of value left in this area, although signs are evident of a past splendor -- holes in the walls hint at massive chandeliers, and large bas-reliefs are still visible here and there.

**25 -** Extraordinary small works (figurines, relieves) done by the giants can be found here. They could have much value for the right buyers.

A single stone egg can be found among the rubble -- it is an unhatched Stone Giant egg<sup>1</sup>. The egg is now dead, but it can be sold as a curio to scholars, collectors, or perhaps to a circus.

Inspired by the place, the Darkers will eventually solicit some stone giants to live here and rebuild the workshop, but it could take some time for this to happen.

**26 - The Workshop.** This building was the stonemason's workshop. It is full of large slabs of stone in various stages of crafting. The Stone Giants fled the workshop when the city was attacked, so no remains of them are left here.

The Darkers could discover the golem before The Last One gets to use it against them.

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<sup>1</sup> Stone Giants, according to AC 10, lay eggs, as they were created by Ka the Preserver, who was more familiar with oviparous biology

26 - The Last One assembled a stone giant skeleton in the upper left corner. He couldn't really raise any dead giants, so he really made a stone golem that looks like a stone giant corpse. He'll not use it immediately against the Darkers but will keep him for later.

## THE BATTLE IN THIS LEVEL

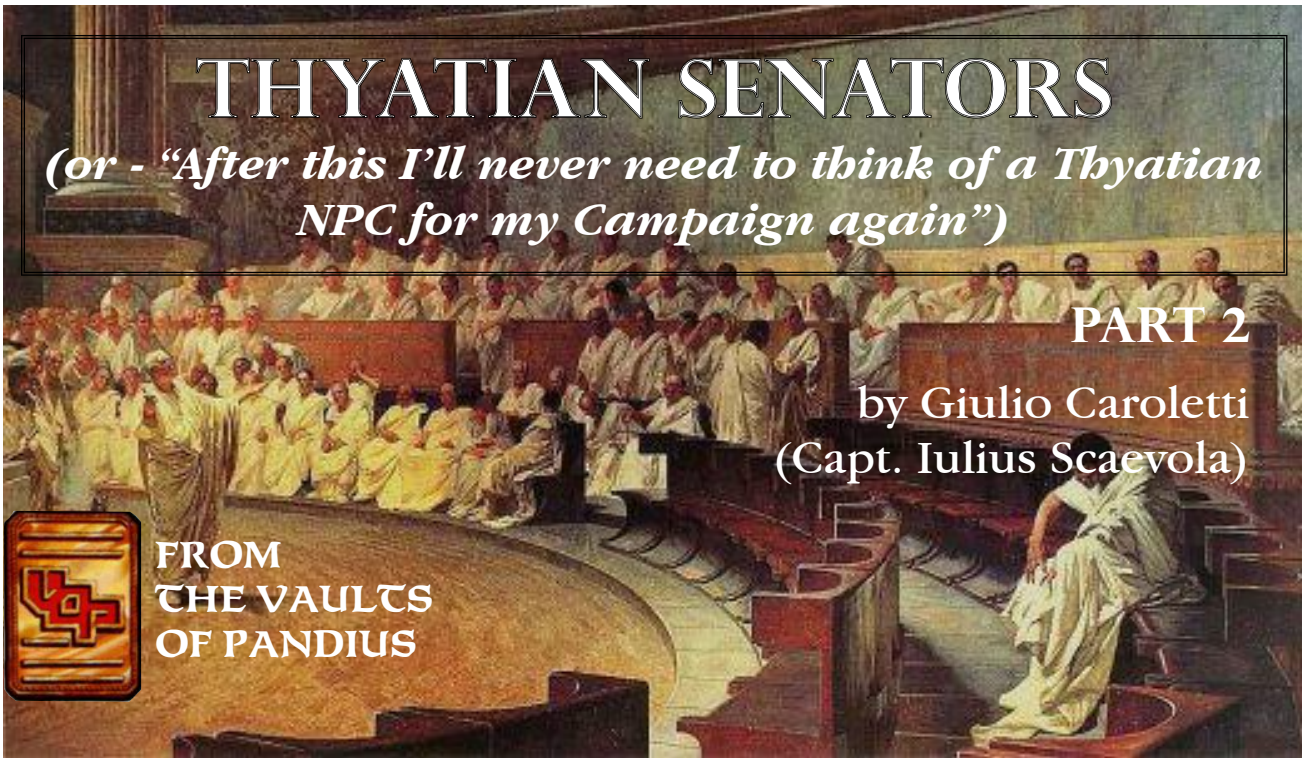
During the Darkers initial invasion, The Last One will send against them some zombies (room 1), wraiths (room 3, but they'll turn against him immediately), skeletons (room 7, 11, 23), rust monster skeletons (room 9), the intelligent ghouls (room 10, but they'll turn against him), the Bone Golem (room 13), gelatinous skeletons (room 21), and ghouls (room 24).

When The Last One strikes back, he'll use the Six Vampires (room 2, but they could have already encountered the Darkers and gone with them, or be able to escape his control and flee), more skeletons (room 23), Wights and Wraiths (room 8, who

could turn against him) The Body (room 12), the Nightwalker (room 14), Chuv (room 22, but he'll be unwilling to fight and could flee), and The Stone Golem (room 26).

The Darkers however in the meantime could have gained the allegiance of the vampires (room 2), the wraiths (room 3), maybe the apparition (room 5) the intelligent ghouls (room 10) and Chuv (room 22, if they can free and convince him). They'll also probably have on their side the Incorporeal (room 7), Kulfan (room 12), the rhagodessas (room 20) and some ogre and hill giant sentries (room 22).

Humgr (room 18) is a special case as he'll not fight for either party.



Dear readers, it is with pleasure that I introduce you to the second part of the gallery of Thyatian Senators and their families, relatives and allies, continuing the article that you can find in Issue #3 (Thyatian Senators pg 209). In this second part, we will continue the list of Constituency Senators, i.e. the chosen representatives of dominion rulers and the Senators elected by the Thyatian citizens all over the Empire. In the first part of the article we described Senators from Actius to Kerendas; here we continue our journey from Lucinius, on Mainland Thyatis, and we will lead you over land and sea through many dominions, including the Grand-Duchies of Ochalea and of the Pearl Islands, ending our voyage in Westrouрке on the Isle of Dawn.

In the next installment of this series we will move to describe the forty aristocratic families who have a Senatorial seat reserved for their head-of-the-family, and we will then end with the Conscripti, the Senators that have been permanently raised to the seat through their merits, and with the ecclesiastical senators, that include priests of the Church of Thyatis, diviners, sages and prophets from all the corners of the Empire.

Sources are:  
 “TSR1037: Dawn of the Emperors”, A. Allston;  
 “DDA1: Legion of Thyatis”;  
 “DDA2: Arena of Thyatis”;  
 “Ochalea Gazetteer”, G. Agosta;

“A History of Thyatian Literature”,  
 G. Caroletti and J. Ruhland;  
 “Thyatian Variant Government”, J. Ruhland;  
 “The Thyatian Senate”,  
 G. Caroletti and G. Agosta.

## CONSTITUENCY SENATORS CONTINUED

### LUCINIUS

A region of grassy plains and forest-covered hills, the capital of which is Port Lucinius, the seaport that hosts the Thyatian Navy training school. The people of Lucinius are incessantly proud of their seamanship.

**Population:** 120,000

**Dominion ruler:** Count Baldassarre Patrizio.

Senators:

Irene Pallathakis (ruler representative),  
Gens Sergia.

Appius Glantri, (first elected), Populares;  
Tribunus

Scribonio Fratojanni, (second elected),  
Populares

The Count of Lucinius is **Baldassarre Patrizio** (C15), a descendant of the first Count of Lucinius (the county was separated from the Duchy of Thyatis by Emperor Gabrionus IV only at the turn of the 10th century). Patrizio is not especially fond of Thincol, since his family has a great love for the Gabrionus family and they disliked the way Thincol dealt, and deals, with his wife.

**Irene Pallathakis** (born 954, W9, NG), a trusted friend and advisor to the Count, and a skilled wizard, is his appointed representative at the Senate. She is a tiny, common-looking woman, with dark blue eyes and a mane of black hair, with courteous

manners and a low, pleasant voice. She seems about fifteen years younger thanks to potions of longevity.

Appius Glantri (born 958, Bard 2, TN) is a direct descendant of the famed knight Darius Glantri. His branch descends from a cousin of Lord Tiberius Glantri, who led the Thyatian colonists to the current Principalities. Appius also descends from Senator Claudius Glantri, who was stripped of his senatorial family rights because of his involvement in the *Conjuratio Lusciniae*, the conspiracy of the Republican subversive Fabritius Luscinia; the family seat was given to the Patrizio family, a major enemy of the Glantri since. Appius's father Canius was the first of the family to return to the Senate as an elected senator in Kerendas, where they have most of their estates, but he was killed after three years in service and the killers were never caught. Appius has been quietly investigating the matter for years and is convinced Magist Demetrium had something to do with it. Appius is an idealist and is a well-liked Populares, and although he refuses ideas of revolution and violence, he is friendly to Lentulus and the Republicans, and thus many Senators and Army officers think of him only as a Republican-in-Populares-clothing. Appius started as a Kerendan senator too, but during the last elections he earned his seat in Lucinius, where he stayed most of the time in his second term as a Tribunus, travelling to monitor justice and trials and to listen to the appeals of common citizens. Appius's mother is Mariela Poggi (born 939, NW, TN), an embittered Kerendan noblewoman that counts among her ancestors Alexander Glantri himself, through the expelled Archduke Alexius Glantri. Appius is married to Deianira Ghio (born 961, NW, NG), a member of a prominent Kerendan family.

Their eldest son, Publius Appius Junior (born 980, F1, TN), is also set to become a politician. The Glantri family wholly supports Appius. The most important members are Titus, Appius' younger brother, and Philodemos, a second cousin. Appius' cousin, Alexandra, is married with Octavius Marcianus, a prominent politician in Thyatis City.

**Scribonio Fratojanni** (born 960, NM, NG) is a friend of Appius and acts unofficially as his representative in Thyatis City. He is a secretary of sorts, and keeps Appius informed during his travels of important sessions or votes that may be relevant to Appius's interests. Scribonio is a former naval officer and naval engineer, and has often worked closely with Archduke Derentarius and Count Actavius in matters that regard the Navy and naval arsenals.

## MACHETOS

Machetos was once the wealthy homeland of the Karameikos ducal family. Thirty years ago, Duke Stefan III traded his lands for Traladara and moved west with the whole treasury, while Emperor Thincol sold all the wealth, livestock and slaves and ruined the duchy's economy, depopulating it as a result. The new Duke, Callastian, paradoxically thanks to improving trade with Karameikos, has since rebuilt Machetos into a self-sufficient dominion, with a thriving grain farming and lumber industry. As a consequence, Duke Callastian is the most popular figure among the population, while Emperor Thincol is thoroughly despised. The capital, Machetos (pop. 2,500) is a picturesque small town built quite close to the Duke's Castle.

**Population:** 30,000

**Dominion ruler:** Duke Callastian Jowdynites.

Senators:

Duke Callastian Jowdynites, Populares.

Urban Sakigenetos (ruler representative), Populares.

Aulus Livianus, Populares (first elected)

Rufinio Quaerulus, Gens Sergia (second elected)

Sergius Timens, Republicans (third elected)

## Callastian Jowdynites

(born 933, F11, LN) is the Duke of Machetos and a Senator of the Empire. He became Duke by royal appointment when the previous Duke, Stephan Karameikos, traded his lands to acquire Traladara. Callastian, then one of the best generals of Thyatis, thought he was being rewarded for his brilliant military services. Unfortunately, Thincol had stripped Machetos of its wealth, livestock and slaves, ruining the duchy's economy and forcing Callastian to rebuild the land from scratch. Since then, Callastian has become a silent enemy of the Emperor and a precious ally of the Populares. He is a bitter, tired man without heirs and with few friends.



One of them, **Urban Sakigenetos** (born 953, NM, NG), is the son of his previous seneschal,

Adrian (born 921, F3, NG), and is also his appointed Senator of the dominion. He sees the bitterness in Callastian and would like to soothe it somehow, as he thinks Callastian has been a great ruler for Mchetos. Urban is married to **Helena** (born 970, NW, N), a skilled painter much younger than himself, and they have a small son, **Aristides** (born 996), and an infant daughter, **Clelia** (born 999). His previous wife, Massentia, died several years ago, childless.

**Aulus Livianus** (born 958, NM, TN) is the veteran Senator of Mchetos. After having lost his mother when he was 8, Aulus inherited his father's timber industry after he killed himself, almost ruined by debts, in 981. He managed to rebuild his family fortunes - his is a typical Mchetan story of trial and rebirth, that has won him many sympathies as a candidate, not least because of the attitude he showed towards his employees. Livianus has a great respect for Duke Callastian, since he considers the Duke the main person responsible for the recovery of Mchetos. As most Mchetans, he strongly dislikes the Emperor - but even more so Stephan Karameikos, who condemned ten thousands of citizens to ruin just on a whim.

**Rufinio Quaerulus** (born 967, T(Rake) 3, LG) is a renowned watchmaker and jeweller from a small village close to Mchetos. He has performed well in the past both as a judge and as an investigator, solving a few crimes and even more than a homicide. His wife **Petronia** (born 971, NW, CG) harassed him to take up a political career and in 997 he stood up for election, and was chosen, much to his own surprise. He doesn't like the Senate, doesn't feel like he has anything interesting to say, and has joined the backbenchers of Gens Sergia, where he dreams of being home repairing clocks or solving a local mystery. Rufinio and

Petronia have two daughters, **Gabriela** (born 992) and **Stella** (born 996).

**Sergius Timens** (born 970, F3/T(Rake)3, LE) is the first Republican Senator in Mchetos - he managed to obtain this position through violent rants against the Emperor, calling for a revolution and to throw down the Empire. Actually, he's an Alphantian spy. He was ordered to spy on the Republicans and see whether they could be of any use to undermine Imperial and/or Senatorial influence. He is a gloomy man and found it extremely easy to morph into a Republican orator, something that the other Alphantian spy in the Senate, his boss Cabirio Nasica, is increasingly worried about.

## MOSITIUS

Mositius is a long, narrow island due east of Hattias. Once little more than a grassy lump of stone with a bad reputation, it was changed into a travel resort by her first ruler, Triella Tien-Tang, appointed to the position by her friend Emperor Thincol. Triella discovered and learned to control the Censer of the Mists, an artifact which releases emotion-inducing mists all over the island. She promptly turned Mositius, then a sparsely inhabited land, into a rich vacation resort, allowing her to purchase herself the status of Duchess.



**Population:** 15,000

**Dominion ruler:** Duchess Triella Tien-Tang.

Senators:

Duchess Triella Tien-Tang, Gens Zendrolian.

Dominica Assenzio (ruler representative), Gens Zendrolian.

Polibia Stateritis, Gens Zendrolian (first elected)

Alceste Sardi, Free Thinkers (second elected)

Memmus Theofilos, Free Thinkers (third elected)



The first dominion ruler of Mositius, **Triella Tien-Tang** (born 928, W20, N) and her *cursus honorum* are despised heartily by many Senators (one of them is, unsurprisingly if you think about it, Duke Callastian J o w d y n i t e s , another ‘upstart’ of T h y a t i a n aristocracy; most

of the others come from Gens Aemilia and Aurelia). Triella, an Alphatian/Ochalean mix born in West Portage, spent a hard life on the Isle of Dawn and came to study magic quite late in life (at age 28) thanks to a traveling Thyatian wizard who discovered her talent for it. An accomplished mage and adventurer, Triella helped Thincol to regain the Thyatian imperial palace during the Alphatian Spike

assault and, since becoming a Senator, has always been a staunch supporter of the Emperor, even though she isn’t overly fond of many of his supporters in the Senate. With green, almond-shaped eyes and the red skin of Alphatian commoners, Triella looks like a young woman in her twenties, although she is much older. She prefers to dress in ornate green gowns of Alphatian spider-silk.

**Dominica Assenzio** (born 940, W20, N) is a close friend of Triella, and a former lover. Triella is a closet bisexual, and keeps it secret as she doesn’t want to bring more trouble to herself than she already has. Dominica is a good friend and a trusted counselor, their relationship ended several years ago and Dominica is married with adult children, and totally loyal to Triella, so there shouldn’t be possible room for scandal. Dominica, originally from Kerendas, was the first wizard to be trained by Triella, and has shared many adventures with her. Dominica too keeps her age much younger through magic.

**Polibia Stateritis** (born 951, F13, LG) is another famous Mositius resident. A strong-willed, former General, she decided to buy a villa in Mositius and run as a Senatorial candidate a few years ago. A moderate supporter of the Emperor, she is sympathetic towards the Duchess and Dominica Assenzio, and she wonders whether she should ask them for magical help to become younger and be able to build the family she neglected to pursue in favor of her career - but at the moment, she is too ashamed to ask. She is into her second term.

**Alceste Sardi** (born 975, T4, CN) is a young, rich heiress with too much time and money on her hands. She moved to Mositius five years ago and bought her way into the Senate at the 997 elections with bribes, promises,

and a glamorous electoral campaign, with spectacular fund-raising through flashy parties on the island. She has quickly risen in popularity in Thyatis too, where she is known for her expensive parties, socialite skills, and flamboyant and much-talked-about flirts with, to name just a few, a gladiator, an Archduke (Maldinius Kerendas), an army officer, and a young Patriarch of Valerias. She is a master in disguise, and has several aliases in the city that she uses mostly to make fun of people she dislikes (for instance, she has repeatedly broken into the house of the Ochalean Senator Yang Lao-Ye just to steal a few books or move things around when he is absent from the city). She tends to vote on a whim (when present at all). The Duchess, Dominica Assenzio and Polibia Stateritis loathe her, as they think Alceste gives a very bad repute to the status of the Duchy and, more in general, to women Senators, that already face a hard time enough getting respect in Mainland Thyatis.

**Memmus Theofilos** (born 956, F3, NE) is a rich merchant Senator who has a stake in many commercial activities on the island. In fact he is a member of the Shadow Hand and is a good friend of Maria Evergetes, the Shadow Hand's main political representative. Theofilos holds contacts between the Shadow Hand and several corrupt Senators like his fellow Free Thinkers Osteropolous and Canolocarius, and unscrupulous Gens Zendrolion leaders like Rufus Aenobarbus, to keep Maria Evergetes out of having to deal directly with them. He was already Senator in Kerendas, where he comes from (and where his family has worked as local bosses for the Shadow Hand for decades), before moving to Mositius to put the Shadow Hand in the business there about ten years ago. He was elected to the Senate as a Mositius Senator in 997.

## OCHALEA

Settled in the centuries after Alphatian Landfall by a group of Alphatian commoners, Ochalea is a hilly island, not pretty but agriculturally productive. Ochaleans are very reserved, scholarly people devoted to honoring the Immortals. Contrarily to other dominions of the Empire, Ochalea is divided in five areas, each of which separately elect one Senator.

**Population:** 125,000

**Dominion ruler:** Archduke Teng Lin-Dieu

Senators:

Archduke Teng Lin-Dieu, Philosophers.

Ling Tzu-Chen (ruler representative), Philosophers.

Yang Lao-Ye, (elected senator for NE Ochalea), Philosophers

Song Yun-Wu, (elected senator for NW Ochalea), Philosophers, Praetor Peregrinus.

Quintus Chen Lao-Wai, (elected senator for Bohan, Chi and Shun), Gens Aurelia

Wen Zi-You, (elected senator for Cao, Chung, Daisun and the Celestial Territories), Free Thinkers

Chong Li-Yi, (elected senator for Kiang, Wang and Shou), Gens Aemilia

There are eight Senators from Ochalea, including of course Archduke **Teng Lin-Dieu** himself, Abbot Teng Lee-Dai (see below) and High Priest Ling Tzu-Chen, high-ranking members of the Jade Temple who have been chosen by the Archduke to fill the seats that are assigned to the Teng family and to the

governor of Ochalea, as well as five additional elected representatives. Aristocratic Senator Ran-Wen Zenobius and Duchess Triella Tien-Tang are also of Ochalean origin. Senators Teng, Ling, and Zenobius belong to the Philosophers faction (headed by Archduke Teng), while Duchess Triella is a member of the Zendrolian faction.

Abbot **Teng Lee-Dai** (C14, LG) is an abbot of the Jade Temple, and a distant relative of the Archduke. This 50 years-old scholar is a master of defensive martial arts, as well as an expert in Ochalean history. He currently represents the Teng family (see below) in the Imperial Senate, a duty that keeps him in Thyatis city most of the time.

**Ling Tzu-Chen** (C11 (of Koryis), LG), a High Priest of Koryis in the Jade Temple of Ochalea, is the representative Senator for the Ochalean government. This aged scholar and priest follows Archduke's Teng directives unfailingly, and is possibly even more committed to the Philosophers' pacifist stance than him.

**Chong Li-Yi** (F7, LN), holding the senatorial seat for the Central Ochalea region, is a member of the Gens Aemilia, and of the Society of the Blue Flower, a semi-formal political organization sharing similar goals to the Gens Aemilia, but limited to Ochalea. The main political goal of Chong and his associates is the establishment of local legislative assemblies modeled on the Thyatian Senate in the Grand Duchies (the Society campaigns for the establishment of an Ochalean senate, and Chong adapts this into a more general policy for the Empire).

**Song Yun-Wu** (Pr5 (Pantheist), NG), an elderly priest of the Eight Immortals, Song Yun-Wu has been Senator of the North-Western region for five times in a row. A very popular man, he

is a member of the Philosophers faction, preaching moderation in all things. Contrary to many priests, he worships all of the Eight Immortals equally, since he believes that the Immortals each emphasize a particular trait or virtue, and only a good balance of all can lead to perfection. He is one of the few Ochalean Senators to be popular in Thyatis, thanks to his extremely good standing as a Praetor Peregrinus, a position he holds also in this legislature, as well as in his homeland.

Senator **Quintus Chen Lao-Wai** (T5, TN), a middle-aged merchant of mixed Ochalean and Thyatian descent, Chen Lao-Wai (Quintus Chen to the Thyatians) has bought his way into the Senatorial seat of the South-Western region, by financing the building of the new Cathedral of Wumingdou - and distributing money to many of his supporters, in pure Thyatian style. A member of the Gens Aurelia, Quintus supports the Church of Thyatis in its efforts to control the government. He is not a fanatic, though - he just sees the church as his ticket toward a permanent Senatorial seat, and perhaps even higher.

**Yang Lao-Ye** (Pr8 (Philosopher of Law), LN), recently elected Senator of the North-Eastern region of Ochalea, is a member of the Philosophers faction. He is a somewhat boring scholar and researcher in natural and human law. His considerable magical powers derive entirely from his faith in the power of Order, not from worship of any Immortal. Yang Lao-Ye is a member of the Mystic Way of Order. He keeps his head completely shaved, and strictly respects a number of taboos, including not eating meat, not drinking alcohol, and bathing in cold water only. He is dressed in formal priestly robes at all times. Perhaps not surprisingly, he is

not at all popular with the society of Thyatis City - not that the fact concerns him: he only accepted being elected to the Senate so that he could travel to Thyatis City and consult the library there. However, being extremely respectful of his role, he is present in the Senate for every debate or vote, which actually prevents him from spending as much time as he would like in the libraries.

**Wen Zi-You** (NM, NG), a weak candidate for the position of Senator of the South-Eastern region of Ochalea, was, to his own surprise, elected thanks to a combination of low number of voters and the Shadow Court managing to converge all its voting power on him - as well as eliminating several other candidates. A member of the Free Thinkers, Wen has no contact whatsoever with the Demon Cults, but some elders consider him weak enough to be manipulated through threats, blackmail or magic. Prior to his election, Wen worked as a medium-ranked bureaucrat in the provincial bureaucracy of Daisun. His prime interest in the Senate is currently to obtain some funding for his home province.

## PEARL ISLANDS

The homeland of the black-skinned Nuari, the Pearl Islands have freely been a part of the Empire since the time of Empress Valentia. Nuari are over-achievers: a race of scholarly warriors and widely-read peasants, contemptuous of laziness and lies, who strongly believe in sexual equality. They live scattered in small villages through the five main islands that constitute the archipelago (Nuar, Kuir, Dwair, Puir and Tuar). The only major community is the capital Seagirt, on Nuar, the biggest and easternmost island. A thriving trading point, Seagirt hosts the

Archduke's palace and a major Thyatian Navy base.

**Population:** 100,000

**Dominion ruler:** Archduke Nurokidu Nuar.

Senators:

Archduke Nurokidu Nuar, Philosophers.

Baralidu Nuar<sup>1</sup> (ruler representative), Philosophers.

Tanarobi Nuar, Philosophers (first elected), Tribunus.

Ejo Quaye, Free Thinkers (second elected), Praetor of the Pearl Islands.

Samuela Kuir, Philosophers (third elected)

Abeeku Dwair, Populares (fourth elected), Quaestor of the Pearl Islands.

Yara Mensah, Gens Aurelia (fifth elected)

<sup>1</sup> See "DDA2".

The Archduke of the Pearl Islands, **Nurokidu Nuar** (born 950, T(Rake)36, LG) is one of the most present rulers at the Senate sessions, since he insists that "my islanders rule themselves well enough, they need me more in the City than they do in the Islands". Nurokidu, a descendent of the first Archduke, is an adventurer, explorer and scholar. His wife Venus died many years ago, and he was never able to father children. His heir presumptive is his sister Kiana (born 952, T(Rake)18, LG). Kiana is an adventuress and is married with Bursi Dwair, a Nuari sailor, and they have three children: Ameera, a girl

of 19; Lando, a boy of 16; and Diulanna, a girl of 13.

The honest and trustworthy **Baralidu Nuar** (born 959, T(Rake) 4, CG) started as an elected senator fifteen years ago, but after two terms at the Senate he was inclined to retire, tired of the corruption and hostility experienced daily. It was the Archduke who insisted that he remain at the Senate as his right hand man. Baralidu is very popular among his fellow Pearl Islanders and respected by many citizens in the City, although he still thinks of himself as a back-row senator, and is always surprised when he is recognized and appreciated by third parties. Baralidu is a brooding, frownful Nuari, quite unlike his fellow merry, positive and optimistic islanders. Baralidu is hostile towards Helenites Osteropolus, Angelarian Canolocarius, the Free Thinkers, the Hattians and nationalists. On the other hand, he has a great love for Emperor Thincol, who he tends to perceive as a mythical figure since hearing tales as a child of Thincol and the Spike Assault from his uncle **Augustine Nuar** (born 936, F11, CG). Augustine was a gladiator and fought with Thincol in the battle, and then took up a position as military officer in the Army; today he is an aged, retired man happy to stay at home in Nuar.

**Tanarobi Nuar** (born 950, T(Rake) 6, LG) is the most famous Nuari in Thyatis City, and has acted as Nuari Envoy in the City for the last 20 years, since he moved there after the death of his younger brother Bolotobi after being duped by a gang. Tanarobi changed the nature of the Pearl Islander Consulate, having made sure that all Nuari arriving at Thyatis City go to the Consulate to get advice that can help them - and other foreigners - to learn precious advice so as not to have problems in the Mainland. Tanarobi has a great sense of duty,

and has worked hard for the last twenty years for his people in Thyatis, something that earns him always the first place in the Senatorial elections. He is full of advice and recommendations for young travelers and visitors, and is an entertaining storyteller capable of putting advice in short interesting anecdotes. He is a middle aged Nuari, fit, with greying black hair and black eyes - he dresses as a Thyatian and has an immaculate urban pronunciation, with no Nuari accent coloring his speech. Tanarobi has a wife and four adult sons and daughters on Nuar.

**Ejo Quaye** (born 948, Bard 9, CG) is an expert politician that hails from Puir, one of the smallest Pearl Islands. She has slowly risen in popularity through all the Pearl Islands and at the last election she was the second most voted Senator on the Islands. She stays clear of petty faction squabbling and considers herself a Free Thinker. She has been elected for three terms and spends most of her time in the Pearl Islands, traveling from island to island to administer justice in her role as Praetor. Although a mature woman, she is still naive in regards to the Thyatian way of life - maybe that's why she has no problems with being associated to Helenites Osteropolous and Angelarian Canolocarius, whom she considers good friends, to the astonishment of Tanarobi Nuar and Baralidu Nuar, who have both tried to warn her more than once about the nature of her Free Thinker colleagues.

**Samuela Kuir** (born 953, T(Rake) 3, NG) is a mixed Dunael/Tanagoro with fiery red hair (now showing streaks of grey), light brown skin and sympathetic, slightly mocking green-amber eyes. She is a lawyer and is especially concerned with the plight of poor non-Thyatian citizens, from people of the Pearl

Islands to Alphatians and Dunael from the Isle of Dawn, and more recently with Thratians from the Hinterlands. She is a very good friend of Tanarobi Nuar. Her mixed ancestry and her work has made her a favourite target for racists, Thyatian supremacists and Storm Soldiers.



**Abeeku Dwair** (born 971, F6, TN) is the Quaestor for the Pearl Islands. An energetic young man, Abeeku has adventured on the Thyatian Mainland, where he grew to like the more pragmatical and

aggressive Thyatian culture. Abeeku is somewhat annoyed by the attitude of his fellow islanders. However, he intends to exploit what he perceives as the weaknesses of the Nuari culture for his political profit. He knows what Nuari expect from him and what the Empire will consider a wothy service, and he intends to work in the middle ground.

**Yara Mensah** (born 967, C9 (of Korotiku), CG) is a traveling Matriarch of Korotiku and an adventuress. She has travelled mainly on Ochalea and in the Pearl Islands, and although very much a Philosopher in her political beliefs, she spends most of her time in the company of the clerical Aurelii Senators, as she thinks it is more important to bring her influence on that faction than on 'preaching to the believers' among her fellow Nuari. She has been elected for the first time in the 997 election.

## REDSTONE

Redstone (Saxa Rubra in Thyatian) is a large military town run by the Thyatian Army, with about half the population being civilian.

**Population:** 20,000

**Ruler:** Commander General Harantius Lycandronion

**Senator:** Ulpus Nasica, (elected), Gens Zendrolian

**Ulpus Nasica** (born 953, F19, NE) is a former Lieutenant General in Redstone. He is a cruel and violent man with crude passions like cestus-fighting, gladiatorial games and most violent chariot races and horse racing - and he is a master at them all. He spent most of his life fighting on the Isle of Dawn, where he is popular for his heroic deeds. His relationships and marriages have been hot and violent like he is, and rumors say he killed his last lover when he caught her with another man. Ulpus got elected more because he is infamous than because he is popular, but he didn't spend much time in the Senate during his first two terms anyway. His ambition is to become Praetor of the northern Isle of Dawn, but at his second term in the Senate he hasn't managed to begin the *cursus honorum* yet. He has grudgingly accepted the idea that he has to spend time in Thyatis City to get to his goal.

Two other distant relatives of Ulpus are Senators: Antonius, the elected representative of Sclaras (see below), and Antonius's second cousin Cabirio, a meritory senator.

## RETEBIUS

A land of watered grasslands stretching from the sea to the northern hills, home of the two great orders of Thyatian airborne knights, the Retebius Air Fleet and the Knights of the Air, Retebius sustains itself with cattle and horse herding. The City of Retebius (15,000) is a broad city, whose north-western half is owned by the Duke, who uses it as landing-fields and beast-quarters for the two orders.

**Population:** 200,000

**Dominion ruler:** Duke Callastian Retebius

Senators:

Duke Callastian Retebius, Gens Zendrolian.

Libonia Aeris (ruler representative), Gens Zendrolian

Scipio Caeculo, Gens Zendrolian (first elected); Consul.

Sixtus Viribono, Gens Zendrolian (second elected)

Mars Gabronica, Pure Ones (third elected)

Duke **Callastian Retebius** (born 969, T12, LG) is an experienced adventurer who just recently came to the ducal throne on the abdication of his mother Polibia (born 940, NW, NG). He posed as a common-born acrobat and made his living as an entertainer for many years of traveling and adventuring, meeting his future wife Mitasula on his journeys. He is a humorous man fond of story-tellers and actors; in defiance of his ancient family tradition he is not in the Retebius Air Fleet, but in the Knights of the Air as a pegasus-rider.

And he is one of the peopel that provide a good reputation to the followers of Thincol - something that the Emperor is well aware of, and makes very good use of. Callastian is a typical Thyatian with brown hair and beard, brown eyes, who likes to dress in theatrical black trousers and cloak and a flowing black silk tunic.

His wife **Mitasula Nuar-Retebius**

(born, 973, M11, LG), the daughter of

a Nuari seaman-warrior of the Thyatian Navy,

studied magic with a naval wizard and became an expert

adventurer. She too is a pegasus-riding

Knight of the Air. She likes to dress in knee-length, long-sleeved white silk tunics and white belt and boots.



**Libonia Aeris** (born 971, F10, LG) was part of the adventuring group of Mitasula and Callastian - after they had married, but before they got back to Retebius. She has the complete trust of the ducal couple. A fierce woman, tall and muscular, she's considered a bit of an aberration in the Senate and among many Thyatians. She has become friends with several of the other elected women of the Senate suffering the same snickering remarks from men - among them, Tanja Bendaoud, Flavia Metonenzes, Delphina Koteas, Samuela Kuir and Yara Mensah. She supports Gens Zendrolian mostly because of Callastian, but has no special liking for the Emperor, whom she thinks belongs to the same chauvinistic bunch as most of the ethnically Thyatian Senators. Libonia has fallen hopelessly in love

with the courteous elf Linfarillien Greenheight, ruler representative of the Count of Vyalia. She has bought a love potion from the Hag of Hillfork, a famous prophetess who hides in a cave near that city, and is wondering how to make the elven Senator drink it.

The presence of the Air Fleet and the Knights of the Air has made Retebius a progressive conservative steadfast, with Gens Zendrolian reaping most of the electoral harvest for the last century.



**Scipio Caeculo** (born 960, F16, LG) is one of the two current Consules - it is his first term as such, and it is considered a great honor for the city and the Duchy of Retebius, who has

voted him as Senator for four terms in a row - terms in which he held the posts of Quaestor, Praetor (twice) and lastly Consul. After becoming Consul he resigned from the command of the instructors in the Retebius Air Fleet - while his previous posts enabled him to keep both positions, being Consul required from him to spend too much time in the capital. Caeculo and Thyarius Palykratidius are rivals for a number of reasons, chief among them the eternal debate on what attitude a good teacher should have with his students - even more than the rivalry between Cavalry and Air Fleet.

The jovial **Sixtus Viribono** (born 948, NM, LG) managed to be re-elected after his stunning performance as Tribunus during his first term in the Senate. A merchant with a solid food transport business, former mayor of Hillfork and sometimes judge, he was

elected only after the third Senator died during the election night, poisoned by a plate of bad mushrooms, and somehow found himself Tribunus and spent his time traveling in central Thyatis. Although he was not elected Tribunus again, much to his dismay, he intends to spend his time traveling through Retebius and listening to his countrymen, and not gathering dust in the Senate.

Surprisingly, **Mars Gabronica** (born 965, F9, TN), a Knight of the Air, got the third Senatorial position in Retebius. Mars is, like Alkybiades Nemeicus, one of the few Pure Ones who is not of Hattian origin. Mars doesn't share their racial prejudices, but is concerned about the Thyatian way slowly losing ground as the main philosophy of the Empire. He blames Thincol for not having been able to root out the Empire's chronic corruption - and he implies that one of the reasons is that Thincol himself is corrupt in the first place. The election of Sixtus is considered a shame by Duke Callastian, and although few Retebians admit to having voted for him, many a citizen of the Duchy has been heard muttering 'well, he's a bit excessive, but, he has nailed it, hasn't he?'

## SCLARAS, CARYTION & BORYDOS

These three islands are Protectorates in the Sea of Dread which elect one Senator. Sclaras is an island made of estates reserved for wealthy wizards. Carytion is an island which hosts a naval base and some scattered villages; most of Carytion, however, is made of wealthy estates and the island is the "non-wizardly" equivalent of Sclaras. Borydos is a prison island.



**Population:** Sclaras 5,000; Carytion 5,000; Borydos 5,000 (4,500 prisoners)

**Rulers:** Sclaras is officially ruled by the throne, i.e., Emperor Thincol, but is in fact left to the powerful wizards that live on it. Carytion has no official ruler, so the highest authority on the island is Archduke Derentarius, Praetor of the Mainland Islands. Borydos is ruled by Prison Director Decio Tertullianus.



**Antonius Nasica** (born 930, M20, LN) managed to win the elections by combining two important aspects of these island protectorates' features: he's both a former Prison Director on Borydos, and a skilled

wizard who owns an estate on Sclaras. A stern, uncompromising man, he left the post as Director in Borydos only a few years ago, and his memory is still fresh among the 500 army personnel. The wizards of Sclaras decided to vote for him instead of for his chief rival candidate, an Army official in Carytion.

## SHADOW COAST

This area is divided into two Provinces, Septentriona and Meridiona. They are almost entirely untamed wilderness, largely left to its own devices. Most of the sparse population consists of Dunael-descended people, with a few Thyatian colonists from the Mainland especially in Septentriona, a land of thick woods, while Meridiona is more a collection of highlands and bogs.

**Population:** more than 10,000

**Ruler:** Septentriona is officially ruled by Commander General Deitica Baralius. Meridiona has no official ruler. The highest governmental officer is Quintus Fabius, the Praetor of the Southern Isle of Dawn, whose seat is in Redstone.

**Senator:** Scott Minnear; Tribunus.

**Scott Minnear** (born 963, C10 (of Asterius), CG) is a traveling bard and priest who has been elected three times in a row to the Senate, where he is almost never seen. He has also been Tribunus thrice in a row and spends all his term wandering throughout the Shadow Coast, and occasionally to the main cities of the Isle of Dawn, to perform duties as judge or lawyer, and to administer justice, teachings, exorcisms, healings and blessings. A gaunt man with red hair, freckled pale skin and sea-blue eyes, Minnear is a popular figure in the Shadow Coast.

## TEL AKBIR

The Duchy of Tel Akbir is grassy in the south, turning arid to the north. Its population is more of Alasiyan than Thyatian descent - and shares a bit of the Alasiyan attitude towards women and wizards, although believers in the Eternal Truth are quite rare here. The beautiful capital Tel Akbir (20,000) is a harmonic blend of sea-port, fishing and farming community, and military base.

**Population:** 150,000

**Dominion ruler:** Duke Tarik ben Nadir.

Senators:

Duke Tarik ben Nadir, Gens Aemilia.

Farid ben Nadir (ruler representative), Gens Aemilia.

Hassad Fatnoussi, (first elected), Gens Zendrolian; Tribunus.

Laakkad Abdelhadi, (second elected), Gens Aemilia

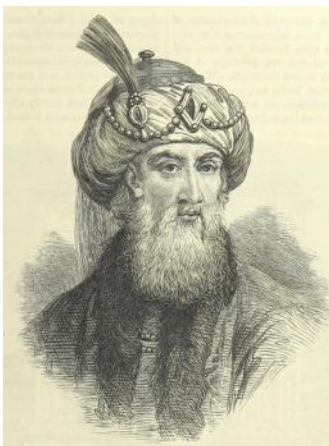
Abderrahim Essaidi, (third elected), Free Thinkers

the Army of Thyatis. She distinguished herself during the Alphatian Spike assault, has been twice married, and survived both adventurer-husbands. She is a capable but not inventive garrison commander, and does not allow for wartime atrocities. She uses *potions of longevity* to look about 30 years younger.

Tarik has many sons and daughters. His third child, **Farid** (born 974, F3, NG) is his appointed heir and representative at the Senate. His youngest daughter **Jamila** (T1, CN) seems destined to follow her aunt's footsteps, much to the chagrin of her father.

The most popular Senator in Tel Akbir is **Hassad Fatnoussi** (born 950, F7, LE). A shrewd politician, a lawyer and an occasional judge, Fatnoussi, who began as an army lawyer in Fort Nikos, has been twice a Quaestor and once a Praetor, and is set to become a Consul before he reaches fifty. Fatnoussi is a legal expert, with ties to the most wealthy families of the Duchy that he has exploited to get elected in five elections in a row through their web of relatives, clients and associates. He is careful to stay perfectly on the right side of the law - his conscience is satisfied by 'playing the game by the rules', without taking too much into account the suffering that might cause.

**Laakkad Abdelhadi** (born 954, T(Rake) 10, TN) is a follower of Sheik ben Nadir. He has fought in the Thyatian Army since he was eighteen, as a spy and scout on the Isle of Dawn, and has a good knowledge of the Alphatian culture and language. He left the Army about twelve years ago and rose quickly in the ranks of the Duke's collaborators. He has often administered justice in the name of the Duke and is known as a serious, balanced and objective man - qualities that



Sheik **Tarik ben Nadir** (born 937, F12, N), formally a Duke, rules Tel Akbir. He is a great trader and keeps a knowledgeable eye and hand on the merchant guilds of the city. A subtle man, very polite and civilized, he is nonetheless capable

of great and treacherous revenge when crossed. Exceedingly proud of his Alasiyan ancestry, he has a bit of an old-fashioned view about women. He is also brother of General **Leilah ben Nadir** (born 939, C20 of Tarastia, LN) military commander of Raven Scarp in the Hinterlands, and it doesn't come as a surprise that he has not exchanged a friendly word with his sister in forty years. Leilah ran away from home to join the Order of Tarastia and then

are taken into great account by Tel Akbiran voters.

**Abderrahim Essaidi** (born 968, C11 (of Protius), CG) is a priest who has traveled and adventured especially in Ylaruam and the Northern Reaches, sailing north up as far as Oceansend and Alpha, and has even been to Hule and the Savage Coast once. He is a well-read man who speaks several languages and has a gift for music (he plays a variety of string and brass instruments). A moderate conservative who shares many ideas with Aemilii and Aureli, albeit in a less confrontational manner with the other factions, Abderrahim prefers considering himself a 'Free Thinker', as he is opposed to the concept of the factions itself (and thus even more the concept of a true 'party' like the Republicans). He is friendly to several of the moderate conservative and/or seamen in the Senate (from Archduke Derentarius and Count Geraldan Actavius to Scribonio Fratojanni). He is a close friend of Corus Viator.

**Population:** 25,000 (60% humans, 40% elves)

**Dominion ruler:** Archduke Derentarius Mactator.

Senators:

Archduke Derentarius Mactator, Gens Aurelia; Praetor of the Mainland Islands.

Aegus Noceti (ruler representative), Gens Aurelia.

Maximus Cosmatos, Gens Aurelia (first elected)

Corus Viator, Populares (second elected)

Marius Honoribus, Populares (third elected)

Delphina Koteas, Gens Sergia (fourth elected)

Sindarin Miele, Republicans (fifth elected)

## TERENTIAS

The greatest bone of contention between Thyatis and Minrothad, Terentias has been in control of the Mactator family for the last two hundred years - but bad feelings take a long time to die, especially among long-lived Minrothad elves.

Terentians are traders, sailors and pirates; Crossbones (pop. 5,000), the island's capital and home to the Archduke's fortress, is a lively trading port that many a thinly disguised pirate vessel calls home.

Archduke **Derentarius Mactator** (born 964, T23, TN), Praetor of the Mainland Islands and former Consul of Thyatis, is one of the most important politicians of Gens Aurelia. The fierce Archduke is a skilled fighter, an adventurer and a former Army officer. Derentarius is a religious man, although in his very personal way. He is a follower of Protius, the Old Man of the Sea, a bold, brave sea-fighter who respects valor, personal integrity and isn't above using menace and force to get his way - after all, the spell and the sword are the way of the man of power and man has to fight his way in the world to get respect in the eyes of the Immortals - and this also explains how a supporter of Gens Aurelia can also be an endorser of piracy. The man has no patience with cowards and legal

pettifoggers, and has a hearty dislike for the Philosophers, for Gens Sergia, for the Republicans and for the Pure Ones. He is not overly fond of the Emperor, but thinks Thincol is sufficiently worthy to fill the role. He has a strong personal magnetism and is very egalitarian for a Thyatian aristocrat, something that brings him close to Duke Leonidas Ruggiero.

Archduke Derentarius and Duke Maldinius Kerendas are arch-enemies, driven by a love-and-hate relationship towards each other that is growing to legendary status in the Empire. They are often rival orators whenever their faction needs to provoke the other one's faction; they have duelled more than once; and even fought for the same women, more to outplay each other than for real interest. While Maldinius is cold, calculating and smooth, Derentarius is all controlled fury and his violence is natural, and not calculated, to him, although he has learned over time to control it. Like Maldinius, Derentarius isn't married but has fathered more than a son and daughter all over the Sea of Dread and the Sea of Dawn.

The Mactator family received their surname (which means "butcher") because of the fierce way the first Mactator Archduke wrestled away the islands from Minrothad, but they resent the name, and never use it if possible - a sure way to enrage Derentarius is to call him "Archduke/Senator/Quaestor Mactator". The Mactators are respected and admired in Terentias, but not overtly loved. Derentarius's parents both died a few years ago during a naval incident, along with his younger brother. Derentarius has no other close relatives, and isn't in a hurry to choose a heir.

Derentarius has more than an ounce of Elven blood in his veins: two of his grandmothers,

one on the father's side and one on the mother's, were half-elves (making him  $\frac{1}{4}$  Elf). He is about 5 feet 9 inches tall, lean, with slightly pointed ears, honey gold eyes, blue-black hair, and a healthy, sun-tanned golden complexion. He has a short-trimmed beard which already shows hints of grey, but otherwise doesn't look one year older than 25, something that is a clear advantage towards enemies who underestimate him.

Derentarius has chosen, as his senatorial representative, the raider-priest **Aegus Noceti** (born 955, C11 (of Protius), CN). A former pirate, Aegus became a cleric of Protius under the patronage of a battle-seapriest with whom he had fought raiding ships from Minrothad and Ierendi in his late twenties. He is a respected and well-known figure in Terentias, and even now occasionally sails as a priest on raids and is known to invoke the blessing of Protius and of the Immortals on pirate and mercantile ships alike. Married thrice, with a score of sons and daughters who are mostly sailors, fishermen and pirates themselves, Aegus is obsessed with the sea and uninterested with matters in the Senate, where he attends only when Derentarius asks it from him, generally to vote on important matters - if he can be found in time.

Terentians are known to vote Populares candidates, with the occasional Senator with Republican or Sergii ideals - it can be considered a moderate left stronghold. The Archduke's piousness has brought to the Senate some priests of Protius in the last years, that can be considered supporters of the Archduke and Gens Aurelia. The last of these Senator-seapriests is **Maximus Cosmatos** (born 969, C7 (of Protius), NG), a thirty-odd year old man with a bald head,

black moustache and beard, and fiery, dark eyes. An enthusiastic follower of the Archduke, Maximus doesn't feel at home in the luxurious City, constrained by the maze of alleys and the amount of people. He has befriended Gawain McLeod, another confused Senator new to the city.

Two Populares Senators were elected in Terentias. **Corus Viator** is a merchant who has travelled over most of the Sea of Dread. He has the support of Terentian merchants who would like to boost trade with Minrothad (and are not into piracy) and sees Derentarius as a bit of a bore. The merchants don't want to cross the powerful Archduke, but they want the Senate to fight piracy and encourage diplomatic missions to the west with Minrothad, Ierendi, Karamaikos and the Five Shires. The smooth-talking, nice, reassuring and confident Corus has been the right man for that for two terms now. Corus travels often with his adolescent son **Favonius**, while his wife **Helena** stays home with a younger son and daughter.

His colleague **Marius Honoribus** (born 956, T5, NE) has been bought up by Maldinius Kerendas. Marius plays the role of a humble Populares Senator, but in fact he keeps an eye on Derentarius for the Duke of Kerendas, at the same time trying to use forged reports and paid witnesses to provide evidence against the Archduke and push Corus Viator or Sindarin Miele to some more or less open political action that can harm Derentarius.

**Delphina Koteas** (born 962, T8, CG) is the Sergii Senator of Terentias. Although Terentians, especially because of the elven settlers, are not as chauvinistic as other Mainland Thyatians, it was not easy for Delphina to be elected here, the second woman to achieve this feat in the last 20 years,

mainly because of her fame as a clever sailor and tradeswoman. She is an intelligent, perceptive woman who resents the way her fellow Senators treat her, especially the aristocrats. She is fond of Derentarius, who seems to her much better than the other aristocrats, but she cannot accept his theocratic views of Thyatian society, so she has found herself to be closer to Gens Sergia. Delphina is a beautiful widow with sun-tanned skin, light brown hair and hazel eyes. She has two children (Melissa, born 990, and Demetra, born 993) from her late husband, and is extremely discreet but very liberal in her affairs with men.

**Sindarin Miele** (born 860, T6/M9, CG) is an elf, and a Republican. He is the most vocal opponent of Derentarius on Terentias, whom he considers a reckless brute who hides behind the faith in Protius. Miele takes great pleasure in calling the Archduke 'Lord Mactator'. Miele realizes that without the Empire of Thyatis, most cultures of the Known World would risk their independence and, ultimately, destruction at the hands of other powers like Hule or Alphatia. That doesn't prevent him from dreaming of turning the Empire into a Confederacy of truly independent dominions - not like the pharce those Philosophers like to believe about Ochalea and the Nuari islands.

## THYATIS

The sprawling center of the Empire, the Duchy and City of Thyatis is the most populous and wealthiest dominion in the Empire. A thriving center for trade and warfare for a thousand years, the City features the Empire's largest seaport, broad streets of concrete, huge public works and buildings, but also degenerated sprawls and ghettos,

and more corruption than any other part of the Empire. Thyatis elects three Senators from the Duchy, and two extra Senators as representatives of the City itself.

**Population:** 1,500,000

**Dominion ruler:** Duke Eusebius Torion.

Senators:

Duke Eusebius Torion, Gens Zendrolian, Censor.

Sullianus Pica (ruler representative), Gens Zendrolian.

Angelarian Canolocarius<sup>1</sup>, Free Thinkers; Tribunus.

Helenites Osteropolous<sup>2</sup>, Gens Aemilia

Aesculapius Lupercalis, (third elected), Populares

Flavia Metonenzes, (fourth elected), Gens Zendrolian; Tribunus.

Dexter Femurlongum, (fifth elected), Populares

<sup>1</sup> "Dawn of the Emperors", Book 1, page 30, says there are 2 city representatives, to sum to the three duchy representatives they make five.

<sup>2</sup> See DDA1 and DDA2.

The nominal ruler of Thyatis is traditionally the Emperor's heir - in this case, Eusebius Torion, the son of Emperor Thincol. As a Duke, Eusebius is also a Senator of the Empire<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Emperor Thincol, Duke Eusebius and the Torion family will be detailed more fully in an upcoming issue of Threshold, along with the *Conscripti*, or "meritory senators". For more on the "meritory senators", see also "Patres

**Sullianus Pica** (born 966, C7 of Solarios, LN) has been chosen by Eusebius Torion as his representative in the Senate. Pica is only slightly younger than Eusebius, and is his spiritual advisor. Pica is an ambitious priest, who sees in Eusebius the chance to restore Solarios's clergy to prominence in the Empire - instead of being lickspittle dogs subjected to the whim of the arrogant Church of Thyatis. His opinion is not shared by the majority of Solarios's clergy, who is supportive of the Church of Thyatis and see themselves (probably deluding themselves a bit) as equal partner in Gens Aurelia.

**Helenites Osteropolus** (born 947, Normal Man, CE) is one of the most corrupt and greedy senators of the Empire. He has served as Senator of the City for about thirty years. His great skills and charisma (Ch 18) allow him to retain an air of innocence that makes him seem more naive than guilty and allowing him to pass wrongdoings as mistakes. He has ties with the Shadow Hand, with the zonga drug trade, with rigged games at the Coliseum and with illegal gambling. Politically, Helenites is on the conservative side of Gens Aemilia. He is a subtle enemy of the Emperor, using his ties with the Aemilii to present himself as a champion of the Senators and of the Thyatian population. He is also subtly playing with the xenophobic ideals of the nationalists and Hattian supremacists to undermine Thincol's support by trying to use his ethnic background against him; he has also used his current position as the Prefect of the XIVth Cohort of the Imperial Legions (stationed in Hattias) to do so.

His late father Marius (918+976) was also a Senator before him. Helenites has recently

and *Conscripti*", in Threshold #2, pp. 148-164.

been at odds with his son **Pulcher** (born 978, Normal Man, CN) because of his relationship with the decadent, zsonga-addict Alphantian wizard **Elemaledai**<sup>2</sup>.

**Flavia Metonenzes** (born 965, Normal Woman, LG) is one of a handful of elected women to the Senate in Mainland Thyatis. She is devoted to the Immortal Tarastia, patroness of Justice and Revenge. A wise and experienced woman, she is publicly recognized as a just and honest figure in a world of corruption - although she too has retorted to the “occasional indiscretion”, as she might put it.

There are two Populares Senators elected in Thyatis. **Aesculapius Lupercalis** (born 944, T(Rake) 2, TN) is a merchant. He has travelled all over the Empire since he was 16, in the company of his father Marcus (born 920, NM, TN) and his uncle Adrian (born 922, NM, TN). When he reached forty, wealthy and happy, with a young, beautiful wife (Michaela Callicratis, born 960, NW, NG) and two small daughters (Patricia, born 982, NW, NG, and Aristeia, born 984), he decided to enter politics. Since then, he managed to rise slowly in the eyes of the Populares, and he managed to enter the Senate, where he is serving his third term. The work in the Senate has affected him much: he had always perceived some corruption and treachery as a natural and non-harmful part of the Empire, but having witnessed the enormity of the problem (from the City districts, the corrupt *clientes* of politicians and men of power, to the influence of the Shadow Hand and the corruption among the ranks of the Senators), he sees his old self as a naive fool. Although he is a decent, quite honest man, he hasn't still found a way to use his skills to make an impact. His loving

wife is worried for him, as he has become increasingly brooding in the last few years.

**Dexter Femurlongum** (born 963, T5, NE) is yet another Shadow Hand man in the Senate, who gets most of his votes from the slums of the City in exchange for money or because they fear him (or the people he represents).

## VYALIA

Located in the westernmost part of Mainland Thyatis, this County is heavily-wooded and lightly populated by the Vyalia elf clans: Blueleaf, jewellers, painters and sculptors; Diamarak, forest-wardens and rangers; Etheredyl, philosophers and mystics; Greenheight, outgoing and boisterous friends of humans and halflings; Hierydyl, scholars, genealogists and naturalists; and Treeshield, soldiers and adventurers. The main settlements of Vyalia are the capital Greenheight (pop. 1,000) and the human/halfling/elven community of Foreston (pop. 5,000), the main center of training for the elven-sponsored elite human rangers called Foresters.

**Population:** 20,000 (74% humans, 25% elves, 1% halflings)

**Dominion ruler:** Count Yldrisyl Greenheight

**Senators:**

Linfarillien Greenheight (ruler representative), Philosophers.

Ralynna Blueleaf, (first elected), Gens Sergia

Diatres Imlacris (second elected), Philosophers; Tribunus.

<sup>2</sup> See DDA1.

Count **Yldrisyl Greenheight** (born 496, F10/W10, LG) rules the County of Vyalia and the city of Greenheight. The son of Yntherin, who first agreed to sponsor the Foresters some 800 years ago, he is fond of human cultures and a scholar of Thyatian ceremonies and entertainments. He is a pale elf with black hair and eyes, who likes to dress in comfortable forest green tunics and black boots. The merry, life-loving Yldrisyl has never married, but he has fathered a dozen sons and daughters through a score of human and elven partners. His heir presumptive is his firstborn **Anthelion Greenheight** (born 619, F12/W8/C4 of Ilsundal, NG), a retired adventurer and now a Treekeeper and priest of Ilsundal. Anthelion's mother is **Evelina Longfingers** (born 504, W5, NG), a master woodcutter and painter well renowned in Thyatis. Anthelion grew up with his mother and her family, and he is on excellent terms with both parents.

**Linfarillien Greenheight** (born 754, W10, CG), a member of Greenheight clan, not related to count Yldrisyl, is the ruler representative of the Vyalia clans. Although formally nominated by the Count, the representative is actually chosen by a council of the elven Clans of the County.

**Ralynna Blueleaf** (born 910, Bard 9/Wizard 4, CN) has been elected for her first term as a Senator. She wanted to try it more out of curiosity than any other reasons, and since there were no strong candidates, she arrived first in a fairly close election. She is a sculptor, actor and dancer, and is thinking of using the rivalry between Maldinius Kerendas and Derentarius Mactator as the subject of her first play, "The Duellists". At the moment she has written only the title and the first act. A reckless young elf, she is also toying with the dangerous idea of seducing both men, known

womanizers, to learn more of their characters and maybe to stir things up to a worthy finale. She 'hides' herself among the Sergii - because she considers them the least interesting people in the Senate (bar the Philosophers) she thinks she will get less trouble from them than if she joined other factions.

The elected Senator **Diatres Imlacris** (born 961, NM, NG) is a human who represents Foreston, its environs, and many of the non-elven inhabitants, though he has definitely a Vyalian point of view on things. A respected political figure, fairly neutral, he owns a well-kept estate in northeastern Thyatis City.

## WEST PORTAGE & Central Isle of Dawn

West Portage (pop. 2,000) is a city of thieves, officially ruled by a Guild of Merchants that are in fact the local thieves' guild, guided by **Lareth Kubek** (born 969, T12, CN), its guildmaster. It is the terminus for a 100-mile portage trail where goods and even some ships are carted across the island at its narrowest point, over to the Alphatian-controlled East Portage. The population here is mostly of Thyatian and Alphatian descent. West Portage is the most important non-dominion city in the Central Isle of Dawn, and it elects a single representant along with the other free cities and villages in the area.



**Population:** more than 10,000

**Ruler:** Guildmaster Lareth Kubek rules over West Portage. The other non-dominion settlements of this area have no official ruler. The most important governmental officer is Archduke Donegal Firestorm, the Praetor of Northern Isle of Dawn.

**Senator:** Periandra Docerius, Gens Zendrolian (elected)

**Periandra Docerius** is an enemy of Julia Kendasius of Kendach, as Periandra is trying to lobby to become the independent Baroness of West Portage, something that would close expansion in the area to the ambitious Countess. Periandra is the daughter of Senator Docerius's sister **Diulanna**.

## WESTROURKE

A Thyatian Grand Duchy, it was founded over 500 years ago and granted Grand Duchy status in 970. Newkirk (pop. 25,000) is the capital, a heavily-fortified and well-defended city. Archduke Firestorm maintains a series of signalling stations stretching from Newkirk to the Finnegan's Watch in the north, to warn of oncoming armies or fleets.



**Donegal Firestorm** (born 950, F20, TN) is the ruler of Westrouрке on the Isle of Dawn. He is the nephew of Thincol on his mother's side, and is intending to carve his own domain in Westrouрке just like Stephan Karamaikos did in Traladara.

**Population:** 50,000

**Dominion ruler:** Archduke Donegal Firestorm.

**Senators:**

Archduke Donegal Firestorm, Gens Zendrolian, Praetor of the Northern Isle of Dawn.

Thrainkell Firestorm (ruler representative), Gens Zendrolian.

Mark Craig, Populares (first elected)

Alysandra Mori, Gens Zendrolian (second elected)

Gail Strachan, Populares (third elected)

Maurus Spica, Gens Sergia (fourth elected), Quaestor of the Northern Isle of Dawn

Gavin Burnie, Republicans (fifth elected)

His son **Thrainkell Firestorm** (born 976, C6 of Vanya, LN) is his heir and his father's appointed representative in the Senate, where Donegal shows up very rarely. Thrainkell is a bit appalled by his father's attitude, since he thinks it will be much more difficult for him to obtain independence if he doesn't work politically for it in the Senate.

Donegal's mother **Beate Torsdatter** (932, NW, TN) is an older sister of Emperor Thincol. She married Donegal's father **Kerry Firestorm** (920+975), Count of Westrouрке, as he had fallen in love with her after several trips to Oceansend. Her relationship with the Emperor allowed Westrouрке to rise as a regional power, from a mere County to a Grand-Duchy, something that is resented by the other rulers of the Isle of Dawn - and putting ideas of ambition in the heads of

more than one person, like Periandra Docerius and Julia Kendasius, for instance.

**Alysandra Mori** (born 960, F7, LN) is a Gens Zendrolian supporter at her second term as elected Senator of Westrouрке. There are quite a few of them, especially in the city of Westrouрке, that benefited most from the rise to Grand-Duchy, and that are thus grateful to Emperor Thincol and look with favour on Archduke Donegal. Alysandra is a supporter of the Emperor, and doesn't like Donegal's (and Thrainkell's) ideas about a possible independence. After what happened with Stephan Karameikos, Thincol has contacted her and she is his person of trust in the Grand-Duchy. Alysandra is of mixed Alphatian and Thyatian descent.

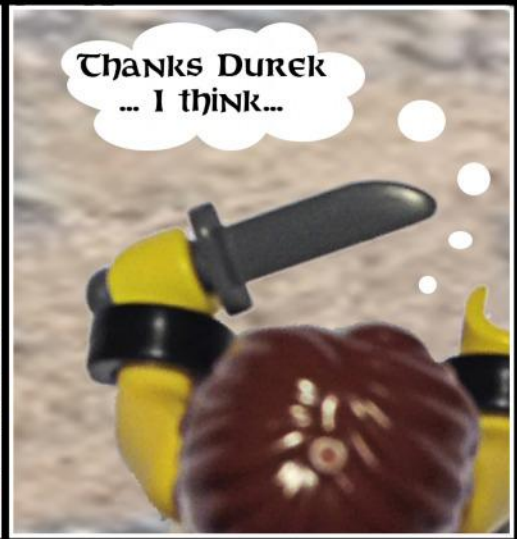
The first elected of the local Senators is **Mark Craig** (born 948, NM, CG), a Populares. A popular, wealthy merchant, Craig was born in Westrouрке and has seen the great benefits that Westrouрке reaped from their relationship with Thincol, and now sees two very dangerous threats to the stability and happiness of his fellow citizens - one is Thrainkell's desire for independence, that he sees is destined to incur in the wrath of the Torion family; the other is the Torions' attitude towards the Alphatians and what he perceives as their appetite for war on the Isle of Dawn. Thus he is an outspoken pacifist Populares in the Senate, and he spends much time in the capital lobbying with like-minded Sergii and Philosophers.

**Gail Strachan** (born 971, C9 (of Diulanna), CG), a Populares woman from the northern part of the Grand-Duchy, elected for the first time in 997, is a popular adventuress in the north and at the eastern borders of the Grand-Duchy, where she fought against raiders

and humanoids, and has also traveled south towards the Shadow Coast, where she is considered part of the 'dhampirs', a loose group of vampire-hunters. Gail is friendly towards Maurus Spica, with whom she has worked on-and-off in the last five years and who convinced her to try running in the last elections. She thinks that both Mark Craig and Gavin Burnie have good points about Westrouрке's present and future status, and at the moment she hasn't decided on which side of the Westrouрке independence debate she is.

**Maurus Spica** (born 966, F9, LN), elected for his second term in 997, is not very concerned with senatorial politics, and prefers doing his duty as a Quaestor in Westrouрке, West Portage and Kendach. He is spending increasingly more time in West Portage, something that the Thieves' Guild there doesn't like at all. To get him away from there, the Thieves' Guild has started paying brigands and humanoids along the border to sack and raid farms and villages, so that in the last two years Spica has spent a lot of time there with his men to prevent and respond to the new threat. Marcus is in love with Gail Strachan, although he is married with three children, and tries not to think about his sentimental troubles by overworking.

**Gavin Burnie** (born 970, F3, CN) is a member of the Republicans. He gets many of his votes from Westrouрке separatists, as the Republican Party has given its support to the independentist cause in the hope of breaking new ground and building here the first example of their new form of government. Gavin is a smith and armorer and has many friends among the adventurers and common soldiers in Westrouрке.





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[Death](#) as a [skeleton](#) carrying a [scythe](#) [Public domain] via Wikimedia Commons [Source](#)
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# NEXT ISSUE



*Not final cover*

An unknown continent with lost worlds, a thousand dead empires and many powerful, rising nations. A land of wonderful cities and dangerous ruins, dinosaurs and great mammals, the original homeland of elves and halflings and, before them, the cradle of reptilian civilization. That's not the Known World, traveller: That's Terra Incognita. Here Be Dragons and much, much more. If you are brave - or fool - enough, join us to:

## Explore Davania

- Anticipated contents include:
- A Newbie guide to the continent
- Dread and ruins, beyond the sea of Dread to the shores of north western Davania
- Rakastas of Davania
- Terrifying secrets of Y'hog
- Caducea: a gate to southern Mystara
- Tabernacle of Gildesh
- Nations of the Izondian Deep

... and much more!

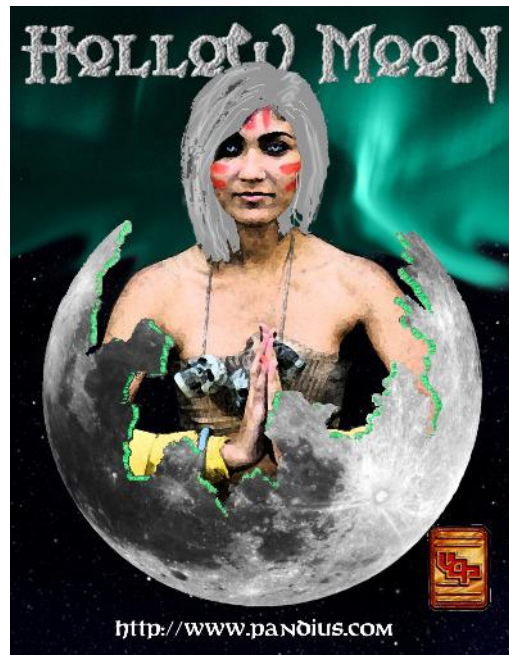
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## Submission Guidelines

### 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:

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(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 [34](#)) for next issue deadline dates.

#Insert relevant issue number in place of '#'





# THRESHOLD

The Mystara Magazine

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## Return to the Dread Sea

The Sea of Dread - these dark tempestuous waters loom off the southern coast of Brun, a raging force of nature that has shaped many of the nations in the Known World. Many of us have set sail upon these waters before, featured in adventure modules from X1 - The Isle of Dread, XSOLO - Lathan's Gold, X7 - The War Rafts of Kron, and many more.

These waters are the birthplace for seafaring nations, Merchant Princes, empires, and pirates. Throughout time refugees have sought succor on the islands that dot its surface, tyrants have sailed armies across its waters, and adventurers have attempted to plumb its depths for treasure - sometimes to disastrous consequences.

The fourth issue of Threshold the Mystara Magazine yet pursues the deep, dark, waters off the the southern coast of Brun... Throw caution to the wind and set sail, as we once again Return to the Sea of Dread.

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