

**MYSTARAN
ALMANAC &
BOOK OF FACTS
VOLUME VIII, AC 1017**

Version 2.00

Published by **Joshuan Gallidox**
Halfling Adventurer and Entrepreneur
within the City of Mirros
in the Kingdom of Karamaikos
in the Year After Crowning 1017

A Word or Two About this Material

First and most important, are the copyright laws regarding this project. This material is NOT endorsed or approved by TSR, Inc. Although the setting (places, characters, features, calendar...), as well as the rules of D&D and AD&D are the creation and property of TSR, the events, attitudes, beliefs, descriptions and all the rest in this material are those of the writers and are in no way supported by TSR.

TSR, Inc. is a subsidiary of Wizards of the Coast. Should TSR or Wizards of the Coast demand that we remove this material from the web, we will be happy to comply with their decision.

The intent behind the *Mystaran Almanac* is to continue to keep alive the wonderful world of Mystara. It is therefore the compilation of ideas and suggestions from all members of the *Mystara Mailing List* and not those of the staff and/or management of TSR.

This manual has very little in terms of game stats, as it does not want to infringe on TSR's copyright (meaning: you want the stats of NPCs and such, buy the appropriate book/references by TSR). We hope that TSR sees this merely as the work put in by those who love Mystara and wish to see it grow rather than any attempt at stealing their setting and infringing on their copyrights.

Our second topic regards permission to place this almanac up on your own personal web page. GO RIGHT AHEAD! We, the authors, give complete and free access to this material to everyone. You are free to do what you will with it, with one ABSOLUTE restriction: should TSR/Wizards of the Coast demand that you remove this from your web page, you must comply! As mentioned above, Mystara and all that is related to it belongs to TSR, so TSR has the final say on everything concerning Mystara and this non-endorsed material. If they want it removed, then it is gone.

Also, you are free to modify the contents of this almanac as you see fit as well (after all, everyone has their own future for

Mystara). We simply ask that, if you do so, please:

1. Change the title: we would like to keep the title *Mystaran Almanac*, so people can find the rest of the series and know which material is the continuation of this particular group of authors' project. In other words, we are simply asking for the rights to the name *Mystaran Almanac*.
2. Mention that you have modified it from the *Mystaran Almanac*: in this case, say where it came from and keep the original authors' names. Feel free to add a "modified by:" section at the top of that list. The writers have put a few hundred hours each on this project, so please, give credit where credit is due.

For example, call it *Bob's Almanac of Mystara* with the subtitle "Modified by Bob from the *Mystaran Almanac*."

Of course, we won't police you or harass anyone who doesn't comply with this. We just ask that you do, please.

Now comes the debate on "canon" or "net-canon" material. We do not in any way claim that the *Mystaran Almanac* is the "online official future of Mystara!" We, the authors, write this product because we enjoy writing it. It is not our attempt to make our own personal home campaign the official version! It doesn't even always match OUR own campaigns as we are several authors who each put in their own ideas (often conflicting until a consensus is agreed upon). We also steal/accept ideas left and right from posts made by the members of the *Mystara Mailing List* or other sites. So, the names on the author list is by no means the only people who have shaped this "future" Mystara; many people on the *Mystara Mailing List* have participated, whether they know it or not (unfortunately, we often forget who the source of a given idea was, so the Special Thanks list is far from complete. If we missed you, sorry!).

This product is nothing more than a possible future for Mystara which we call the "*Mystaran Almanac* future" (hence the above expressed desire to keep the title should you change a part of this product). Use its

contents or disregard them as you see fit. You are each the DM of YOUR own campaign, so decide what YOU like, keep what interests YOU, or throw out what YOU don't like—and that's the end of it. Do not take these events in your own campaign simply because we say so! There is no such thing as an "official" or "canon" Mystara. Use them because YOU want to.

And, more importantly, should TSR ever return to making Mystara products, odds are everything we've done here (as well as whatever has been happening in your own campaign) will probably disagree with what they say and become obsolete (as far as "canon" is concerned, that is). All this to say: DON'T WORRY ABOUT CANON OR NON-CANON; JUST HAVE FUN!

Next is the big decision between D&D and AD&D. This subject is always a strong debate on the mailing list. The *Mystaran Almanac* supports both games as it is very stats free. It deals mostly with the world of Mystara, NOT gaming systems.

The few times that stats are present, describing NPCs, the AD&D 2nd Edition game stats were used, except in the Famous Folk section where we used 3rd Edition rules. The main reason for this is the fact that potential new players will be used to the AD&D system and the more of them that join Mystara, the better! Also, Mystara was completely converted to AD&D with their final projects, including *Joshuan's Almanac* as well as the Karamaikos, Glantri and Savage Coast box sets (all copyright property of TSR). Should TSR revive Mystara, it will probably be in AD&D format as well.

Lastly, by now, all old D&D players should know how to convert back and forth between systems blindfolded. This is something the new AD&D players don't know how to do.

All in all, this book is about Mystara, not the game system, so please don't discard it because of that, but instead read it because it's about Mystara!

Finally, the list of authors and contributors to this project:

Product Manager & Editor	Hervé Musseau	hmusseau@yahoo.com
	Geoff Gander	ganderg@tc.gc.ca
Contributors	Aleksei Andrievski	solmyr@kolumbus.fi
	Alex Benson	alex295@aol.com
	John Calvin	chimpman.geo@yahoo.com
	Giulio N. Caroletti	scarole@tin.it
	Marco Dalmonte	mdalmonte@hotmail.com
	Daniel Eustace	deustace@mediaone.net
	Rob Fry	rmunch@easynet.co.uk
	Michael M.M. Grootenboer	m.m.m.grootenboer@student.tudelft.nl
	Jennifer Favia Guerra	valerya1@yahoo.com
	Jamuga Khan	jamugakhan@gmx.net
	Harri Mäki	hihama@sunpoint.net
	Adrian Mattias	ashaktur@hotmail.com
	Markus Olavi Montola	mmontola@cc.ht.fi
	Francisco V. Navarro	fanavarro@pacific.net.ph
	Aaron Nowack	anowack@juno.com
	James Ruhland	jruhlconob@sprynet.com
	Jens Schnabel	alphantian@angelfire.com
	Ohad Shaham	ohadshm@inter.net.il
	Andrew Theisen	jsmill@wans.net
Special Thanks to	Paul George Dooley	dooley@cableinet.co.uk
	Jenni A. M. Merrifield	strawberry@jamm.com
	Fabrizio Paoli	brizio@gdr.net
	Giovanni Porpora	gporpo@tin.it
	Michael Roy	kallatari@home.com
	Thibault Sarlat	tsarlat@etu.montaigne.u-bordeaux.fr
	Shawn Stanley	shawn@leme.anu.edu.au
	Thorfinn Tait	curufin@velvia.demon.co.uk
	Also, all contributors to the previous almanacs	
	and anyone whose ideas we shamelessly pillaged but forgot to thank	

So, if you have any ideas or comments concerning this almanac or events for AC 1018, please, feel free to contact me. For AC 1018, expect more regions to be covered in the almanac, as well as whole new sections.

Read on and enjoy your year-long visit to the grand world of Mystara.

The Mystaran Almanac Team

**Version 2.00 – Reformatted by Morfie
from the Piazza: January 3-5, 2019**

Introduction

Preface

Dear Reader

The wonderful book you now hold in your hands is the eighth in a series of rich volumes intent on describing the amazing world of Mystara.

Allow me to introduce myself to those who did not read previous almanacs. I am Belzamith Fingertackles, an illusionist of Highforge in the wonderful Kingdom of Karameikos. Oh yes, before I forget: I'm also a gnome. I have several fascinating hobbies including poetry, tinkering, solving interesting mysteries and political sciences. I am one of the few souls who truly enjoys discovering things that were previously hidden and searching for the truth behind what is always presented to us. I for one believe that there is much going on in this world that we should know about, but the powers behind the scenes keep hidden from us. Of course, those of you who read my preface last year probably already know all this.

We wanted to make this issue of the almanac as thorough as possible. Those who own previous almanacs will notice that this year's edition is significantly bigger—as was last years. We hope the additional information you will be able to find will provide you a better vision of the world we live in (literally, for some of us).

Now, of course you must all be wondering what changes have been made to this year's *Mystaran Almanac*, that we brag about it. Well, we still have our famous on-site correspondents and letters to describe places and events. I firmly believe that such presentations make the descriptions all the livelier and more interesting, giving the reader a better perspective on things, as well as insight on the people who present them to you. I continuously encourage our writers to dig more behind the scenes;

unfortunately, sometimes digging behind the scenes can be very dangerous and we cannot safely get all the information as to what is really going on. Despite this, the *Mystaran Almanac* is definitively the most precise and accurate account of last year's history that will ever be written.

As for changes, there is one I'm sure you'll notice. This year, the almanac has been divided into yet several more parts, each representing a



large fraction of our world, to introduce to the reader to a larger portion of the world. One deals with the continent of Skothar to the east; the only part of it that used to be known to us was Esterhold, the harsh Alphatian colony and to a much lesser extent some westerners also had heard of the Minaeans and of the Jennites who live farther inland. Thanks to the Thyatian expedition to that continent, we will gradually learn more about as the years pass and the expedition progresses into uncharted territories, as is happening in the southern continent of Davania. On the other side of the world, after we introduced Hule last year and briefly mentioned other nations of that area, we delve deeper into the land of the dark Master and what kingdoms and empires exist in its shadow, in a section named Western Brun. There are more and I hope you'll enjoy reading them as much as we enjoyed chasing for the best information to provide you, the reader.

Finally, we received mountains of letters and comments from you the reader and have done our very best to fix all the mistakes you have pointed out, or add details that were left out and so on. Again, thanks everyone for your comments and yet more thanks to those who, after getting their hands on an almanac, decided to volunteer as reporters and correspondents to bring us more news from every known corner of Mystara!

Therefore, it is with great pleasure that I present to you the new and improved *Mystaran Almanac*, AC 1017 edition. It would also be my pleasure to hear from you, gentle

readers, on your opinions of our presentation and content.

Belzarith Fingertackles, Co-Editor

Mystaran Almanac

Mirros, Karamaikos

Nuwmont, AC 1017

To The Reader

I'm Dorrik Stonecleaver, one of the two editors of the *Mystaran Almanac*. I'm a dwarf from Highforge and used to be a caravan guard for several decades. I retired over a decade ago and wandered the world for a while.

I've always believed that one should get to the point and therefore try to keep the gnome's babbling to a minimum. I don't like big texts and wasting breath, so I give the information that you really need. Numbers, dates, places. They give you what you want or need to know, quickly. I've therefore made sure to include exact dates, locations, populations, taxes, currency and all the other small details meticulous people expect to find. That information is as concise as possible and I hope accurate, for quick reference.

Once again, I would have loved to include descriptions of the military forces and their tactics as well, but most governments took a dim view at seeing such information published and though we gathered a lot of data we knew some of it was inaccurate. I still hope such information and others I'd like to include as well, will one day find its place in the almanac—it almost did this year, but we haven't finished sorting the truth from misleading information that was fed to us. I wish I could blame the gnome for the almanac's bulk, but I fear I must share responsibility on this.

Anyway, I've said the important stuff, so it's time to start reading the *Mystaran Almanac*. If you have anything important to tell us, let us know. Make sure it's important, because with all our correspondents, we don't have time for useless letters. Also, speaking from the previous years'

experience, most of you should learn to write in proper Thyatian before sending us any letters!

Dorrik Stonecleaver, Co-Editor

Mystaran Almanac

Mirros, Karamaikos

Nuwmont, AC 1017

Almanac Format

First, who should read this material. That's simple. Anyone who has interest in the world of Mystara. Of course, some need a more specific answer than this. As such, all the Atlas Sections (of the Old World, Norwold, etc.) can be read by both players and DMs of Mystara. The information given is general, usually common knowledge and often slightly biased by the correspondents' point of view. Of course, this means that the information is not always 100% accurate, so players be warned: individual DMs might not accept the descriptions of any given place, changing it to suit their needs and campaign. And they're within their rights! After all, who said that the correspondent wasn't a complete fraud? It already happened (and we're sorry for that). DMs may also want to limit the PCs' knowledge to just one area of Mystara (after all, why should someone from the Old World know anything about the Savage Coast?).

The *Mystaran Miscellanea* section is left to the DM's judgment as to whether his players know this information. As such, merchant PCs should have access to the *Economica* section, while superstitious PCs will probably know their horoscope, for example.

The timeline section, dealing with events for the year of AC 1017 is for the DM's eyes only. It reveals certain secrets that players are just not meant to know unless they discover them the hard way. Of course, this only makes it easier for DMs to change any timeline event to match events that are occurring in their own world of Mystara.

The format used throughout the *Mystaran Almanac* is like the various previous almanacs

in this line. As such, each nation will have an entry that will give a brief summary of location, size, population, languages, coins, taxes, industries and flora and fauna.

There is also a section that lists the names of important people at any given entry. The format is as follows:

Name (title or occupation, race, gender, class/level),

Class/level is presented in the form of a letter (or more) followed by a number, such as F6 or T12. The number indicates level, while the letter represents the class according to the following legend (in 2nd Edition terms):

F = Fighter	M = Mage
Pa = Paladin	M(ab) = Abjurer
R = Ranger	M(co) = Conjurer
T = Thief	M(di) = Diviner
B = Bard	M(en) = Enchanter
C = Cleric	M(il) = Illusionist
Pr = Priest	M(in) = Invoker
Pr(dr) = Druid	M(ne) = Necromancer
Pr(cr) = Crusader	M(tr) = Transmuter
Pr(de) = Defender	WD = Witch-Doctor
Pr(mk) = Monk	Pr(?) = other Specialty Priest

These letters will also be used anywhere where character classes are given, except for the Famous People section, which uses the 3rd Edition rules instead—with a Prestige class as a bonus!

Finally, a section on Further Reading is also given. We strongly recommend purchasing all the wonderful books and adventurer modules on Mystara, as they truly give a much deeper understanding and description than this almanac can ever give. Some of them are available through *Joshuan Gallidox Publishing*.

Nation descriptions will, as before, have a brief intro section from the correspondent, a section on the land and another on the

people of the land. Now, many will have already heard these descriptions several times over. What do you expect? There are only so many ways to describe a given place and its cultures. In fact, entries that have been repeated from last or previous years might have paragraphs with the exact same text, word for word. We, the editors, saw no reason to change a description that is already accurate. Often, though, those sections are original, as a new correspondent has joined the almanac and gives us his or her own perspective on a place.

On the other hand, the section on recent events will be different each year. I would think this would be obvious.

Finally, the last sections give us a peek at places that are highly recommended, either to visit or avoid. For this section, we tried to have something new to talk about, since each nation probably has more Don't Miss sites that could possibly fit in this entire almanac.

We here at *Gallidox Publishing* would like to announce the acquisition of the services of Alle Handro, formerly of Aasla. Living here in Karameikos while performing some artistic renderings for the School of Magecraft, Alle has graciously offered his artistic skills in visually enhancing the accounts and locales described in our publication.

Jalinoor Cerrulian is an Alphatian artist who dabbles in chronomancy... or perhaps he's a chronomancer who dabbles in paint and canvas. Either way it boggles the mind. Cerrulian's powers are at the disposal of *Gallidox Publishing* and he is quite capable (and most enthusiastic) of being able to illustrate any event that is worth illustrating. "Any place, any time."—his motto.

Dorrik Stonecleaver

The People of Mystara

Various intelligent beings live on—and in—Mystara. No almanac of the world could ever be complete without at least describing the major races that one can encounter during her travels. This section will therefore give a brief overview of the most important known intelligent species that have helped shape the history of Mystara. There are obviously more sentient races than those listed, but these are by far the more common.

By Dorrik Stonecleaver

Humans

Humans come in all shapes and sizes, without really any common theme to unite them. Historians claim that all the humans on Mystara are descendants from three ancient races of humans: the Neathar, Oltecs and Tangor. A fourth major race, the Alphatians, arrived on our world just over 2,000 years ago and has also contributed to the various cultures now found today. With such a short life span (compared to demihumans), humans have evolved rapidly and there are now more races of humans on Mystara than one can possibly keep track off.

Humans can be found on all the continents of Mystara and seem to have adapted to almost any climate. As mentioned, there are too many races of humans to describe fully, but the two most common are the Thyatians with their olive complexion and dark hair as well as the Common Alphatians with coppery complexions and brown or red hair.

If there is anything that can be said to generalize humans is that they are all unique. Racial unity is rare and only takes place when there is a non-human threat close by. Otherwise, they fight more often amongst themselves than with other races.

Dwarves

The dwarves of Mystara, often called Rockborn dwarves, all came from the same source: the mountains of Rockhome. They

claim that Kagyar—their patron Immortal—created them circa BC 1800 and they have since spread throughout the continent of Brun. Some have even sailed across the sea and made their homes in the land of the now sunken continent of Alphatia [*in the former nation of Stoutfellow. Ed.*]. Whether the dwarves have colonized other continents during the past remains to be discovered.

Dwarves are lawful beings who only change their ways of life after a very, very long period. Every dwarven colony still speaks the exact same dialect of Dengar that is still used in Rockhome. The same holds true for their physical characteristics: all dwarves on Mystara are still identical to their racial ancestors. Rockborn Dwarves are the only race of dwarves that exist on the surface of Mystara.

Rockborn dwarves are stocky and muscular with a deep tan or light brown skin, often with ruddy cheeks. Their hair is often black, gray, or brown, with similar colors for their bright eyes. They vary in height between 4 and 4½ feet. [*AD&D2: Rockborn dwarves are the hill dwarves of Mystara, as described in the PHB and Complete Book of Dwarves.*]

A second race of dwarves, the Kogolor dwarves, has been found in the Hollow World. There doesn't appear to be any connection between these dwarves and Rockborn dwarves. Their description is still unknown to the authors of this almanac.

Elves

The elves claim that they were born from the soul of Mystara and the Immortal Ordana several thousand years ago. At first, guardian spirits of the land watched over them, but then one day they were let free to inhabit the world of Mystara. Some sages speculate that the ancient elves were colonists from another world, much like the Alphatians. The departure of the “guardian spirits” is interpreted as a loss of contact with their homeworld. Elves scoff at this idea, however.

Five main races of elves exist on Mystara: the Aquarendi (aquatic elves), the ee'aar, the

shadow elves, the Shiye elves and the sylvan elves. Sages claim that all except the shadow elves evolved [or arrived, depending on the sage. *Ed.*] while the elves were still watched over by the “guardian spirits.” In general, elves stand about 5 feet in height, are slenderer than humans and have pointed ears.

The most common race of elves encountered is that of the sylvan elves who are named after their legendary homeland, the Sylvan Realm. Sylvan elves have either pale blond hair and blue eyes, or dark hair and intense green eyes. A few clans have red hair and gray is also not unheard of. Unlike all other elven races, sylvan elves can grow mustaches and beards, a trait that is often noticed on the elves of Belcadiz. Sylvan elves are scattered throughout the continents of Brun and Davania and almost all the elven clans found in the Old World and the Savage Coast are sylvan elves. Sylvan elves prefer a simple life and live high up in the trees of many forests. Some clans have different attitudes, however. The Belcadiz of Glantri enjoy prestige, reputation and living in human-styled houses, while the Meditor and Verdier elves of Minrothad love money and are renowned sailors. The sylvan elves of the Savage Coast have abandoned all elven ways and adopted the lifestyles of the nations they live in. [*AD&D2: Sylvan elves are the high elves of Mystara, as described in the PHB and Complete Book of Elves.*]

The Aquarendi are an aquatic race of elves that inhabit the various seas of our world. Gill slits in their neck permit them to breathe while underwater. They have webs between their fingers and toes and small fins on their ankles. Green and blue hair is common among the sea elves, although brown or black have been spotted on rare occasions. Skin colors range from light tan for those living near the shore to bright green or blue for those living deep beneath the sea. [*AD&D2: Aquarendi are considered to be the sea elves of Mystara, as described in the PHB and Complete Book of Elves.*]

The ee'aar are a rare race of winged elves that inhabit the western end of the Savage Coast and the Arm of the Immortals. They look much as the sylvan elves, except appear

much more delicate and with more angular facial features. Of course, they also have large feathered wings with a wingspan of at least 10 feet. They usually have white or silver hair, although black and gray are not uncommon. Their wings are the same color as their hair. Eyes tend to be amber, violet, or deep green. [*AD&D2: Ee'aar are the avariel, or winged elves, of Mystara, as described in the Complete Book of Elves.*]

The shadow elves are a mysterious race of underground elves. They have gray skin and white hair and their philosophies appear to be much different than other elves'. To date, not much more is known about them. Shadow elves inhabit the nation of Aengmor in the Old World and they also have a large empire deep beneath the ground. The nation of Schattentalheim in the Hollow World is also composed of shadow elves. [*There is no AD&D2 counterpart for the shadow elves. AD&D2 stats are given on TSR's homepage.*]

Finally, the Shiye elves are slightly taller than other elves. When the elves left their ancient homeland, the Shiye elves went with the sylvan elves and helped create the Sylvan Realm. But the differences in philosophies, especially the Shiye's xenophobia, eventually caused them to leave. Their new migration brought them to the continent of Alphatia where they founded Shiye-Lawr, the largest nation of Shiye elves. They usually have silver hair and amber eyes, although a few rare Shiye elves have pale golden hair and violet eyes. They are more reclusive than sylvan elves and live a much more ordered life than their chaotic cousins. Shiye elves are found throughout Alphantian territories such as Norwold and Bellissaria. Also, one colony of Shiye elves seems to have settled in Eusdria on the Savage Coast. [*AD&D2: Shiye elves are considered to be the grey elves of Mystara, as described in the PHB and Complete Book of Elves.*]

Gnomes

Like dwarves, gnomes claim they were created by their patron Immortal—Garal Glitterlode—who also placed them in the mountains of the area now known as

Rockhome. Unlike the dwarves, however, gnomish colonization of the rest of the world wasn't so successful. Only when they colonized areas with the dwarves [*such as Highforge in Karameikos or Stoutfellow in Alphatia. Ed.*] did their colonies survive. Seeing how they couldn't forge nations on the ground, the gnomes of Mystara built Serraine, their wondrous flying city and there they remain to this day. Still, small scattered communities can still be found in the Old World and Norwold. Elsewhere, gnomes do not seem to be present, though rumors coming from the explorers of the southern continent would have them uncontested rulers in the farthest reaches of Davania.

Strictly speaking, there is only one race of gnomes present on Mystara and they are simply known as Mystaran gnomes. The second "race" of gnomes is that of the sky gnomes which inhabit the flying city of Serraine. As such, physically the two races of gnomes are identical (hence the reference to just one race of gnomes), although their attitude and culture are so different that many sages prefer to separate them into two races.

Gnomes stand about 3 feet tall and have rather pronounced noses of which they are quite proud. They have either pale blond or red hair, which often turns white as they age. Their skin ranges from dark tan to woody brown and they usually have bright blue eyes. [*AD&D2: Mystaran gnomes are the rock gnomes of Mystara as described in the Complete Book of Gnomes and Halflings. Sky gnomes enjoy inventing things and are like tinker gnomes, but have more common sense and less chances of exploding inventions. Serraine does fly, after all!*]

Goblinoids

Goblinoids is a generic term used to describe various barbaric races seemingly related to goblins and generally descended from the old Beastmen race that can still be encountered in the Hollow world. There are far too many types of goblinoids to describe here and many volumes at the very least would be required. Suffice to say that the following goblinoid species are present on

Mystara: bugbear, gnoll, goblin, half-ogre, half-orc, hobgoblin, kobold, ogre, orc and troll. Of those mentioned above, kobolds seem limited to the Old World, while the rest can be found in all areas of Mystara, though only orcs and Beastmen can be found in the Hollow World.

Within each species of goblinoid there are several dozen to hundred of races. For example, in the Broken Lands, there are three races of orcs: yellow orcs, red orcs and the Hyborean common orc. Several hundred other orc races exist outside the Broken Lands. [*AD&D2: Stats for these goblinoids can be found in the Complete Book of Humanoids.*]

Half-Elves

Half-elves are so rare in the Old World as to be almost legendary [*in fact, if playing D&D, they don't exist at all. Ed.*]. Many sages believe that a Mystaran elf/human couple somehow has a harder time at producing offspring than is reportedly possible on other worlds. When they do, the result is invariably a half-elf [*or a human with elven blood or elf with human blood if playing a pure D&D game; see GAZ5 The Elves of Alfheim for more details. Ed.*]. Strangely enough, half-elves are more common on the Savage Coast. Some speculate Immortal involvement, others a side effect of the Red Curse [*two possible reasons for having half-elves on the Savage Coast in a pure D&D game. Ed.*]. Half-elves are unknown in the rest of the world.

Half-elves appear like a mix between their human and elven ancestors, hence, can have a large variety of appearances. A look through both the human and elven races can give an idea of the possibilities. Despite this, half-elves are of one race: half-elven [*or half-human if you're talking to an elf. Ed.*]. Unlike most other worlds, half-elves aren't treated with total scorn by the elves of Mystara; they are so rare that most are curious about half-elves and will gladly accept their company for a while just to learn more about them.

Hin (Halflings)

The hin, sometimes called halflings by other races, are a small folk who enjoy a

good life. Hin have no knowledge of their creation or arrival, although historians trace them back to the original elven homeland, leading them to speculate they “appeared” [that is, were created or arrived from another world. Ed.] with the elves. Hin tend to blend in with the surrounding communities rather than create their own. Most hin are therefore found in human nations. The Five Shires of the Old World and the city-state of Leeha in Norwold are the only known true hin communities. On the Savage Coast, they have been completely absorbed into the local nations.

Hin rarely grow larger than 3 feet in height. They have ruddy complexions, sandy to dark-brown hair and blue or hazel eyes. Their faces are small and childlike when compared to a human. Hin also have thick hair atop each foot. [AD&D2: *Hin are the hairfoot halflings of Mystara, as described in the PHB and Complete Book of Gnomes and Halflings.*]

Lupins

Lupins are a race of dog-people that have spread over the world of Mystara. The origins of the lupins are unclear; some believe they are merely a type of more civilized gnolls and if this were the case, then gnolls would be a race of lupins and not goblinoids. Others think that they are the descendants of the Hutaakans, a race created by the Immortal Pflarr at some unknown period of history. Because of this belief, some lupins have returned to worshipping Pflarr and this has caused much trouble in the lupin nation of Renardie.

Over the centuries, lupins have scattered over most of Brun and the rest of Mystara, evolving into several different races. Like humans and other short-lived species, there are too many races of lupins to mention here, just as there are far too many breeds of dogs to describe in a couple of paragraphs. I shall therefore limit this entry to naming a few and giving a general location where they can be found.

Grand bloodhounds are excellent trackers from the nation of Renardie, while the

carrasquito is a small breed that lives in El Grande Carrascal of the Savage Coast. The ogrish chow-chow was once a slave race to the ogre-magi of Ochalea but is now free. The foxfolk is scattered throughout Brun, while the Glantri mountaineer is limited to the Glantrian Alps. The Heldann shepherds are a goat and sheep raising race found in the Heldannic Territories.

Many, many more exist, especially crossbreeds and mongrels (as they are called). For a more complete list and better descriptions, I strongly recommend an article written by Raman Nabonidus of the *Princess Ark*. The article is entitled *Lupins of the Mystara setting* and can be found in *Dragon Magazine* #237.

Rakasta

The rakasta are a race of cat-like beings that also claim that a patron Immortal created them. This time, it is the Immortal Ka who transformed a cat into a human when it fell in love with her master. But when Ba-steh [the human/cat in question. Ed.] still behaved like a cat, Ka instead transformed her and her human lover into cat-people: the first rakasta. When this happened is still unknown, but it is believed to have occurred prior to the Great Rain of Fire, explaining how they have since spread throughout most of the world [and even beyond if you believe they have a colony on an invisible moon. Ed.]. They have adapted to various climates and evolved into several sub-races.

Rakasta are mainly wild and most have fled lands that were colonized by humans and as such are almost unheard of in the Old World. Rakasta have one nation on the Savage Coast [Bellayne. Ed.], but beyond that are mostly scattered tribes throughout the world. Like all short-lived races (that is, those of less than 100 years), rakasta have evolved rapidly and many races now apparently exist in the wild, so below we'll only describe those who often encounter the rest of the civilized world. In general, rakasta are man-sized, but weight easily two or three times as much. One noticeable difference in

the fact that rakasta need 12 hours of sleep per day.

The msongo, also known as the fast runners, have a coarse coat varying from yellowish-gray to golden. A reddish fawn with small dark spots is also common among them. They are tall and lanky but can achieve great speeds when running. The msongo are known to inhabit the Meghala Kimata grasslands of Davania, the Steppes of Jen of Skothar and on the Thothian Plateau on the Isle of Dawn.

The jakar are found in the rainforests of the Arm of the Immortals. They have beautiful spotted coats that are prized by Vilaverdan hunters. Not much is known about them except that most Vilaverdans hunting the jakar fail to return from their expeditions.

Mountain rakasta are the most common rakasta of the Savage Coast and have also been spotted in the remote wilderness of Norwold. Their fur varies from plain gray-brown to reddish and even black. A tribe of mountain rakasta is rumored to inhabit the Kurish Massif and if this is true, they are the only known rakasta in the Old World.

Many other races of rakasta exist and those seeking more information should look up the *Rakasta of Mystara*, written by Raman Nabonidus of the *Princess Ark*. [This article can be found in Dragon Magazine #247. Ed.]

The Immortals

The people of Mystara worship powerful beings known as Immortals. These beings fill in the same roles as Gods (or Powers) would on another world and most religions focus on the desires of the Immortals. The main difference between Immortals and Gods is that the Immortals were once mortals that have since advanced to a state of being far beyond their former peers by accomplishing deeds of heroic proportion.

Some claim that the Immortals are merely another family or collection of gods. The name Immortal merely refers to the group of Mystaran deities, much like Olympians refers to the gods of the Greek people and Aesir is the name of the Norse powers. Or, perhaps the cultures of Mystara simply developed the term Immortal instead of God. Some reverse the same debate, stating that Gods and Powers are merely other terms used to describe Immortals.

Other sages state that Immortals are not Gods. They are powerful beings akin to Gods and Powers and are deities in their own rights, but they are not the same. They use the fact that Immortals have been slain by very powerful mortals on rare occasions, while Gods simply cannot be slain by mortals.

Regardless, whatever the Immortals truly are simply does not matter to most people. They are more powerful than mortals can imagine. They serve as the basis of faith and grant clerics and priests their spells. With their powers and priests, they manipulate the world into outcomes that they favor. Anything beyond that is probably beyond mortal comprehension anyway.

Belzamith Fingertackles

Physical Characteristics of Mystara

By now, most readers would have heard various rumors and fairy tales about how our world is a large hollow sphere floating in the emptiness of the void. In this void are also the sun, Matera, the stars and a few other planets discovered by astronomers.

Well, those rumors are indeed true. Several groups have reportedly successfully crossed the large polar opening into the Hollow World, each reporting that it looks like the inside of a sphere with an eternal red sun within. Also, by recently laying my hands on a copy of certain sections of Captain Haldemar of the *Princess Ark's* logbook, even an outside description of Mystara from the void only serves to further validate this belief.

Prospero, the owner and author of the *Poor Wizard Almanacs* (property of TSR), claims that Mystara has a diameter of 6,190 miles, giving it a circumference of 16,352 miles. The three volumes also state the entire Hollow World is approximately 3,790 miles in diameter. The polar openings are supposedly 774 miles in diameter at their narrowest point, 1,030 miles in diameter on the Hollow World's side and 1,548 miles in diameter on the outer world's side. The crust is about 1,200 miles thick.

Now, where this information comes from is still unknown to the authors of the *Mystaran Almanac* and Prospero refuses to reveal his sources. Most sages we have brought this knowledge to admit that the values do seem reasonable, though the Alphatians have been unwilling to confirm or refute them. It should be noted, however, that Julinius Dicrodion, a renowned Thyatian mapmaker, claims that the values are wrong and that Mystara is much larger than that. He is currently organizing and financing several map-making expeditions to try and prove his point. Other mapmakers scoff at his, as they say, "ludicrous" idea.

From more reliable sources (not to say that the previous information is false, just that we do not know where it came from), the world of Mystara is surrounded by a

magical bubble known as the skyshield. This skyshield allows objects to enter the world of Mystara, but not to leave. Thanks to this, the air that we breathe remains on Mystara and does not spill out into the empty void that surrounds us.

Again, from Haldemar's journals, the skyshield is reportedly situated 15 miles above the ground. A friend of mine in the Heldannic Knights confirms this report.

Various rumors we've heard claim that skyshields occur on every planet on the Prime Plane. Although we again have no way to verify this, I've heard similar tales from various groups, so I've decided to publish this rumor anyway. Still, a sage of Aeria once told me that skyshields are only a localized phenomenon to our crystal sphere. He has yet to inform me what exactly a crystal sphere is though. I'm still trying to figure this one out.

Our atmosphere is completely normal up until about 20,000 feet in altitude. After that height, it's much harder to breathe and most expert skyship sailors recommend some sort of magical breathing apparatus or spell.

Now, with the physical description of Mystara are done with, it is time to start examining various areas in closer detail. We, the authors of the *Mystaran Almanac*, have decided to divide the known sections of Mystara into 7 separate areas. Each sector differs both geographically and sometimes even culturally from one another. Admittedly, each zone does vary considerably in cultures, as anyone can plainly see that Ethengars are in no way like the mages of Glantri. Overall, however, there is a somewhat different tone, or atmosphere, to each zone of Mystara. At least, we the authors believe so.

The heart of civilization, which includes the fine nations of Karameikos and the Five Shires, is known as the Old World. The less civilized and more frontier area covered with the dreaded *Red Curse* is called the Savage Coast. The lands of feudalism to the north fall in the area of Norwold. The islands of the Sea of Dawn create another sector, while the large open waters of the New Alphatian

Confederate Empire will be called the Alphatian Sea. There are also the colonies and the dangerous lands of the southern continent known as Davania. And of course, there is a whole second world within our own, the mysterious Hollow World. As

a bonus, we present you this year with a special focus on the lands of Hule and its neighbors.

So, without any further delay, welcome dear readers, to the lands of Mystara.

Belzamith Fingertackles

Atlas of The Old World

Introduction to the Old World

Welcome dear reader to the atlas of the Old World. Formerly called the Known World and the Dread Coast, the Old World is the seat of civilization on the world of Mystara. It is the place where technology is at its peak. It is the place where art and music are awe-inspiring. Civilization is almost everywhere and it is rare indeed to walk for more than a day and not have any village or town to rest in for the night.

In this enlightened land, education is on the rise and most people can read and write. It is an age of knowledge and discoveries. Even magic, once held secret by old mages in their remote towers, can now be learned through various schools and universities. Slavery is almost abolished and most people are considered citizens of their nations, having the freedom to do as they please. Diplomacy is the favored method of accomplishing one's goals and savage brutality is almost non-existent.

Of course, this does not mean there is no danger to be found. Some places are still savage, such as the Atruaghin clans or the hordes of the Ethengar Steppes. Goblinoids can still be found almost everywhere and their brutality is unmatched in the entire world. Even diplomatic nations cannot achieve everything with words and therefore their armies march across the land. It is simply that, here, in the Old World, such events are normally much rarer than anywhere else on Mystara.

Instead of brute force, this land is ripe with intrigue and behind-the-scenes powers. Manipulations are everywhere and strong guilds and organizations rule almost as much as the kings on their thrones. Those that think that adventure cannot be found here in the Old World simply aren't looking in the right place.

The Old World is a large stretch of land found in the southeastern margin on the continent of Brun. It is bordered by the Sea of Dread to the south, the Sea of Dawn to the east, the Great Waste to the west and the

Mengul Mountain Range to the north. Within this land are two dozen “nations,” most of them enlightened, but a few still hold on to barbaric traditions. These nations have influenced every other corner of the world and just as Mystara is the center of the multiverse, the Old World can honestly be said to be the core or heart of Mystara.

Correspondents for the Old World

Here is our list of correspondents that give us detailed information on the nations, places and events of the Old World:

Balnor “Silverblade” Audriel



Captain of the shadowelf army. During his adventures he traveled all over the shadowelf kingdom, in the Broken Lands and he even visited some nations of the surface world, like Darokin, Sind and Glantri. A quick fighter and accomplished skinwing rider, he took part in the invasion of Alfheim and in the siege of Oenkmar, where he was shot down by enemy forces. He is our eyes and ears inside the shadowelf community.

Christopher Dove

Formerly an explorer and a renowned archeologist of the Old World, Christopher Dove has spent the last ten years teaching archeology and ancient history at the University of Corun in Corunglain, Darokin. He has published famous essays on the Nithian and Milenian civilizations and has made many interesting discoveries in the past years, the last one being the finding of the tomb of Nennaya-Sherat.

Now in his late fifties, this scholarly and well experienced fellow has agreed to join our cadre of correspondents on behalf of his student and our friend Ursula Bremen: he will cover the region of Wendar and Denagoth for the almanac this year.

Demetius Vannopolus

A career officer in the Thyatian army, General Vannopolus has been stationed on the Isle of Dawn off and on for over a decade, first fighting against the Alphatian invasion and later as military administrator in the central highlands of Dunadale. His interests go beyond the military and he has a reputation for showing concern for the welfare of the common people of Dunadale during his time there and has now gained a good repute in Minrothad as well. This year he shares with us his impressions of the island nation of Minrothad, in addition to reporting on other areas.

Favonius Viator

The second son of a well-to-do Thyatian senator, Favonius is a bit of a rogue uninterested in the politics that his father takes part in; instead, Favonius took up the trade of a merchant with the help of a very rich uncle. His mercantile experience gives him much understanding on the Empire of Thyatis, as well as the various inland trade routes and coastal sea trade routes.

Favonius was recently freed from his captivity by the merrow and now describes to us the wondrous places he has seen. He is also the writer for the entries on Minrothad, Ylaruam and the Empire of Thyatis. It has

been noted that his recent captivity has given Favonius a rather cynical outlook on life. We have finally gained access to Favonius's report on the Twaelar Merrow Empire.

Hempford Brewster

A native-born Glantrian, Hempford will be giving us a closer look at the various principalities of that nation and the people who live there. Hempford is proud to have been raised in the free territories of his homeland (those ungoverned by any single principality) and hopes to provide an unbiased viewpoint.

Hendrik von Gultzer



Freiherr Hendrik von Gultzer, descendent of a long line of Hattian noblemen, arrived in the Heldannic Territories in AC 1004 in search of opportunities. These he found in abundance. Entering the Heldannic Order, von Gultzer ascended the ranks quickly, until he reached a respectable rank. Though he serves his superiors willingly, von Gultzer possesses about him a slightly irreverent air—one that has got him into trouble in the past. One would think that he entered the order only to profit from the additional privileges it provides him in this land, but he denies this of course. Today, he divides his time between running his estates in Kammin and Landfall and corresponding for the

almanac. In the latter function, he provides us with news from Heldann proper and Heldland.

Joshuan Gallidox

The owner and publisher of this fine almanac, Joshuan Gallidox has taken leave as editor to once more visit far-away and interesting places. Describing himself as world traveler, pipeweed smoker, collector of knowledge and spinner of tales, the hin adventurer describes to us his homeland of the Five Shires, as well as the nations of Ierendi and Karameikos.

Misha Mananov

An itinerant priestess of the Church of Traladara, Misha has given herself the goal of bringing the various goblinoid tribes to a level of civilization equal to those of other nations. She has therefore left her homeland of Karameikos for Soderfjord, where goblinoids had been running rampant the past few years.

Omar-ibn-Chukri



Born in Selenica, Omar is a second-generation descendant of Alasiyan immigrants. An adventurer by trade, he has signed on with the *Mystaran almanac* to provide us with inside information on the

Emirates of Ylaruam. His ethnicity enables him to venture into the region that is now closed to all outsiders.

Ryuk-uk Tshaa



Ryu is a hsiao—an intelligent, owl-like creature—and a scholar in the ways of goblinoids. He hails from the forests of Vestland and he and his companion Starkad Grimmson, a warrior from Soderfjord, will be bringing us all the information on the Great Migration.

Additionally, as *Joshuan Gallidox Publishing* is the primary backer of his expedition, we have convinced Ryu to send us information on all the nations through which they travel on their way, such as the Atruaghin Plateau and Sind.

Shaun the Elfin

Shaun of clan Grunalf is one of the most renowned artists and adventurers of the Old World. A well-traveled and knowledgeable elf, she has long retired from her adventuring career and now lives in Ierendi acting as *kia'i* (guardian) of the crown and member the Adventurers' Club. She is a formidable storyteller and has a deep passion for heroic tales. After hearing of our editorial pursue, she has volunteered to tell us what she knows about the most exotic lands she visited in her life.

Starkad Grimmson



Companion and bodyguard to the scholastic Ryuk-uk Tshaa, Starkad will provide us with an insight into the mindset of the Northmen, particularly those of his native home of Soderfjord.

Stefania Torion

The second child of Emperor Thincol, Stefania is known not only for her strong will but her keen intellect. She killed her first husband on their wedding night and even ran away from home, causing much gossip in Thyatis City. During the Great War she fought alongside her husband Anaxibius Torion, a former Thyatian gladiator and general and earned her own general's spurs before he did. Stefania and Anaxibius rule the realm of Redstone. She is continuing her work on a history of her father's life, as well as fighting in defense of Thyatis alongside her brother, the emperor. None the less she fulfilled her commitment to provide reports for publication in the almanac, taking time to provide us with a description of Redstone and some of the surrounding communities, for which we are extremely grateful.

Thurgood Lodestar

Little is known of Thurgood, save that he appears to be a gnomish revolutionary in the city of Serraine. Not an official correspondent, the *Mystaran Almanac* has nevertheless managed to secure some top-secret information about the activities of the Grey Front and their flying city from his reports.

Ursula Bremen



Ursula is a smart and experienced member of the Darokin Diplomatic Corps, giving her great insights into the political goings-on in Darokin and surrounding nations. Her connections also allow her inside information on the military activities in Darokin, Aengmor and the Orclands, making her an invaluable asset to this almanac.

A very ambitious woman in her mid-30s, Ursula always manages to keep her ambitions in check. The duties of her job always come first.

Vivianna Romanones



An adviser and supporter of Eusebius, Lady Romanones is one of the empire's special envoys. Her duties demand a considerable amount of travel throughout the region under Thyatian influence and she has been kind enough to provide us with some unclassified reports of these areas, including an extensive description of the heartland of the empire this year. A strikingly beautiful but headstrong woman, Lady Romanones is a skilled negotiator known for her dedication to Thyatis and its interests. She is a strong proponent of reform in Thyatis and of doing the right thing. Some of her detractors claim she is willing to use any means to achieve what she believes is right, but we can only say she deserves praise for the insightful reports she has graciously sent us. We know our readers will find her unique insight into the Thyatian mindset interesting. Though her writing is very pronouncedly favorable to the Thyatians, everything we have been able to check seems factually accurate.

Atlas

ACTIUS (County of)

Location: Southeastern corner of the continent of Brun, along the eastern border of Karameikos and the Kerenda river, north of the Sea of Dread and south of the Altan Tepes Mountains. OW

Area: 240 sq. mi. (620 sq. km.).

Population: 10,000 (90% human, 10% sea elf) including the town of Actius (pop. 8,000).

Languages: Thyatian (Hattian dialect).

Coinage: Thyatian Standard: *emperor* (pp), *lucin* (gp), *asterius* (sp), *denarius* (cp).

Taxes: 25% income tax collected quarterly on the aristocracy, nobility and wealthy; 20% income tax collected quarterly on everyone else (Va. 1, Ya. 1, Fy. 3 and Ei. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. Expensive and magical items are also taxed 25% of their worth. 10% imperial *commercia* sales tax on all goods except food, clothing and fixed assets; levied on imports, rebated on exports. Tax on slave owning equal to 50% of the slave's value annually. Property tax levied based on quality of land, roughly 6% of its value annually.

Government Type: Dominion, member of the Thyatian Empire.

Industries: Agriculture, crafts, fishing, oil, shipbuilding, trade.

Important Figures: Geraldan Actavius (Count, human, male, F16), Dalia Salieri Actavia (Countess, human, female, Rake 9), Heraclius Actavius (Heir, human, male, F12), Comentas Dulcissinuis (Magist, human, male, M18), Cyril Helladius (Prelate, human, male, Pr16 of Protius), Xendorian Hydrosius (Commodore, human, male, F15).

Flora and Fauna: Olive trees, date palms, cedar trees in cultivated orchards. Sheep and goats, dolphins and other sea life.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, DDA1 *Arena of Thyatis*, DDA2 *Legions of Thyatis*, previous almanacs.

Description by Vivianna Romanones.

A small island known for its fishermen and shipyards, which serves as a trade way station for merchants traveling the southern route around Hattias.

The Land

Actius is the smallest island in Thyatis that rates dominion status (there are many smaller islands, most of which are not noted on any map because they would clutter it and are governed by other dominions rather than being dominions on their own account). The island itself is hilly and infertile, suitable only for grazing by goats and growing hearty vines. Most Actians make their living off the sea. Actius has an unusually good harbor, around which the town of Actius is built. This port is broad and deep and is surrounded by wide beaches and has become a center of shipbuilding for the Thyatian navy.

Often forgotten is that Actius is not just surrounded by the sea, but part of it is under the sea. A community of sea elves lives in the waters nearby and their ocean home produces pearls, fish and other bounty from the sea.

The People

The vast majority of Actians are fishermen, seafaring merchants, or shipbuilders. The town of Actius contains 80% of the County's population. The rest are farmers and herdsmen living in the hills around the town, or sea elves living in the waters around the island. Actius has lately been involved in provisioning ships for the war against the Twaelar and the blockade and reconquest of Hattias. The sea elven inhabitants have been alerted for possible Twaelar incursions into Thyatian waters, but so far none have appeared. Gambling is a popular past time among the Actians, with dice being the favorite. There are many gambling halls in town and just about every tavern has a table or two where games of chance are being played at all hours of the day and night.

AENGMOR (City of)

Location: Continent of Brun, former Broken Lands. OW

Area: 60,000 sq. ft. (5,400 sq. m.); the area of the Eastern Broken Lands is also under the city's jurisdiction, both aboveground and belowground.

Population: Estimated 17,000 (75% shadow elves, 20% various humanoids, 5% Schattentalfen).

Languages: Elvish (Shadowelf and Schattentalfen dialects), humanoid tongues.

Coinage: *Bright* (gp), *shine* (sp), *glint* (cp), *kalafi* (varnished strips of hard, bark-like fungus, they come in 10 gp, 50 gp and 100 gp denominations); also Oenkmarian coins: *quetzal* (gp), *axolotl* (cp), *ixitxachitl* (jade ingots).

Taxes: Unknown.

Government Type: Independent city, formerly part of the Shadow Elves' Kingdom.

Industries: Military, mining (gold, copper, tin, jade), fungus production.

Important Figures: Xatapechtli (High Priest, elf, male, M15).

Flora and Fauna: Mosses, fungus, leeches, mosquito, striders (bipedal lizards).

Further Reading: GAZ10 *The Orcs of Thar*, GAZ13 *The Shadow Elves*, previous almanacs.

Description by Balinor "Silverblade" Audriel.

Aengmor, the former Jewel of the Depths, a dark city sacred to Atzanteotl and imbued by evil.

The Land

Situated atop a rugged lava hill in the central Broken Lands, Aengmor is a walled city full of mysteries and dangers.

The city is a nightmarish maze of winding streets and narrow alleys, surrounded by heavy stone walls and steep lava cliffs that make a massive assault impossible and a flight from inside very difficult... unless you

can command some sort of aerial travel. I had that chance and I flew over the city many times during the war. Here it is what I saw.

The city is built on a series of concentric plateaus over what was probably the top of a rocky hill. Though usually wrapped in smoke it is sometimes possible to see a huge maze of narrow, chaotic streets. Except for the heavy walls there are a couple of notable buildings in the city. On the top of the central plateau there is a big temple, not different in shape to the Temple of Rafiel in the City of the Stars. Northeast of the temple there's a circular arena. The city has also a park and a couple of lakes.

It was in that park that my skinwing fell when we were shot down and it was in that dark fungal forest that I hid until our army finally broke into the city, eating fungus and drinking foul water. That "park" is really a dangerous place, with lots of spiders and other dangerous creatures that I hope you will never meet.

The People

Wicked, renegade shadow elves, who live side by side with orcs, serving the evil cult of Atzanteotl, trying to spread chaos in the western Old World and beyond.

After the recent Shadow War about a thousand of Schattentalfen found shelter in the City of Aengmor. Rumors say that even some human brigands moved to the evil city.

Given its central position the City of Aengmor could quickly become a pain in the back for Glantri and Darokin, much like what the Broken Lands were under Thar's rule.

Recent History [by Dorrik Stonecleaver.]

Before the Great War the Broken Lands, probably the most desolate and inhospitable land in all Brun, were home to thousands of goblinoids. Forgotten by Immortals, humans and dwarves alike (not to mention elves) these rugged lands were probably the most dangerous area in all the Old World.

But things changed dramatically on AC 1006 when a meteor crashed in the Kurish Massif creating the Great Crater. The feared orcish leader Thar and King Kol IV of the kobolds moved their hordes to the Great Crater (a.k.a. Western Broken Lands) to better raid on Glantri as well as Darokin. Only a few tribes remained in the Eastern Broken Lands.

In AC 1010 brave dwarf scouts found the lost City of Aengmor floating on a lava lake in the caves beneath the Eastern Broken Lands. The mighty dwarven army left Rockhome to defeat the hated orcs and conquer the lost city.

In Flaurmont AC 1012, after many bloody skirmishes, the humanoids surrendered to the dwarves, but joy was to last very short, because shadow elves attacked the city. In the following months Aengmor was conquered and lost many times by dwarves, shadow elves and humanoids with heavy losses on all fronts. Dwarves abandoned the city in Felmont, then Alebane's ogres ransacked the city in Ambyrmont just a few days before the shadow elves' final attack.

In 1014 shadowelf mages managed to raise the city back to the surface and their troops secured all the Eastern Broken Lands. After the shadow elves' civil war two years ago, rebel followers of Atzanteotl elected Aengmor as their stronghold rallying the few scattered humanoids in the area and using them as slaves.

The survivors from the disastrous Schattenalfen assault on the City of the Stars took refuge in the city of Aengmor in AC 1015.

Do Miss

If possible, avoid crossing the Eastern Broken Lands, especially by night. If you go and you are surprised by shadow elves immediately drop your weapons and keep silent until they capture you. Maybe they will spare your life and you will have the chance to go back home, although it is rumored that they use captives as slaves in their mines.

Fleeing from the City of Aengmor is almost impossible, either on the surface or

underground (where, anyway, you will certainly meet shadowelf patrols).

AENGMOR (Colony of)

Location: Continent of Brun, Darokin area. OW

Area: 17,950 sq. mi. (46,490 sq. km.).

Population: 150,000 (90% Shadow Elves, 10% Alfheim elves).

Languages: Elvish (Shadowelf and Alfheim dialects).

Coinage: *Bright* (gp), *shine* (sp), *glint* (cp), *kalafi* (varnished strips of hard, bark-like fungus, they come in 10 gp, 50 gp and 100 gp denominations).

Taxes: One fourteenth of the yearly earnings goes to the Temple of Rafiel and the king.

Government Type: Semi-autonomous monarchy under the jurisdiction of the Shadow Elves' Kingdom.

Industries: Military, mining (precious metals).

Important Figures: Tanadaleyo (Radiant Princess, elf, female, F14/M13); Doriath (Former King of Alfheim, elf, male, F13/M15), Jorodrin Feadiel (Treekeeper, elf, male, M15/Pr12 of Ilsundal), Kanafasti (Court Mage, elf, male, M17).

Flora and Fauna: Canolbarth Forest is almost completely dead, but a few small animals still live here. Many nasty monsters (gorgons, basilisks, lycanthropes) and evil fairies also settled here recently. The shadow elves brought with them skinwings.

Further Reading: GAZ13 *The Shadow Elves*, GAZ5 *The Elves of Alfheim*, previous almanacs.

Description by Balinor "Silverblade" Audriel.

Aengmor, once a forest full of mighty trees and merry game, now a dry and obscure land, where your life is always at stake.

The Land

Completely enclosed by the Republic of Darokin, Aengmor lies on a plain bordered by the huge Strel River (to the west), the cursed Cruth Mountains (to the south) and the dangerous Orclands (to the north and east).

Once one of the most peaceful and beautiful areas of the Old World, Canolbarth Forest is now just a pale shadow of what it used to be before the Great War, when it was home of the seven clans of Alfheim Elves.

During the war the shadow elves lost control of their magic and turned Canolbarth's trees into twisted version of their former selves, their gnarly and intertwined branches forming an impenetrable canopy that now shrouds the forest undergrowth in darkness. New fungus of an unknown sort and strange mosses started to grow under the twisted trees, but without water the once-mighty forest is slowly dying, receding a few miles each year, thus giving ground to Darokinian grass.

The most brilliant mages of both elven races [*shadow elves, current owners of the forest and Alfheim elves, former inhabitants of the area. Ed.*] are trying to bring Aengmor back to its former glory, but until now they have failed.

The People

Despite lot of Alfheim exiles, as they like to be called, got back to Aengmor (or Canolbarth, as they prefer to say) in the last few months, Aengmor is currently inhabited mainly by my brethren, the shadow elves. We are a race of fiery warriors and accomplished mages. Centuries of life spent underground caused many changes in our physical appearance: we have a pale skin, light blue or gray eyes, white hair, big ears and squeaky voices.

Sunlight is dangerous to us, because our skin and our eyes are not yet accustomed to a long exposure to the burning sun. That is why we still prefer to live in stone houses or underground caves, instead of above trees like many of our surface cousins. But saying that, like burly dwarves, shadow elves hate

nature and have stone hearths would not be fair. Like the surface elves we like to sing, even though our voices are not always appreciated by surface dwellers.

As in all demihuman societies, the clan is very important among shadow elves. There exist four clans of shadow elves: Celebryl, Porador, Felestyr, Gelbalf. While in their native kingdom they live in four different cities, separated by miles of dark tunnels and hard rock, in Aengmor they live side by side, united in the name of Rafiel. Until now this has not proved to be bad, but in the shadowelf history wars of clan vs. clan are not unheard of.

As you may have guessed from the above paragraph, religion is very important among shadow elves. Rafiel is our patron Immortal, He guides us and we strive to follow His will. The shamans, a restricted group of shadow elves born with the mark of Rafiel (a purplish coloration of their forehead) and well taught in the way of Rafiel, are our "priests" and guides and possess a tremendous influence on our people.

Recent History

The shadow elves settled in Aengmor in AC 1007, after chasing away the Alfheim elves, who previously lived there. The war, if it can be called with such a name, was quick and almost bloodless. We had waited for the invasion for years, prepared it for months and won it in a few days!

When our armies popped up from the many tunnels that we had silently prepared under Alfheim, they found a deserted place, a dark forest of twisted trees with no one but a bunch of stubborn elves. I was there, riding my skinwing in the night and from the sky, high above the trees, I saw a long row of light. It was the surface elves, quietly and sadly abandoning their cursed land.

At first, we were happy, finally Canolbarth was ours. Rafiel's promises were coming true. Then some started to realize that the magic we used to turn the forest into a gray and lifeless place had gone out of control, but before we managed to start doing something about it there came the war for

the lost city of Aengmor. In Aengmor I was shot down by the dwarves, my skinwing was killed and I barely survived hiding in the darkest corners of that city. When I got back to Rafielton a few months later things had changed: the war with the dwarves had brought us many new enemies in the Old World and even among us there were some who started to stroll away from the way of Rafiel.

Suddenly a civil war spread all along Canolbarth, as the flames spread in a pool of oil when you toss a spark into it. It was shadow elf against shadow elf, brother against sister, father against son, King Telemon against Princess Tanadaleyo, reformers against traditionalists, wanderers against shamans. Those were sad days for the shadowelf race.

Only after Prince Erian was barely killed people realized the foolishness of this war and there came the peace again. But Aengmor is still a place full of reformers, of hotheaded people that do not wish to spend all their life under the strict rules imposed by our patron Rafiel.

In AC 1015, in a desperate attempt to save the forest, Princess Tanadaleyo established diplomatic relationships with our enemies, the surface elves and even invited many of them in Canolbarth. I hope that they will not cause any trouble in the future, but I hardly believe it.

While shadowelf shamans and wizards and Alfheimer treekeepers and wizards were trying to find a way to restore the Canolbarth Forest, tension continued to rise between the shadowelf settlers and the growing number of returning Alfheimers. The country has been oscillating between peace talks, overtures, cooperation and even friendship and terrorism, assassinations, repression and skirmishes. Meanwhile, the first *radiant soul crystals* have appeared in Aengmor, with shamans at last coming to the surface colony, while the *Trees of Life* were brought back to their ancestral grounds.

Don't Miss

If you happen to visit Aengmor (and to do this you should either be an important man or a stupid brigand looking for trouble) do not forget to look at the Sump and Weir, a natural complex of tunnels and rifts not too far from Rafielton.

The main feature of this area is a huge hole that goes down deep into Mystara. The hole is fortified, with a wall going all around it. The Sump and Weir was once the place where all Alfheim's rivers flowed to, so that the water of Canolbarth's night rain could be drained into the earth.

Alfheim elves built the wall to protect themselves from monsters coming from underground. When the shadow elves conquered Canolbarth, this area, so full of tunnels and caves, immediately drew the attention of the newcomers that settled here en masse. Today these caves host roughly 70,000 shadow elves.

Do Miss

Magic points - may Rafiel guide us away from those evil places.

Rumors say that before we came here Alfheim was rich in magic points. There were two kinds of such points, good ones and bad ones. After our mages cast the spell that disrupted Canolbarth's magic, the good ones disappeared, while the bad ones had their power increased.

Strange occurrences happen around those magic points, magic usually goes wild there and it is not unheard-of for monsters coming out of thin air or people disappearing into nothingness.

It seems that these points are somehow connected with the forest's evil magic. The team of elves that is studying how to save Canolbarth certainly knows more about this, but I'm not allowed to access this precious information.

ATRUAGHIN CLANS (Territories of)

Location: Along southern shore, west of Darokin and the Five Shires. OW

Area: 46,380 sq. mi. (120,124 sq. km.), including 19,172 sq. mi. (49,656 sq. km.) on the plateau itself.

Population: 224,400. On the plateau: Bear Clan: 44,200; Elk Clan: 29,000; Horse Clan: 69,500. In the lowlands: Tiger Clan: 57,000; Turtle Clan: 24,700.

Languages: Atruaghin, although each clan has its own dialect.

Coinage: Coinage is uncommon, as most use barter for goods. The few coins that do exist are called *cloud* (5 sp) and *land* (cp).

Taxes: None.

Government Type: Numerous independent tribes, each lead by a chief and/or shaman, loosely collected into larger clans.

Industries: Trapping, fur production, leather production (especially Horse and Turtle Clans), pottery and woven goods (Bear Clan), woodworking (Turtle Clan). The Tiger Clan is known for its raids into Darokin.

Important Figures: Powakuan Sleeps-With-Open Eyes (Bear Clan Chief, human, male, F10), Tulabal Shadowfall (Elk Clan Chief, human, female, F4/T13), Hovar Duck Watcher (Elk Clan Shaman, human, male, Pr14 of Atruaghin), Eleya Moonstalker (Horse Clan Chieftainess, human, female, F10), Naravipa Dagger Tooth (Tiger Clan King, human, male, F17), Eelsha Spider's Kiss (Tiger Clan Cleric, human, female, Pr10 of Atzanteotl), Talinguk Rolls-His-Canoe (Turtle Clan Chief, human, male, T13).

Flora and Fauna: Horses, buffaloes, birds of prey and many types of snakes can be found atop the large plateau. Down in the jungle below, great cats are often encountered, as are other typical jungle beasts. There is even rumor of a huge green dragon making its lair somewhere in the region.

Further Reading: GAZ 14 *The Atruaghin Clans*, previous almanacs.

Description by Ryuk-uk Tshaa.

The so-called Tiger Clan is at once the most technologically advanced and yet most antisocial of all the peoples of the Atruaghin region. They constitute a kingdom of semi-autonomous city-states with a very strict and powerful clergy influencing their day-to-day activities. It is largely due to their insular nature that they haven't spread further across the face of the Old World, nor taken up the technologies of their neighbors, a fact that should cause outsiders some measure of relief.

The Land

The forests of the Children of the Tiger are almost jungle-like in their appearance. Endless tracts of enormous deciduous trees loom over a jagged, broken landscape, their thick canopies blocking all but the slightest traces of sunlight. The result is that smaller trees and plants can't compete and thus little vegetation exists at the ground level. Mosses, lichens and ferns constitute much of the ground flora.

Still, life thrives in these woods. Numerous streams and ponds can be found in the forest and the strange meteorological conditions caused by the presence of the plateau insure that rain is abundant here. Animals of all sorts make their homes in the woods—monkeys, bats, birds—and of course, the tigers for which the peoples of the region get their name.

The People

The Children of the Tiger live different lives than most of their neighbors around the Atruaghin Plateau. They are perhaps most like the Children of the Bear atop the plateau, in that they live in cities and have a very defined social structure. Their cities are built amongst the surrounding woodlands, beneath the forest canopy, so that they are nearly invisible from above. The only structures that stand above the treetops are the central pyramids that house the city's clergy.

The clergy is one of two major social structures of the children of the Tiger, the other being the nobility. The nobility arose from the concept of the tribal chieftain, in which a great warrior would be chosen as leader of the tribe in times of war (a concept still evident among many Atruaghin peoples, such as the Children of the Turtle). Over the centuries, this title became hereditary amongst the Children of the Tiger, in ways like that typified by other Old-World nations. The noble families of the Children of the Tiger are mighty warrior families and are descended from the same.

This dichotomy of clergy and noble warrior has led to many conflicts over the history of the Children of the Tiger. It is typified by the division of loyalty between the two patron Immortals of the Children of the Tiger—Atzanteotl, their primary patron and sole object of the clergy's attentions; and Danel Tigerstripes, a legendary hero of the Children of the Tiger, whom is honored by most of the common people, particularly the warriors of the clan.

Recent History

The Children of the Tiger were dealt a harsh defeat by their enemies last year. First, combined military efforts of the goblinoids of the Great Migration and Atruaghin peoples (both from atop the plateau and in the surrounding lowlands) caused the children severe setbacks, nearly devastating two of their westernmost cities. Then, following the retreat of the Great Migration, the Atruaghin forces were joined by military from Darokin—primarily mercenaries and the personal forces of the Borderland region of Tenobar, which has long suffered from Tiger Clan attacks.

The combination of military pressures evidently was a catalyst for religious discord that had long been brewing amongst the Tiger Clan. Civil unrest was the result, as warring religious factions gave voice to their sentiments. The Darokin and Atruaghin forces were thus able to deal severe setbacks to the Tiger Clan. Several treaties have been signed between the Tiger Clan and their

outside neighbors and the peoples of the Tiger Clan kingdom have been attempting to resolve their internal difficulties, which has reportedly ended in violence on more than one occasion.

The hope among their neighboring states is that the Tiger Clan will resolve their difficulties and move towards a less antagonistic, more cooperative relationship with others. Whether this will happen or not is yet unknown.

BIAZZAN (*County of*)

Location: Southeastern corner of the continent of Brun, along the southern range of the Altan Tepes mountains, north of Kerendas, south of Ylaruam. OW

Area: 7,392 sq. mi. (19,145 sq. km.).

Population: 30,000 including the city of Biazzan (pop. 15,000; 90% human, 5% elven, 3% dwarves, 2% hin), Fort Nicos (pop. 1,250).

Languages: Thyatian (Kerendan dialect).

Coinage: Thyatian Standard: *emperor* (pp), *lucin* (gp), *asterius* (sp), *denarius* (cp).

Taxes: 25% income tax collected quarterly on the aristocracy, nobility and wealthy; 20% income tax collected quarterly on everyone else (Va. 1, Ya. 1, Fy. 3 and Ei. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. Expensive and magical items are also taxed 25% of their worth. 10% imperial *commercias* sales tax on all goods except food, clothing and fixed assets; levied on imports, rebated on exports. Tax on slave owning equal to 50% of the slave's value annually. Property tax levied based on quality of land, roughly 6% of its value annually.

Government Type: Dominion, member of the Thyatian Empire.

Industries: Light agriculture, crafts, scholarship, silk, spices (including tea), trade.

Important Figures: Babrak Biazzan (Count, human, male, F15), Gallia Biazzan (Countess, human, female, F7), Himerius Biazzan (Heir, human, male, F13), Batzas Daphavkarius (Prelate, human, male, Pr17 of

Asterius), Damianus Hermongenes (Magist, human, male, M20).

Flora and Fauna: Mulberry trees (for sericulture), grape vines, olive trees, date palms, cedar, peach, pear, orange and cherry fruit trees in cultivated orchards, maple, birch and oak trees, pine and aspens in the Southern Altan Tepes Mountains. Herds of cattle, sheep, horses, goats and mules. Bees kept for honey. Bears, boars, centaurs, lycanthropes, mountain lions, foxes, dryads, wolves, unicorns and goblinoids can be found in the wilds of the empire. Hill giants and ogres in the hills.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, DDA1 *Arena of Thyatis*, DDA2 *Legions of Thyatis*, previous almanacs.

Description by Vivianna Romanones.

Recently enlarged and turned into a county, this dominion is centered in the rich mountain pass that functions as a trade route between Thyatis and Ylaruam and sees much caravan traffic. The town of Biazzan itself (pop. 15,000) is known for its university, one of the foremost centers of learning in all Mystara.

The Land

The County of Biazzan is divided into two parts. The most important portion is the region around the Greendale River valley, which forms a pass through the Altan Tepes between Thyatis and Ylaruam. Fort Nicos guards the mouth of the pass at its northern end. The town of Biazzan is located at the center of a broad green vale or dale formed by the river. This area is unusually fertile for a mountain pass, sheltered by hills and mountains. Many traders travel back and forth along the road that cuts through this region—sending goods north to Ylaruam and returning with the produce of that land and the lands beyond. Many scholars travel with these caravans as well, as Biazzan contains a noted center of learning.

The other portion of Biazzan is the western massif of the Southern Altan Tepes Mountains. This is a frontier region,

underdeveloped and surveyed. The county gained authority over this region last year and except for the hills closest to the Greendale itself no settlement has taken place yet.

The People

Biazzan is known for its traders, warriors and scholars. Ever since the creation of Ylaruam, there have been numerous border raids back and forth between the Ylari and the Thyatians and the frontier soldiers of Biazzan have been at the forefront of these activities. Most recently, during the Final Alpathian War, Biazzan itself was sacked. Just last year, however, a large group of Ylari raiders, overconfident because of their recent successes, were trapped and decimated in the narrowest part of the pass. Many captives are still held in Fort Nicos and Biazzan, while the Ylari Emir of Dythestia has tried to negotiate for their release.

The people of Biazzan are prosperous, on account of the richness of the dale, the flow of trade that passes through it and the spread effect of ideas and information due to the presence of the university. For this reason, they are recovering quickly from the plundering of their property committed by the Ylari raiders.

Though the town of Biazzan is far from the largest community to host a major university, many people enjoy the tranquility the lack of crowds brings. Biazzan University is a complex of buildings built atop a hill just south of and overlooking the town. The scholars and students have access to all the goods of a major city, because of the continual passage of trade caravans through the town, but without the hassles of overcrowding and noise interrupting their studies and researches. The university has Thyatian, Vyalian and even Ylari scholars among its number. The presence of the Ylari professors and students proved a great boon to the university when Ylari raiders occupied the town. On account of their intercession, the university was not looted or destroyed, though most faculty and staff had to turn

over some of their personal wealth in exchange for this exemption from the ravages of the sack.

BORYDOS (Protectorate of)

Location: Island off the southeastern coast of the continent of Brun, east of Mositius, west of the Sea of Dawn. OW

Area: 560 sq. mi. (1,450 sq. km.).

Population: 5,000 including Fort Borydos (pop. 4,000).

Languages: Thyatian (Hattian dialect).

Coinage: Thyatian Standard: *emperor* (pp), *lucin* (gp), *asterius* (sp), *denarius* (cp).

Taxes: 25% income tax collected quarterly on the aristocracy, nobility and wealthy; 20% income tax collected quarterly on everyone else (Va. 1, Ya. 1, Fy. 3 and Ei. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. Expensive and magical items are also taxed 25% of their worth. 10% imperial *commercia* sales tax on all goods except food, clothing and fixed assets; levied on imports, rebated on exports. Tax on slave owning equal to 50% of the slave's value annually. Property tax levied based on quality of land, roughly 6% of its value annually.

Government Type: Dominion, member of the Thyatian Empire.

Industries: Light agriculture, magic, military, shipbuilding.

Important Figures: Iohannes Angelikos (Curator, human, male, M20), Hermann Veseldorf (Commandant, human, male, F20), Euphemia Gundesvinda (Sanctifier, human, female, Pr20 of Kagyar).

Flora and Fauna: Sea monsters in the surrounding waters.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, DDA1 *Arena of Thyatis*, DDA2 *Legions of Thyatis*, previous almanacs.

Description by Vivianna Romanones.

This island protectorate was recently converted into a naval research station, the former prison closed. Little is known about

what goes on here yet. The island is still surrounded by dangerous sea monsters.

The Land

Borydos is an unlovely little island, with rocky cliffs overlooking dangerous, rock-strewn shores (no real beaches here) and surrounded by jagged reefs and shoals. It was once home to fishermen and herdsman but was converted to a penal colony several generations ago, a use from which it has recently been re-converted, this time to a naval research station. There are a couple of coves that are used as anchorages by the imperial navy, as well as a sheltered lagoon near the fort, around which most of Borydos's inhabitants are based. Vast chambers have been dug into the cliff sides around the lagoon, sealed with huge valves.

The People

Navy men, naval architects and engineers and the like are all that live here. Except for official business, travel to Borydos is forbidden. The island is governed by martial law. The only other things that live around Borydos are the sea monsters that were raised here to deter escape attempts when the island was a prison. They are kept because it isn't worth the trouble to move or eliminate them and they still deter efforts to land at Borydos unlawfully.

Do Miss

There was never anything anyone would really want to see at Borydos. Not when it was a sleepy island of fishermen and goatherds, certainly not when its "tourists" were those hardened, incorrigible criminals who were exiled to this dull island and not now when the only thing that goes on here is esoteric naval experiments.

BUHROHUR (County of)

Location: Southeastern continent of Brun, along the southern range of the Altan

Tepes Mountains, east of Biazzan and south of Ylaruam. OW

Area: 4,368 sq. mi. (11,315 sq. km.).

Population: 25,000 including the town of Makrast (pop. 5,000). About 95% dwarven.

Languages: Thyatian (Hattian dialect), Dwarvish (Buhrohur dialect).

Coinage: Thyatian Standard: *emperor* (pp), *lucin* (gp), *asterius* (sp), *denarius* (cp).

Taxes: 25% income tax collected quarterly on the aristocracy, nobility and wealthy; 20% income tax collected quarterly on everyone else (Va. 1, Ya. 1, Fy. 3 and Ei. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. Expensive and magical items are also taxed 25% of their worth. 10% imperial *commercia* sales tax on all goods except food, clothing and fixed assets; levied on imports, rebated on exports. Tax on slave owning equal to 50% of the slave's value annually. Property tax levied based on quality of land, roughly 6% of its value annually.

Government Type: Dominion, member of the Thyatian Empire.

Industries: Light agriculture (principally subterranean), mining, metallurgy, gem-cutting.

Important Figures: Gilla Blyskarats (Countess, dwarf, female, Pr12 of Kagyar), Thadrik Karstone (High Priest, dwarf, male, Pr12 of Kagyar), Wagton Blyskarats (General, dwarf, male, F15).

Flora and Fauna: Pine trees and aspens in the Southern Altan Tepes Mountains. Herds of sheep, goats and mules. Bees kept for honey. Bears, boars, centaurs, lycanthropes, mountain lions, foxes, dryads, wolves, unicorns and goblinoids can be found in the wilds of the empire. Hill giants and ogres in the hills. Pegasi, griffons, rocs, ruby, gold and white dragons in the mountains.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, DDA1 *Arena of Thyatis*, DDA2 *Legions of Thyatis*, previous almanacs.

Description by Vivianna Romanones.

Another recently expanded dominion that had its status elevated from barony to county. This dominion is populated almost completely by dwarves and is entirely mountainous.

The Land

Buhrohur is a small, mountainous dominion sandwiched between the pass of Biazzan and the vale of the Mesonian along the Altan Tepes range. It is a rugged land of almost unspoiled mountain beauty. The eastern half of the county is especially unspoiled and has only recently seen any settlement. Buhrohur, like nearby Halathius, is rich in mineral wealth, especially gold. The inhabitants mine these in great quantities, generally in mining complexes that are located entirely underground.

The largest community is the town of Makrast. Makrast means "broken mountain" in Dwarven and the town is named for the mountain it is built into. The eastern face of Makrast appears as if it was sheared off sometime in the distant past. The surface portion of the town is built unto a plateau up against this mountain face, with two paths or roads winding down towards Biazzan. Most of the town, however, is built below ground.

The People

The vast majority of Buhrohur's inhabitants are dwarves. Most of these are from the clan of the same name, who have lived in Thyatis since the founding of the empire. These came to help Lucinius in the struggle for liberty against the Alphatians and stayed at the request of Emperor Zendrolion to build the Imperial Palace and help with the construction of fortifications around The City. On account of these services, they were granted the domain of Buhrohur and allowed to govern it with a lot of latitude (including putting restrictions on non-dwarven settlement and visitation). The dwarves of Buhrohur have served Thyatis loyally but retained their isolation. Until recently, when things have begun to change.

Last year new settlers began to arrive. These were dwarves from Rockhome, refugees from the strife in those lands, including many that were dissatisfied with the isolationist policies Rockhome has adopted in the last several years. As fellow dwarves the Buhrohuri welcomed them. But they have already begun pressing for more open policies. Many of these new immigrants visit Biazzan frequently and in addition they are advocating that some of the restrictions on non-dwarven visitors be loosened, at least in the surface portion of Makrast.

Even longtime citizens of Buhrohur are beginning to see the value of somewhat greater integration within Thyatis. While they have stood aloof, many unsettling things have taken place nearby—fiendish invasion just across the border in Ylaruam, purges and internal disorders within Thyatis itself, politically induced famine during the war and now the Civil War. While the Buhrohuri have served when called, they have held themselves largely aloof from the political and policy debates within Thyatis. The “openness” faction advocates that greater involvement in the Thyatian mainstream will give their voice greater weight in decisions—that their advice will only be listened to if the other Thyatians are more familiar with their point of view.

Buhrohur has remained loyal to Eusebius during the War of the Crown rebellion but has not actively participated in its battles. They send their taxes to Eusebius’s agents and some dwarves serve in his army, but the dominion as a whole has maintained its aloofness while the debate on what course to take rages within Buhrohur. This is because, despite the growing movement for openness, the isolationist faction still has the upper hand in Buhrohuri politics.

CARYTION (Protectorate of)

Location: Island off the southeastern coast of the continent of Brun, south of Tel Akbir, east of Lucinius. OW

Area: 2,160 sq. mi. (5,595 sq. km.).

Population: 5,000 including the town of Torion (pop. 1,000) and Carytion Naval Fort (pop. 1,250).

Languages: Thyatian (Hattian dialect).

Coinage: Thyatian Standard: *emperor* (pp), *lucin* (gp), *asterius* (sp), *denarius* (cp).

Taxes: 25% income tax collected quarterly on the aristocracy, nobility and wealthy; 20% income tax collected quarterly on everyone else (Va. 1, Ya. 1, Fy. 3 and Ei. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. Expensive and magical items are also taxed 25% of their worth. 10% imperial *commercia* sales tax on all goods except food, clothing and fixed assets; levied on imports, rebated on exports. Tax on slave owning equal to 50% of the slave’s value annually. Property tax levied based on quality of land, roughly 6% of its value annually.

Government Type: Dominion, member of the Thyatian Empire.

Industries: Light agriculture, crafts, fishing, oil, tourism, wool.

Important Figures: Theodorus Metopatus (Fort Commander, human, male, F18), Callistita Cataoloia (Magist, human, female, M18), Bessarine Hydrosius (Prelate, human, male, Pr18 of Protius).

Flora and Fauna: Mulberry trees (for sericulture), grape vines, olive trees, date palms, cedar, peach, pear, orange and cherry fruit trees in cultivated orchards. Herds of cattle, sheep, horses, goats and mules. Bees kept for honey. Bears, boars, centaurs, foxes, dryads, wolves and unicorns. Pegasi, griffons, rocs, ruby, gold and white dragons as well as other aerial mounts are sometimes seen at the various estates.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, DDA1 *Arena of Thyatis*, DDA2 *Legions of Thyatis*, previous almanacs.

Description by Vivianna Romanones.

This dominion consists of a large, beautiful island off the eastern coast of the mainland. Many elegant estates and a major naval base can be found here.

The Land

Carytion is the largest of the islands off the eastern coast of Hattias. This island's beauty has been well maintained throughout the centuries, for it is a retreat for the empire's wealthy. Carytion is spotted with great villas perched on the slopes of pretty hills, overlooking gorgeous seascapes. The interior is used for hunting parties, well stocked with stags, foxes and the like. Some crops are grown here—mainly to feed the tables of the aristocracy when they visit their estates—but most of Carytion is maintained in a wild (but not dangerous) state. Meadows, glades, copses of flower-bearing trees, parklands and the like cover most of the island. The beaches are spotless, except for the occasional pier at which the ships and yachts of estate owners dock.

The People

Do not let Carytion's official population figures fool you. They only include the island's more permanent residents—caretakers, guards and the like. The number of people on Carytion at any one time can easily be triple the number given, or more, when one includes those vacationing here from the mainland or elsewhere. Carytion is not a tourist island, however: this is an exclusive retreat for Thyatis's wealthiest families—there are few inns and hostels here. Those who come to Carytion are the owners of the estates and their families, servants and the like. Other guests are here by invitation only. Here Thyatis's aristocrats, senators and nobility take a (temporary) break from the intrigues of politics. By custom, all the factional disputes and rivalries of the mainland are set aside here. This allows for a respite, relaxation and atypical friendly interaction between the great families of Thyatis. It also allows them to get away from the mass of common tourists one might find when vacationing at Mositius or in Ierendi.

Carytion is protected by a naval base and by the estate guards. Thyatis's aristocracy spares no expense when it comes to their self-protection. These places are not easy

marks for robbery, even when the masters and mistresses are not in residence. Each of the estates on Carytion is the center of a small settlement (the imperial estate at Torion being the largest of these), where those who serve the estate masters live. Many of these communities have served the same family for generations or even centuries and are fiercely loyal out of a sense of clannish pride (which one might say this loyalty is misplaced, but I only report their attitudes, I do not judge them).

DAROKIN (*Republic of*)

Location: West and north of the Five Shires. OW

Area: 68,964 sq. mi. (178,615 sq. km.), not including Orcland, which is only nominally under control of the republic.

Population: 1,265,000 humans, plus a scattering of elves, dwarves and hin.

Languages: Thyatian (Darokinian dialect), but many other languages are represented among the populace.

Coinage: *Daro* (gp), *half-daro* (ep), *tendrid* (sp), *passim* (cp). For transactions involving large amounts of money (larger than 500 *daros*), a CLOC (Certified Letter of Credit) is used.

Taxes: 5% of annual income (8% for incomes over 100,000 *daros*), collected annually on Thaumont 1. Every 5 years, a net worth tax is assessed; anyone whose income has increased since the last assessment must pay 5% of the gain in taxes. There is also a 3% sales tax.

Government Type: Plutocratic republic, member of the Western Defense League; it is a republic as leaders are elected, but only the wealthy can apply for positions of power; therefore, Darokin is also a plutocracy.

Industries: Agriculture, fishing, mercantile ability and diplomacy.

Important Figures: Corwyn Mauntea (Chancellor, human, male, T6), Mealidan Mealidil (Mealidil Clanmaster, elf, male, M11).

Flora and Fauna: Herds of cattle, horses, sheep, goats and buffaloes. The various mountains around the nation are home to mountain lions and bears. Malpheggi Swamp is known for its crocodiles and giant lizards, as well as being the refuge for roving gangs of bandits and goblinoids.

The southern part of Darokin is mostly covered with oak forests, while to the north, evergreens dominate. Around the nation of Aengmor, blight oaks can be encountered within the borders of Darokin.

The northeastern section of Darokin is known as Orcland and is completely dominated by bands of goblinoids.

Further Reading: GAZ11 *The Republic of Darokin*, previous almanacs.

Description by Ursula Bremen.

Following the trend set by my esteemed colleagues, I have been charged to describe another part of the vast and heterogeneous territory of Darokin. In this report I am writing about Fort Marny, a lone outpost that stands near the western border with the Atruaghin Clans. What few people know is that Fort Marny is not a keep belonging to our army, but it is a private stronghold that watches over a small borderland dubbed Buffalo Prairie by the local inhabitants.

The Land

Located on a gentle hilltop near Mond River, some sixty miles away from Darokin City and no more than ten miles from the border with the Atruaghin Clans, Fort Marny stands mightily as the most renowned and elaborate building of the whole borderland. This nameless borderland covers a small area all around the fort and although its formal capital is the village of Sweetwater (located near Mond River), all the inhabitants of this dangerous place look to Fort Marny for protection. The rest of the borderland is a plain and unattractive patch of grasslands and rolling grassy hills, which the locals call Buffalo Prairie after the many buffalo herds that can be found here. There are small patches of trees here and there, but

no veritable woods to mention. The real forest begins at the western Darokinian border, where the thick woods of the Atruaghins begin.

Sweetwater's revenue comes mainly from the buffalo herds owned by some of its wealthiest landlords, who raise their cattle on their ranches, guarded by expert herders. Sweetwater regularly provides Fort Marny with provisions and foodstuffs twice a year, but the stronghold is self-sufficient most of the time (always ready in case of an assault made by the vicious Atruaghins of the Viper Clan living in the nearby forest). Fort Marny also houses many trappers and scouts that regularly venture into Viper Clan territory, who also provide meat, furs and logging to satisfy the needs of the fort's inhabitants. The keep itself is surrounded by a 30-foot tall, strong wooden palisade, with lookouts built at all the four cardinal points. Inside Fort Marny many one-story wooden dwellings house the inhabitants of the keep, which is like a small fortified village in every aspect. The last note goes to the commander's house, which is the only stone building of the whole stronghold, a whitewashed square dwelling with a tiled roof that has a colorful flag (bearing Commander Marny's coat of arms) constantly exposed and flapping on its roof.

The People

There are at least 600 people living inside Fort Marny, all families of all the soldiers working for the stronghold's owner, Commander William "Buffalo" Marny. Of these, half are able-bodied individuals that have been trained to wield a sword or a crossbow effectively and can fight their enemy without fear. These 300 soldiers are all faithful followers of Commander Marny, a very charismatic and stern dwarf who is 117 years old. The soldiers [*of both human and dwarven heritage. U. Bremen.*] receive a small salary every month by the commander and never lack food and lodging inside the fort. According to some rumors, they have signed a long-term contract with Marny and can leave Fort Marny only after 30 years of

service. Of course, the fact that at least fifty of these veterans are older than Marny himself may hint that these warriors are more loyal to their leader than one might think. The inhabitants of Fort Marny are industrious, brave and very close to one another, as happens in a small community after so many decades of living together. On the other hand, they harbor a bit of mistrust towards strangers and foreigners, until they get to know them better (likely if the stranger spends more than six months in the keep, becoming “one of them” so to speak). The scouts found in Fort Marny are the best available inside Darokin if one wants to explore the Atruaghin Plateau or the perilous forests that stretch around it [*I have even talked with a well-known scout named Two-Hits, who has mixed Atruaghin and Darokinian blood but has been nevertheless raised inside Fort Marny and has long since been accepted. U. Bremen.*].

The inhabitants of Sweetwater are the typical border-town lot: a bit rough, illiterate for the most, but friendly and talkative, especially with people coming from the Heartlands [*which they seem to think of as paradise. U. Bremen.*]. The three major landlord families (the Cochranes, the Dougherties and the Dunninges) are much more sophisticated and civilized than their fellow citizens, although Magistrate Ephraim Cochrane (one of the three) is a bitter and boisterous man, always complaining about Commander Marny’s lack of respect towards his authority as a border magistrate.

Recent History

Fort Marny is an anomaly inside the republic. Nominally belonging to a borderland, the fort is in fact a self-sufficient citadel that acknowledges no authority to the local Border Magistrate, Ephraim Cochrane. The keep was built more than forty years ago on behalf of the House of Toney, to act as a trading post with the Children of Atruaghin [*Toney House has in fact risen to prominence inside Darokin mainly because of its trade with the Atruaghin Clans. U. Bremen.*].

However, in AC 992 Fort Buffalo [*as it was called at that time. U. Bremen.*] was assaulted and razed by a group of warriors belonging to the Viper Clan and the situation changed. The commander of the trading post at that time was a stout dwarf by the name of William “Buffalo” Marny. After losing his own family in the massacre, he swore on his honor that he would never flee the place and make the Atruaghins pay for their atrocities. When House Toney declared that it was not interested in rebuilding Fort Buffalo, Commander Marny gathered a small group of faithful followers and former legionnaires of the Darokinian army and built a real stronghold on the ashes of the old trading post, christening it Fort Marny. So Fort Marny officially took the task of protecting the borderland’s citizens from every threat and this led many inhabitants of the nearby regions to come to Fort Marny and settle inside its safe walls. Now, many think it may be possible that at Magistrate Cochrane’s death the central government will grant William Marny the charge of border magistrate [*since Ephraim Cochrane is now nearing his sixties and has no apparent heir. U. Bremen.*], to reward him for his merits.

ETHENGAR KHANATES

Location: Central plains area, north and west of Rockhome, east of Glantri. OW

Area: 57,970 sq. mi. (150,142 sq. km.).

Population: 320,000 (population down from previous years due to war with Glantri in AC 1015). There is also an unknown number of goblinoids.

Languages: Ethengar.

Coinage: All referred to as *tangs*. Coins of platinum, gold, electrum, silver and copper come in 1x, 5x and 10x their normal value denominations.

Taxes: None; all property belongs to the *khan*. Each year, on Sviftmont 23 (the Day of Counting), all families’ herds are returned to the main herd. On Flaurmont 15 (the Day of Blessings) the *khan* divides as he sees fit

all herds and wealth among the families of the tribe.

Government Type: Nomadic tribes ruled by *khans* (chieftains). Until AC 1015, they were loosely united under a great *khan*.

Industries: Cattle, horse-breeding.

Important Figures: Batu (*Khan* of the Bortaks, human, male, F11), Ghazan (*Khan* of the Taijits, human, male, F7), Huaji (*Khan* of the Kaeruts, human, male, F15), Hulagu (*Khan* of the Uighurs, human, male, F16), Jemugu (*Khan* of the Yakkas, human, male, F8), Kadan (*Khan* of the Kiyats, human, male, F15; rumored to be possessed by an evil spirit, HD16), Manghai (*Khan* of the Murkits, human, male, F10), Temur (*Khan* of the Yugatais, human, male, T16).

Flora and Fauna: Grasses and small patches of short, wiry trees called tobai trees dominate the land. On the animal side, goats, yaks, deer, ibex, dogs, bears, boars, horses, lions, lynxes, panthers, lizards and spiders are commonly encountered. Dragons, wyverns and griffons have also been spotted in the steppes. Finally, in the area known as the Land of Black Sand, various undead are said to be haunting the plains.

Further Reading: GAZ12 *The Golden Khan of Ethengar*, previous almanacs.

Description by unknown.

[The following correspondence found its way to the offices of the Mystaran Almanac and is believed to have come from one of the tribal khans, or someone close to them. Ed.]

“Surely Cretia must be pleased, for the death of the Golden *Khan* has brought much chaos to the Sea of Grass. Already the wars of succession have begun as the Golden *Khan*’s eldest son, Manghai, has laid claim to his father’s title. He is still young and arrogant, but it is possible his years of service with the *Keshak* have hardened him. That he is married to the daughter of Kadan *Khan* is no small thing; the support of the Kiyat tribe will greatly boost his own warriors.

“Yet there is dissension amongst the Murkits: Ortu, cousin of the Golden *Khan*, has raised his own opposition to Manghai’s claim. He is considered a bumbler by most, despite his blood claim and several lesser warriors have taken a stand against both Manghai and Ortu.

“More severe is the resistance offered by Batu *Khan* of the Bortaks. Married to the Golden *Khan*’s eldest daughter, he too claims a right to the rulership of the tribes. Batu *Khan* has chosen to bide his time while the Murkits struggle amongst themselves and take on the victor in that battle. He is not idle, however; his *brataks* have been active in their attempts to ingratiate other tribal *khans* to his position. So far, he has not gained any definite supporters, mostly due to the lack of interest in the succession.

“The blood feud of the Taijits and Yakkas shows no signs of abating. Five Yakka *argams* crossed the Streel today. Their route was mostly westward; probably towards the Selinga grazing lands. Two Taijit clans are known to have made camp in that region. Their armaments and swift pace leave little doubt as to the *argams*’ intentions. Ghazan *Khan* attempts to gain allies, for his *mingam* is still weak from fighting the Golden *Khan* two years ago. He will likely throw his loyalty to the successor of the Murkits.

“With the Golden *Khan*’s death, Huaji *Khan* of the Kaeruts has reverted to old ways. Once more has he begun to look northwards towards the lands of Heldann for conquest and glory. Though his *mingam* suffered greatly during the war with Glantri, he nevertheless spurs his warriors on to raiding the northern hills. His *brataks* have been spotted in negotiations with those of Hulagu *Khan*. Like the Kaeruts, Huaji *Khan* and his Uighurs would like to attack the Heldanners. An alliance between these two tribes is considered the highest possibility.

“The Yugatais remain the least involved in, though perhaps the most observant to, events across the Sea of Grass. Emissaries of the tribal *khans* are a daily sight in Temur *Khan*’s camp, but he has chosen a policy of neutrality for the time being. Of greater

concern are Glantrian patrols into Yugatai territory, which have increased since the war. Yugatai horse warriors are on a constant state of patrol along the western border.”

FIVE SHIRES

Location: Along the south shore, west of Karameikos, east of Atruaghin territories.
OW

Area: 10,660 sq. mi. (27,609 sq. km.).

Population: 210,000 hin, 10,000 other demihumans and humans.

Languages: Thyatian (Darokinian dialect). Some sages can speak Lalor, the ancient language of the hin.

Coinage: *Yellow* (gp), *star* (sp), *sunset* (cp).

Taxes: None. Each year, the clanmasters determine what money and chores need to be done to maintain their strongholds and towns. Clan members then share in cost and labor (according to their wealth) to accomplish these chores. This usually comes out to about 5 to 10% of their yearly income.

Government Type: Each shire is administered by a sheriff; together, the five sheriffs govern the shires. Member of the Western Defense League

Industries: Agriculture, especially vegetables (peas, beans, radishes, mushrooms, carrots, onions and asparagus).

Important Figures: Joam Astlar (Sheriff of Seashire, hin, male, F9), Tarisco Highnose (Sheriff of Highshire, hin, male, F7/T7), Maeragh Littlelaughs (Sheriff of Eastshire, hin, female, F8) Delune Darkeyes (Sheriff of Heartshire, hin, female, F8), Sildil Seaeyes (Sheriff of Southshire, hin, female, F8).

Flora and Fauna: As well as all the normal flora and fauna usually found in the Five Shire’s climate and terrain, this land also has many fairy-type creatures (like dryads or woodrakes), as well as the unnatural monsters (such as lycanthropes and vampires) typical of unsettled forest areas. Various goblinoids can also be found in the northern Cruth Mountains.

Further Reading: GAZ8 *The Five Shires*, previous almanacs.

Description by Joshuan Gallidox.

Located just west of the Kingdom of Karameikos, Eastshire is the region most familiar to those traveling through the lands of the hin.

The Land

The lands of Eastshire consist mainly of rich farmlands—running from the coast south of the Wardle River, all the way up to the Cruth Lowlands. There, sparsely vegetated hills wend their way northwards through the eastern portion of Highshire, to the Cruth Mountains. Small forests dot the lands—west of Wardlystone and along the southernmost hills.

The vast open fields are extremely helpful to the numerous patrols that roam the land. Even though the Black Eagle Barony has recently fallen, monsters and bandits—many formerly employed by Ludwig von Hendriks—still roam the lands of Eastshire, making it a potentially dangerous place for the non-adventurer.

The People

The hin of Eastshire are a very closemouthed, cautious lot. Their trust in outsiders has been pushed to the limit by decades of attacks from the western Black Eagle Barony. They tend to be very suspicious of others—even other hin! Yet along with this distrust of others comes a strong sense of community. The hin of Eastshire maintain very close ties to other towns and villages in the region. They are quick to rally to the defense of their fellow Eastshire residents and they maintain one of the best communication nets in all the shires. Their roads are well maintained and patrolling *fang* units are always treated to the best accommodations possible. Soldiers in Eastshire are often called “Minute Hin,” for their ever-ready state of preparedness.

Recent History

In AC 1010, several hin from Eastshire kidnapped King Stefan Karamaikos, bringing him to the Black Eagle Barony. There, the king was forced to bear witness to the terrible depredations committed by his evil cousin, Ludwig von Hendriks. Upon his return home, King Stefan formally revoked his cousin's baronial status and opened the path for von Hendriks' downfall. Within weeks, the Five Shires declared war on the Black Eagle, destroying his army and capturing him. Forces from Eastshire led the vanguard of the attack.

Unfortunately, before he could be executed for his crimes, the Black Eagle was somehow freed from captivity. He went underground for quite some time, only recently turning up in the Principalities of Glantri. The council of sheriffs has tried several times to have the Council of Princes extradite the criminal, but to no avail. Former Seashire Sheriff Jaervosz Dustyboots retired his position in AC 1013 in order to pursue Ludwig von Hendriks and bring him to justice once and for all.

Don't Miss

There are several notable sites in Eastshire, among them The Murdered Princess, an inn located on the road between the village of Nob's Boots and Rollstone Keep. It is a luxurious inn, built into a hillside in the manner of many hin structures. It is named for the Traladaran maiden Navrilstar, the human lover of hin hero Nob Nar, of whom many ballads are sung.

Another well-known inn in Eastshire is The Wizard's Wand, in the village of Mallowfern. It is run by a human sorcerer named Berek Shindel and his hin wife Ammagil Rallytongue.

Both inns are just two of the many splendid inns and waystations to be found in the region of Eastshire.

GLANTRI (Principalities of)

Location: North of Darokin, south of Wendar, west of the Ethengar Khanates. OW

Area: 116,650 sq. mi. (302,124 sq. km.).

Population: 590,000 humans and elves, plus approximately 11,000 humanoids living in and around the Great Crater (previous estimates of their numbers were inaccurate). Population figures are down due to the recent war with Ethengar.

Languages: Thyatian (Glantrian dialect), Alphatian (Flaemish dialect), Elvish (Belcadiz and Erewan dialects), Sylaire (a.k.a. Averoignian, a.k.a. French), Traladaran, Ethengar and numerous goblinoid languages.

Coinage: *Crown* (pp), *ducat* (gp), *sovereign* (sp), *penny* (cp).

Taxes: Quarterly income tax of 10% as well as a hearth tax of 1 *ducat* per household. Also, almost every activity—including speaking in public, carrying weapons, wearing armor and spellcasting—requires a license of some sort with fees ranging up to 50 *ducats* a year for each activity.

Government Type: Magocracy, ruled by a wizards' council. Only mages can be nobles and their voting power in the council is determined by their rank (prince, duke, count, etc.).

Industries: Agriculture, alchemy, magic, metallurgy, mining.

Important Figures: Jaggar von Drachenfels (Prince of Aalban, human, male), Carnelia de Belcadiz y Fedorias (Princess of Belcadiz, elf, female), Juliana Vlaardoen (Princess of Bergdhoven, human, female), Morphail Gorevitch-Wozslany (Prince of Boldavia, human, male), Urmahid Krinagar (Prince of Bramyra, human, male), Carlolina Erewan (Princess of Erewan, elf, female), Dolores Hillsbury (Princess of Fenswick, human, female), Angus McGregor (Prince of Klantyre, human, male), Ralindi Virayana (Prince of Krondahar, human, female), Kol (Prince of New Kolland, kobold, male), Isidore d'Ambreville (Princess of Nouvelle Averoigne, human,

female), Malachie du Marais (Prince of Morlay-Malinbois, human, male), Harald of Haaskinz (Prince of Sablestone and Grand Master of the School of Magic, human, male).

Flora and Fauna: Because of the magical interference and summoning of countless mages, almost any plant, animal, or creature—whether native to Mystara or not—can be found within the principalities.

Further Reading: GAZ3 *The Principalities of Glantri*, PC4 *Night Howlers*, *Glantri: Kingdom of Magic* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Hempford Brewster.

La Vallée des Loups. The Valley o' the Wolves. Lair o' the White Wolf. Kingdom o' the Beasts. (Okay—I made that last 'un up meself).

The Principality of Morlay-Malinbois be a right beautiful place to visit—long as yeh stay in the civilized regions. Venture into the woods, an' yeh might find yerself dancin' with wolves... literal-like!

The Land

As yeh follow the Loir River northwards out o' Nouvelle Averoine, yeh find yerself in a valley o' dark hilly forests. This be the southern edge o' Morlay-Malinbois. Most o' the principality falls between the Loir to the west and the Luneau River to the east, though the rulers Malachie du Marais an' his wife Diane de Moriamis claim some o' the outskirts on either side as well.

Les Montagnes Noires (the Black Mountains ta those who don't speak Sylaire) mark the northern and eastern ends o' the valley and *Mont d'Ire* (Mount Wrath) towers in the west. It's said that five wizards once had their towers around *Mont d'Ire*, but they summoned up some foul creatures beyond their control an' disappeared from human reckonin' back in the days afore the Forty Years War. Just like mages to mess with things they don't understand.

It can get pretty darned cold up in *la vallée* durin' the winter, so less'n yeh be a werewolf (an' come equipped with yer own fur coat)

yeh might want ta bundle up. I'd suggest yeh visit during the summer months—it's right nice out, an' there be some excellent hikin' in them their mountains.

The People

Those what live in Morlay-Malinbois be a pretty hands-off bunch. They don't care much for outsiders, as yeh might expect from a bunch o' backwoods hunters an' loggers. If'n they wanted ta be around city types, I reckon they'd not have picked such an isolated place ta live.

As for the rumors—they're mostly true. Exagg'rated a bit, I reckon, but there definitely be werewolves up in these here parts. Other lycanthropes, too, but mostly werewolves, an' livin' side by side with non-weres. Strangest thing I ever saw. Some o' the more distant communities still hold to their hatred o' the weres, an' it's not unusual to hear tales o' woodsmen a-huntin' down and a-killin' weres what they find around their town, e'en if it do be against the laws in Morlay-Malinbois. Not that weres can go around a-huntin' an' a-killin' as they please themselves; just that *Prince* du Marais affords them equal protection under the laws o' his principality. Never did get to see any o' them lycanthropes change, though.

Recent History

Baron Malachie du Marais married *Vicomtesse* Diane de Moriamis back in '05 [*AC 1005. Ed.*]. Seems everyone but *la vicomtesse* knew the marriage was a sham so's du Marais could get his act o' enfeoffment (which he did, later that year, becomin' prince o' the unified region). The early years o' their marriage were awful unpleasant, way I hear, but the two seem to be gettin' along quite fabulously ever since. Might have somethin' to do with *la vicomtesse* gettin' her hair an' figure back. You'd almost swear she were a different woman.

Prince du Marais granted equal rights to lycanthropes as 'is first official princely act—confirmin' in many people's eyes the rumors that he be the legendary White Wolf o' Glantri. If'n he is, I can't say for sure, but it

sure seems a little too coincidental him bein' a resident o' the valley o' the wolves an' an albino. But I'm not one to spread rumors. Leave that to Princess de Belcadiz's minions in the Paparazzi.

In other news, there be a lot o' ruffled feathers in regard to *la vallée* these days. What with them *Loups de la Guerre* (War Wolves) runnin' loose down south last year, an' the brother o' *Prince* du Marais's seneschal found workin' in conjunction with them. Princess Carlolina Erewan an' the southern elves in partic'lar have been chompin' at the bit an' puttin' political pressure on the prince to crack down on the weres.

Don't Miss

La Vallée des Loups be a pleasant enough place ta visit, but yeh probably wouldn't want ta live here. If'n yer the type what loves adventure an' exploration, there be plenty o' ruined towers ta explore from back in the days when this valley was the most remote part o' Glantri. The ruins of *l'Ermitage* in a deep valley o' *Mont d'Ire* are supposedly haunted by ghosts o' persecuted clerics. Likewise, *la Tour de Magibelle* in the eastern hills' glows with eerie lights every night—if'n there be someone home, they sure don't answer to knockin' at the door.

Up north in the Black Mountains, the prince has started work on *les Citadelles Invincibles*. These two towers used to guard the pass between the Principality o' Aalban an' *la vallée*, but they fell into disrepair way back afore *Prince* du Marais first established his barony here. Given that *Prinz* von Drachenfels an' *Prince* du Marais been so chummy-like lately, it's not surprising that the pass is being reopened.

HALATHIUS (*County of*)

Location: Southeastern corner of the continent of Brun, along the eastern spur of the Altan Tepes Mountains, south of Ylaruam. OW

Area: 3,920 sq. mi. (10,155 sq. km.).

Population: 25,000 including the town of Goldleaf (pop. 5,000).

Languages: Thyatian (Thyatian dialect).

Coinage: Thyatian Standard: *emperor* (pp), *lucin* (gp), *asterius* (sp), *denarius* (cp).

Taxes: 25% income tax collected quarterly on the aristocracy, nobility and wealthy; 20% income tax collected quarterly on everyone else (Va. 1, Ya. 1, Fy. 3 and Ei. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. Expensive and magical items are also taxed 25% of their worth. 10% imperial *commercias* sales tax on all goods except food, clothing and fixed assets; levied on imports, rebated on exports. Tax on slave owning equal to 50% of the slave's value annually. Property tax levied based on quality of land, roughly 6% of its value annually.

Government Type: Dominion, member of the Thyatian Empire.

Industries: Light agriculture, mining, metallurgy, gold-working.

Important Figures: Sabrina Andreana (Countess, human, female, F11), Anthemus Adreanus (Heir, human, male, F9), Maximilian von Hauptstein (Guard Commander, human, male, F16), Brackularus Lactanius (Prelate, human, male, Pr16 of Kagyar), Mercurius Praesentinus (Magist, human, male, M20).

Flora and Fauna: Pine trees and aspens in the Southern Altan Tepes Mountains. Herds of sheep, goats and mules. Bees kept for honey. Bears, boars, centaurs, lycanthropes, mountain lions, foxes, dryads, wolves, unicorns and goblinoids can be found in the wilds of the empire. Hill giants and ogres in the hills. Pegasi, griffons, rocs, ruby, gold and white dragons in the mountains.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, DDA1 *Arena of Thyatis*, DDA2 *Legions of Thyatis*, previous almanacs.

Description by Vivianna Romanones.

This mountainous region is rich in gold mines and other minerals. It is almost invulnerable to attack due to the rugged nature of the terrain.

The Land

Halathius is a county of rugged mountains, covering the eastern tip of the southern Altan Tepes. All sorts of minerals are mined here, but Halathius is most famous for its gold. Most of the iron used in Thyatis City's armaments industry comes from here, shipped overland to the Mesonian and then down river in great barges. Some also goes by way of the Polithius through Retebius and then either forged there or shipped by sea to Thyatis City. The range is steepest on its northern face, across from the Ylari border, making it difficult if not impossible to attack from that direction. The river valleys leading down into mainland Thyatis make Halathius much more accessible from the south.

Numerous small villages and mining communities are scattered throughout Halathius, but its most significant settlement (and the county's capital) is Goldleaf. This town is located near the source of the Polithius River, at the highest point that it can be used by raft and barge traffic. The town itself is built around the river valley, with trails leading out to the nearby gold mines. The slopes around the river itself are steep, except in the vale of Goldleaf around the town, which is broader. The narrows leading into the vale are heavily protected with fortified artillery positions overlooking the river and the trail alongside it. This is also true for the pathway west leading to the Mesonian River.

The People

The lives of the people of Halathius focus around one of two things. The first and foremost thing is mining: either working in the mines, in mine-related industries (like smelting), or serving the needs of the mining industry (taverns catering to miners, for example). Running a distant second is a tourist industry providing for hikers and mountain climbers who visit the area. The town of Goldleaf is known for its goldsmiths, but there are smiths of all sorts living in this settlement. Goldleaf's gates

close at dusk and aren't opened again till dawn.

This regulation is on account of the many brigands that infest Halathius, looking to steal what they can't make. The count's agents are always hiring adventurers to seek out and destroy the camps of these criminals and rewards are fairly high for this sort of thing.

Halathians have a strong work ethic and, despite their mineral wealth, are not given to ostentation or spectacle. They prefer activities such as hiking and skiing to arena combats and the like. There are numerous pretty mountain chalets in Halathius, but few that are as grand as the villas elsewhere in Thyatis—even if the owner is very wealthy. Do not let this fool you, though: Halathians are as concerned with keeping their property from being stolen as the next man. While they do not have numerous servants (and slavery, except for criminals consigned to the mines, is almost unknown) or a plethora of guards, they pay good gold to protect their wealth. A few very capable bodyguards and discrete anti-thievery devices are the norm here.

HATTIAS (County of)

Location: Large island off the southeastern corner of the continent of Brun, south of the City of Thyatis, east of Minrothad. OW

Area: 12,980 sq. mi. (33,620 sq. km.).

Population: 300,000 including the city of Hattias (pop. 30,000) and the towns of Port Hatti (pop. 10,000), Vinton (pop. 5,000), Pilion (pop. 10,000) and Gray Bay (pop. 7,500) and Fort Southpoint (pop. 1,250).

Languages: Thyatian (Hattian dialect).

Coinage: Thyatian Standard: *emperor* (pp), *lucin* (gp), *asterius* (sp), *denarius* (cp).

Taxes: 25% income tax collected quarterly on the aristocracy, nobility and wealthy; 20% income tax collected quarterly on everyone else (Va. 1, Ya. 1, Fy. 3 and Ei. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. Expensive and magical items are also taxed 25% of

their worth. 10% imperial *commercias* sales tax on all goods except food, clothing and fixed assets; levied on imports, rebated on exports. Tax on slave owning equal to 50% of the slave's value annually. Property tax levied based on quality of land, roughly 6% of its value annually.

Government Type: Dominion, member of the Thyatian Empire.

Industries: Agriculture, ale & beer, animals (especially sheep & goats), crafts, fishing, oil, privateering, trade, wine, wool.

Important Figures: Heinrich Oesterhaus (Count, human, male, Pr20 of Thanatos), Eugenos (Lord, human, male, M20).

Flora and Fauna: Mulberry trees (for sericulture), grape vines, olive trees, cedar, peach, pear, orange and cherry fruit trees in cultivated orchards. Herds of cattle, sheep, horses, goats, swine and mules. Bees kept for honey. Bears, boars, centaurs, lycanthropes, mountain lions, foxes, dryads, wolves, unicorns and goblinoids can be found in the wilds of the empire.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, DDA1 *Arena of Thyatis*, DDA2 *Legions of Thyatis*, previous almanacs.

Description by Vivianna Romanones.

This county is known for its racial intolerance. The Storm Soldiers make their home here and they preach about racial purity and how women should stay at home to raise families and not try to learn to fight or obtain power. Hattias rebelled several times against the empire, most recently leading the way in unleashing the War of the Crown rebellion.

The Land

The largest dominion of the Thyatian heartland, Hattias has long been known as a somewhat infertile island. But for some reason ever since the sinking of Alphatia Hattias has received more rainfall and the land has begun to become more productive as a result. The northern areas along Vanya's Girdle are perhaps the most productive, acre for acre and are host to fields and vineyards

that primarily serve the needs of the City of Thyatis. The hills here are verdant and rolling and a lot of sheep herding takes place in the areas that aren't given over to vineyards and orchards. There are small pockets of fertile lowlands on the eastern coasts, but most of this area is hilly. In the past, these hills were full of iron mines, producing much metal for export. Many of these mines have played out over the years, though some finds are still discovered and iron production is enough for local use. But they no longer export in quantity as before and the center of mining in Thyatis has shifted to the Altan Tepes.

For the longest time, though, most of Hattias's useful lands were along the western shores and in the Stegger and Pilion river valleys, near Hattias City. This is where most Hattians live and work. Barley is grown here in preference to grapes, as the Hattians themselves tend to prefer beer and ale over wine. The interior is gradually given over to forests, which then fade into forested hills and finally into rugged hills. The forests are home to boars and deer, while the hills are used as pasturage for goats and sheep. The southern portion of Hattias has many small coves and anchorages that are home to privateers and corsairs who prey upon non-Thyatian shipping.

Hattias has numerous towns and communities, though only the capital (Hattias City) can be considered large. Port Hatti lies directly across Vanya's Girdle from Thyatis City and is used to ship the goods of Hattias to The City's markets. Vinton lies near the eastern end of the girdle and its economy is centered on exporting the wines of Hattias. Portus Pilium is the eastern counterpart of the Tower of Aes—a lighthouse and village at the mouth of the girdle, to guide ships.

Pilion, the town at the mouth of the Pilion River, serves as Hattias City's main port. Hattias itself is an unwallied town at the confluence of the Stegger and Pilion rivers. About half way down the coast is the town of Grey Bay, a fishing and mining community, producing iron from ore in the nearby hills. At the southern tip of Hattias is

the imaginatively named Fort Southpoint, a garrison and way station for imperial fleets patrolling the Sea of Dread. A dozen or so miles to the south is a small island, no more than a few square miles in area, that forms the Hold of Eugenos. The mage who lives here has long maintained his tower as a lighthouse and is a helpful friend to sailors in need of aid. Eugenos retired here from Thyatis City many years ago but entered imperial service against the Alphatians and has more recently helped the resistance to the Count of Hattias during the War of the Crown rebellion.

The People

The Hattian people form one of the ancient tribes of Thyatis, but though their appearance and language is the same as the Kerendans' and Thyatians', their customs are markedly different from their brothers'. The Hattians use naming conventions that seem more akin to those of the Antalians or Heldanners, prefer beer to wine and most importantly are known for their intolerance of outsiders, a trait greatly different from the cosmopolitan and tolerant Thyatians and Kerendans.

Hattians are tough, stoic, taciturn people by and large. Jolly and happy around their family and their own people, they are close-mouthed and inhospitable around strangers and travelers. Some scholars say that the Hattians most closely preserve the original culture of the tribes, but I must say that Thyatian civilization, as we observe it today, flaws and all, is much to be preferred to the culture of Hattias. If the Hattians are the closest example to the original way of life of the tribes, then one can only say the culture now found among the Kerendans and Thyatians are changes for the better. For throughout the world, the most common examples of "Thyatian" treachery, betrayal, intolerant zealotry and the like tend to be among those of Hattian decent. From Ludwig von Hendriks's rule of Halag (admittedly under the tacit acceptance of Stefan Karameikos) to the Heldannic Knights' religious intolerance in the north,

or the latter's sudden and unprovoked termination of the alliance with Thyatis after the War of the Wrath. Hattian Storm Soldiers are known the world over for their wickedness. The War of the Crown rebellion was inspired and led by the Count of Hattias and his pretender and has found its strongest backing among the Hattians.

Still the War of the Crown rebellion also proves that just as one should be careful generalizing about "Thyatian treachery" or "Thyatian corruption," so too should one be careful in portraying the Hattians as universally immoral. Among the earliest and fiercest resistance to Count Oesterhaus were many of the Hattians themselves. Once the count began his more despicable acts (see recent events below), many Hattians of honor and virtue took to the Century Hills and began a resistance movement against his rule. Others left Hattias and moved overseas rather than support him. What is true is that a fish rots from the head down and once the Hattians are given more noble leaders, we are likely to see the better side of them.

Recent Events

Hattias was unscarred by the War of the Wrath and its aftermath, though many Hattians continued to emigrate elsewhere, usually to the lands of Heldann. But last year Hattias became the focus of a great upheaval that has shaken the empire's heartlands. Around midyear the archeologist Stellmann Grimm located the original *Imperial Crown* at a dig in the Century Hills. In transit with the crown to Thyatis City, he and his party were brutally murdered in Port Hatti by agents of the Count of Hattias. Count Oesterhaus then used the crown in a coronation ceremony to declare the pretender Manfred Torion Dörfer emperor. This unleashed the rebellion, the most recent crisis Thyatis has faced.

The count and his pretender mobilized forces on Hattias, as well as encouraged dissidents to emigrate. He persuaded many nobles to support his cause, most notably the dukes of Kerendas, Kantrium and Machetos. Count Oesterhaus called upon

the forces of darkness to aid his cause, opening vile temples on Hattias (and closing the temples to beneficent Immortals). He had priests of the cult of Thanatos conduct bloody sacrifices in these temples, usually using foreigners who were unlucky enough to be caught on the island when the rebellion began, but also turning against despised citizens of Hattias itself. As word leaked out, many Hattians were sickened by this practice, even those who had supported the dream of a Hattian-led *imperium*. Soon a resistance movement sprang up, centered in the hills and forests of the interior.

Eventually the emperor dispatched forces under the command of Thyarius Palykratidius, including the empire's *skyships*, to occupy Hattias. The island was lightly garrisoned at the time, since most Hattian troops were located on the mainland, besieging The City. Many of Hattias's other troops had been sent into the hills to try and put down the resistance movement. Imperial marines quickly occupied Port Hatti and other coastal towns, while the aerial force swept into Hattias City. Members of the resistance rose up to attack the city by land when the *skyships* arrived. Fighting against Storm Soldiers and Thanatons (priests of Thanatos) was fierce here and the count's palace was completely leveled by aerial bombardment. Within a few weeks Hattias was under the control of the loyalists—the pirates of the south having been either beaten by the imperial navy or never loyal to Oesterhaus in the first place. Fort Southpoint was recaptured with the aid of Eugenos and his followers.

There remains one dark spot on Hattias—the cancerous pit beneath the main temple of Thanatos. Though the temple itself has been captured (and was largely destroyed in the battle to root out the Thanatons), the tunnels beneath it remain in the hands of the Storm Soldiers, Thanatons and their minions (which include many undead and other foul monsters). These tunnels seem also to snake their way under the count's palace and indeed much of the city itself. The entrances have been warded by magic and are heavily guarded by constructs created by Eugenos,

but no effort has been made to engage the evil creatures that occupy this hive of villainy. Thyatis's most skilled adventurers are still devoting their energies against the rebel forces encamped outside the City of Thyatis. The emperor would welcome brave individuals who sought to clear these caverns of his enemies and who knows what treasures lie in these vast dungeons.

HELDANN (Territory of)

Location: North of Ethengar and Rockhome, east of Wendar. OW

Area: 25,000 sq. mi. (64,750 sq. km.).

Population: 270,000.

Languages: Thyatian (Hattian dialect), Heldannic. Thyatian is the official language of the nation.

Coinage: Heldannic Standard: *groschen* (5 gp), *gelder* (gp), *erzer* (ep), *markschen* (sp), *fenneg* (cp).

Taxes: 15% income tax collected four times a year. 10% tithe to the Heldannic Knights collected once a year. 1 *gelder* head tax collected once a year from all those not in military service. There is also a 5% sales tax on all items but food and clothing.

Government Type: Military theocracy, member of the Heldannic Empire.

Industries: Agriculture (wheat, barley and potatoes), mining (iron), sheep herding and fishing.

Important Figures: Wulf von Klagendorf (*Oberherr*, human, male, Pr19 of Vanya), Geoffrey of Grunturm (Rebel Leader, human, male, C20 of Law).

Flora and Fauna: One can commonly encounter sheep and elk herds, bears, boars, wolves and yetis. Rarer, but deadlier, are the snow apes, hill and stone giants, gnolls and lycanthropes. Occasionally a dragon will be spotted, but the Heldannic Knights hunt them down as soon as possible.

Further Reading: Previous almanacs. Also, several articles of the *Princess Ark* series can be useful.

Description by *Freiherr Hendrik von Gultzer*.

It is with pride and honor that I write to you about the magnificent Heldannic Territories and the glory of Vanya. I hope that this entry into the *Mystaran Almanac* will help refute all disparaging remarks made about the Heldannic Knights and show the world the true valor behind our ideals and way of life.

I now give you a description of Heldann, the Gateway to Norwold.

The Land

The lands of the Heldannic people are harsh and unforgiving. Our winters are noted for their cold winds that pierce right down to your bones and the summer is not much warmer. Cold waters from the northern regions of the Alphatian Sea splash upon our shores, keeping the warm months cooler than most other nations of the Old World.

The land is as beautiful as it comes, with many renowned painters traveling to Heldann just to paint portraits of the landscape. Pines and spruce are everywhere and mountain runoffs create numerous small, crystal-clear lakes.

Although covered in pines, the land is rocky and not very adequate for agriculture. Despite this, hardy Heldanners work the lowlands, producing enough food for the people to survive. Further from shore, tall rough-edged mountains dominate the land, effectively marking our border with Wendar and Denagoth.

The People

While our land is picturesque, it is the people of the Heldann Freeholds that are the true heart of our nation. They are hardy and resourceful, never giving up on any task they set to heart. The fact that they manage to grow crops and even thrive in this harsh land is proof enough of this fact.

Heldanner commoners are a tall, light-skinned people most likely related to the

men of the Northern Reaches. They toil the fields and are at peace with themselves and the world. The worthier and braver among them join the ranks of the Heldannic Knights.

The majestic Heldannic Knights were once majority Hattians (from Thyatis), but now they are equally represented between Thyatians and Heldanners. They preach of conquest and glory and as has been proven in the land of Norwold, these are not empty words. One day, as foretold by Vanya, the Heldanners and Hattians will rule the world in Vanya's name. You, the readers, may scoff at this idea, but do not say we have not warned you. Join us now and become a crusader in the armies of Vanya.

Victory and glory are assured.

Recent History

Heldann has had a remarkable growth period recently. The Heldannic Knights have converted the people of lands all the way up to Oceansend to the beliefs of Vanya and the glory of the Heldannic Knights. In fact, the land under our control was so great, we had to divide it into several territories [*notably, Heldann, Heldland and Vanya's Rest. Ed*] which, together, form the Heldannic Empire. More recently, our glorious armies secured a new dominion, the Davanian city-state of Polakatsikes, which is now enjoying the fruits of Heldannic suzerainty. Admittedly, a few vagabonds throughout our lands have stubbornly resisted our rulership, but our armies crushed these lawless bands, who were known to trouble the other inhabitants. Many have thanked us for our remarkable control on crime and punishment of all criminals.

You have probably heard about the troubles the Heldannic Knights have had within their own lands. Maybe you even heard the rumor that the priests of Vanya lost their spells. This is simply untrue! The Heldannic Knights merely chose to no longer use their spells for a period of time just to show the world that they can conquer lands without magic. And we have! On our own, we are a formidable army, yet we also

have the blessing of the Lady Vanya. Do you still doubt our glory and destiny to rule the world?

Yes, there was a rebellion in our land led by Sir Geoffrey of Grunturm (there is a 100,000 *gelder* reward for his head), but it has been squashed without any problems by the knights. This rebellion is simply an event blown out of proportion. There is no truth to the rumors that we mistreat the peasants, hence causing the revolt. In fact, the *oberherr* himself solved the problem by placing a new leader in the rebellious land—one of the rebels themselves. If this is not proof that we take care of our people and listen to their pleas, then what is?

Also, fallacious tales of threats to our Davanian territories are simply that—fallacies. The writers of the almanac were mistaken and those sources who gave them that information will be disciplined accordingly.

The existing situation changed markedly towards the end of AC 1015, however. During the now-famous Crown War in Thyatis, domestic political unrest rose to an unprecedented level, much to the detriment of the hard-working denizens of Hattias. The unspeakable cruelties of the Storm Soldiers, as well as the retribution meted out by Eusebius, forced many honest Hattians to seek a new home, unwilling as they were to live in a war zone, or to see their once-fair land reduced to ruin. In the spirit of eternal brotherhood and by the grace of mighty Vanya, we generously opened our borders to these people and arranged for tracts of lands to be allocated to them, should they decide to stay in Heldann. Much to our surprise, every one of the refugees from Hattias decided to stay—a miraculous testament to the integrity of the Heldannic Order and the inherent goodness of Vanya's principles.

The Heldannic Knights have continued with their tradition of conquest in 1016, conquering large swaths of lands in the north up to Oceansend, expanding their dominion in the southern continent of Davania and capturing the city of Helskir on the Isle of Dawn. In addition, they have

benefited from an influx of immigrants from Thyatis, Hattians fleeing the civil war in the empire.

Don't Miss

Freiburg, the capital of Heldann, was once a filthy and tightly-packed town. But the Heldannic Knights destroyed most of it, rebuilding it with spacious streets (so a parade of knights on horseback could easily get through town) and sturdy buildings.

At the center of town lies the majestic Star Chamber, a temple and barracks dedicated to the Lady. From this magnificent chamber *Herr* Wulf von Klagendorf rules the land and the will of Vanya is interpreted by the high priests.

Freiburg also has the most impressive city walls on Mystara. The knights claim that nothing can or ever will breach the walls. Many architects and siege engineers agree with them.

IERENDI (Kingdom of)

Location: South of the Five Shires and Karameikos, west of Minrothad Guilds. OW

Area: 17,240 sq. mi. (44,652 sq. km.).

Population: 58,000 locals, plus as many as 20,000 visitors during the summer tourist months.

Languages: Thyatian (Darokinian dialect; for trade and tourist business), Makai (native language).

Coinage: *Pali* (10 gp), *geleva* (gp), *sana* (sp), *cokip* (cp). All foreign currency is also accepted.

Taxes: Tourists must pay a 10% room tax wherever they stay, as well as a 5% sales tax on food. There is also a sales tax of 5% on everything else for both tourists and locals. Locals must pay a poll tax of 10 gp per person per year.

Government Type: Constitutional monarchy; power is held by elected members of noble families, while a king and queen act as figureheads for a year-long reign.

Industries: Tourism, fishing.

Important Figures: Reston of Akesoli (King, human, male, F16).

Flora and Fauna: There are not many monsters that can harm people found on the islands of Ierendi, except for Safari Island which is purposefully populated with dangerous animals and monsters from all over the Old World.

On the sea, pirates are the real danger. Sharks are rather common as well.

Further Reading: GAZ4 *The Kingdom of Ierendi*, previous almanacs.

Description by Joshuan Gallidox.

In all the islands of the Kingdom of Ierendi, perhaps none is quite so famous as Safari Island—nor quite so important to the nation’s economy! Safari Island plays host to the majority of the booming Ierendi tourist industry and attracts adventurers and regular folk alike to its shores.

The Land

A wide variety of terrains can be found on Safari Island, both naturally occurring and artificial. The western edges of the island are a volcanic mountain chain, gradually descending through hills to low plains and forests on the eastern half. Most of the island’s interior has been designated for wilderness parks and game preserves and remains in a natural, primeval state. The few settlements on Safari remain mostly confined to the coastal regions.

Several of these wilderness preserves are adventure parks, designed to cater to the adventurous natures of their visitors and may boast terrain features not commonly found elsewhere on Safari Island—or in the tropical islands of the rest of the region, either! At least two parks are preparing to boast desert-themed attractions this year (doubtless trading in on the fiendish troubles of Ylaruam) and Gastenoo’s World of Adventure has had a Hyborean attraction in operation for several years running.

The People

The people of Safari Island are a vibrant, friendly folk. They eagerly welcome tourists to their home and most families have someone designated to sell jewelry, seashells and other trinkets to outsiders. The villagers are largely of Makai heritage, but the theme parks boast people of all sorts of races. Even hin are not an uncommon sight (in fact, employment opportunities abound for my fellow hin—their stature makes them ideal for doubling as short goblinoid creatures in the theme parks).

Recent History

The most significant recent event on Safari Island is the death of Gastenoo Longblade, one of the founders of “Gastenoo’s World of Adventure.” Opened by Longblade and his partner Simon Saint-Pierre in AC 974, Gastenoo’s was the first adventure park on Safari Island and remains the most popular. Since its creation, several other “Gastenoo’s” have been opened on Safari and neighboring islands. Before his death in AC 1010, he was preparing a reconnaissance expedition to the Isle of Dread, in hopes of creating a future “Gastenoo’s Island of Adventure” theme park.

JALAWAR (*Mumlyket of*)

Location: Southwest of the Atruaghin Plateau, south of Shajarkand, northeast of Jaibul. OW

Area: 13,500 sq. mi. (34,965 sq. km.).

Population: 63,000.

Languages: Sindhi, some Thyatian (Darokinian dialect).

Coinage: *Guru* (25 gp), *rupee* (5 gp), *bhani* (gp), *kbundar* (sp), *piaster* (cp).

Taxes: See Sind. *Rani* Drisana Madhar has long tried to change the caste system in her *mumlyket*, now that she is back in power, the tax distinctions due to caste may change.

Government Type: Feudal monarchy. The ruler of Jalawar (called the *rani*) owes

fealty to the *rajadhiraja* (king) of Sind, Chandra ul Nervi.

Industries: Agriculture, trade (salt, silk, cotton, rice and especially tea).

Important Figures: Drisana Madhar (*Rani*, human, female, M9), Inay Paramesh (Former *Rajah*, human, male, T13).

Flora and Fauna: See Sind.

Further Reading: *Champions of Mystara* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Ryuk-uk Tshaa.

[*This entry for Jalawar is virtually verbatim from last year's; the only addition is an update on the recent history of the mumlyket. Ed.*]

The Land

The *mumlyket* of Jalawar is colloquially referred to as the “Gateway to Sind,” due to its geographic location at the head of the Asanda River, one of the primary routes into Sind itself. The predominant features of Jalawar are its grass and farmlands; it is also home to one of the few remaining swaths of forest in Sind.

The waters of the Asanda bring generous deposits of silt down from its northern head in the Great Salt Swamp, making the lands along its shores some of the most fertile farmland in the Old World; certainly, the most fertile in Sind. Hundreds of tiny farming villages line the eastern banks of the Asanda in Jalawar, where they produce more than enough food to support the *mumlyket*; the surplus helps to provide for the rest of the agriculturally starved kingdom of Sind.

Central Jalawar is populated by small families of cattle owners, who keep their livestock full on the short grasses that fill the landscape and the forest to the far east provides the only elephant reserve within the borders of Sind.

The People

The main human stock of Sind is a blend of Atruaghin and Urduk racial stocks, a combination that has resulted in the nut-brown skin tone often equated to the Sindhi. The people of Jalawar, in particular, are a more reddish brown than most Sindhi, likely

due to a greater Atruaghin influence based on their geographical location. Almost two-thirds of the population is rural, living in the hundreds of farming villages along the Asanda river, or in the central grasslands. The rest live predominantly in the large trading ports along the southern shore.

There is a large foreign presence in Jalawar, due to its preeminence as a trading center. As a result, there is a far greater portion of non-Sindhi to be found here than anywhere else in the nation. Peoples of all nationalities abound—Ierendis, Minrothaddans, Darokinians, Yavdlom; there is even a sizable population of Sindhized Atruaghin peoples in the outlying towns and villages.

It is primarily this large foreign element that has led to a relaxation of the rules of the Sindhi caste system; for decades, I am told, there has been a gradual transition to a more “easternized” system of belief in equality, a move endorsed by the Madhar family that has traditionally ruled Jalawar.

Recent History

Rajah Inay Paramesh came to power in AC 1005, with the aid of the elite troops of then-*Rajadhiraja* Kiritan ul Nervi, deposing his distant cousin Drisana Madhar. Drisana, one of the few *rajahs* to maintain their loyalty to Chandra ul Nervi in the face of the Master’s invasion, retreated to the Yavdlom Divinarchy, where she helped rally Chandra to return to Sind.

The exiled *rani* returned to Jalawar, backed by mercenary troops from Yavdlom and foreign aid from Darokin. Together with forces still loyal to her, Drisana was able to reclaim Jalawar, imprisoning *Rajah* Paramesh and driving out most of the occupying hordes of Hule. There are still several pockets of Hulean resistance forces within the *mumlyket*, but the region has returned to the control of the *rani*. *Rani* Drisana Madhar, with the support of some Yavdlom forces, liberated her *mumlyket* from the Hulean occupant and its puppet, *Rajah* Inay Paramesh. The forces of Jalawar then

assisted in the liberation of Sayr Ulan and other parts of Sind.

Don't Miss

Though I was not able to visit it, I have been told that the capital city of Sambah (pop. 12,000) is quite a sight to behold. Traditional Sindhi architecture blends with a wide array of architectural styles from throughout the world—from as far west as Slagovich and the Savage Coast, to the easterly styles of Alphatia—and with a population as diverse. There is a large contingent of Hulean forces encamped in a shanty town just outside the northern gates of Sambah, along the banks of the Asanda, but that hasn't seemed to faze the foreign elements one bit. Life goes on as usual in the busy merchant town.

KANTRIUM (Duchy of)

Location: Southeastern corner of the continent of Brun, east of Retebius, west of Tel Akbir, south of Halathius. OW

Area: 1,680 sq. mi. (4,350 sq. km.).

Population: 100,000 including the city of Kantridae (pop. 15,000).

Languages: Thyatian (Thyatian dialect), Elvish (Vyalia dialect).

Coinage: Thyatian Standard: *emperor* (pp), *lucin* (gp), *asterius* (sp), *denarius* (cp).

Taxes: 25% income tax collected quarterly on the aristocracy, nobility and wealthy; 20% income tax collected quarterly on everyone else (Va. 1, Ya. 1, Fy. 3 and Ei. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. Expensive and magical items are also taxed 25% of their worth. 10% imperial *commertia* sales tax on all goods except food, clothing and fixed assets; levied on imports, rebated on exports. Tax on slave owning equal to 50% of the slave's value annually. Property tax levied based on quality of land, roughly 6% of its value annually.

Government Type: Dominion, member of the Thyatian Empire.

Industries: Agriculture, animals (especially goats, sheep), crafts, fishing, trade, wool.

Important Figures: Leonidas Ruggiero (Duke, human, male, F15).

Flora and Fauna: Mulberry trees (for sericulture), grape vines, olive trees, peach, pear, orange and cherry fruit trees in cultivated orchards. Herds of cattle, sheep, horses, goats, swine and mules. Bees kept for honey. Bears, boars, centaurs, lycanthropes, mountain lions, foxes, dryads, wolves, unicorns and goblinoids can be found in the wilds of the empire.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, DDA1 *Arena of Thyatis*, DDA2 *Legions of Thyatis*, previous almanacs.

Description by Viviana Romanones.

This fertile duchy is the home to farmers and fishermen living along the shores of the Gulf of Kantrium.

The Land

This is a small duchy at the northern end of the gulf of the same name. It is very hilly in the north and west, with a fertile fringe of agricultural land around the shores of the gulf. Kantrium used to be a frontier duchy long ago, before Tel Akbir was absorbed into Thyatis. At that time the town of Kantrium, located in the center of the duchy, was an important city and crossroads: home to a large garrison and frequented by merchants conducting trade across the border. Today Kantrium is a small, sleepy town of fishermen.

Bloody battles took place in Kantrium during the Wrath War. Thyatian forces managed to defeat and throw back the main Alphatian army at the outskirts of the town, but the Alphatians had sent a force through the hills to the north, which threatened to outflank the imperial army as Alphatia brought up fresh troops. The imperial army was thus forced to withdraw across the Kantridae River, where they made another stand.

Once again, the Alphantians were beaten on the first day of battle when they tried to force their way across the river. But since they outnumbered the imperial army, they were able to send several divisions to cross the Kantridae further upriver the next day and bring up more troops to their main army. The Alphantian commander then formed his main force into a large square to force their way across, while his northern force, already on the Thyatian-held side of the river, attacked the imperial army's flank. These divisions were cut to pieces and the Alphantian forces attempting to ford the river took horrible casualties as well but managed to achieve a foothold on the western bank by the afternoon. The imperial army then withdrew towards Retebius in good order (the Alphantians units were exhausted and too disorganized after the day's battles to pursue at once), where further battles took place.

The People

The folk of Kantrium are of Thyatian stock. Most of them live in the coastal strip of land along the shores of the Gulf of Kantrium, where they are primarily farmers and fishermen. The hill people are largely herdsmen and vine-tenders, raising sheep and growing olives, dates and grapes.

The Duke of Kantrium made the mistake of joining the rebel faction. Kantrium, sandwiched between dominions that remained loyal to Eusebius, was isolated from the other rebel areas. As a result, small forces detached to secure it by the dukes of Tel Akbir and Retebius quickly overwhelmed it. The city of Kantridae has grown some during the rebuilding but remains only half the size it was during its heyday.

KARAMEIKOS (Kingdom of)

Location: East of Thyatis, west of the Five Shires and south of Darokin and Aengmor. OW

Area: 46,750 sq. mi. (121,085 sq. km.).

Population: 351,000 humans (40% Thyatian, 60% Traladaran) and 81,000 demihumans (90% elves, 5% gnomes, 3% dwarves, 2% hin).

Languages: Thyatian, Traladaran, Elvish (Callarii, Vyalia, Alheim and Erewan dialects). Thyatian is the official language of the nation.

Coinage: *Royal* (gp), *crona* (sp), *kopec* (cp).

Taxes: Quarterly income tax of 25% for commoners and 20% for nobles. Sales tax of 5% as well as an import tax of 1%.

Government Type: Feudal monarchy, member of the Western Defense League.

Industries: Logging, mining (gold and silver), agriculture.

Important Figures: Stefan Karameikos III (King, human, male, F15), Olivia Karameikos (Queen, human, female, T12), Terari (Headmaster of School of Magecraft, human, male, M20).

Flora and Fauna: The wilderness of Karameikos is inhabited with all sorts of animals and monsters. Various reports of lycanthropes, vampires and other undead are very common.

Further Reading: GAZ1 *The Grand Duchy of Karameikos*, *Karameikos: Kingdom of Adventure* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Joshuan Gallidox.

We at the *Mystaran Almanac* receive mail from across the breadth of the Old World and we don't always get a chance to respond to it personally. Even with my busy schedule, though, I couldn't afford to pass up a personal invitation by the newly landed Lord Ioannes Rosattas to visit his fief of Rifillian.

The Land

Even after several decades of existence, the town of Rifillian is still little more than a trading post for merchants traveling the King's Road between Specularum and Threshold. It is located on the western bank of the Windrush River, at the edge of the Radlebb Woods. A few small farms help

support the town's permanent residents in times of lean trade. Lord Rosattas was quick to point out to me that his holding is not a barony—as was reported in last year's almanac—but a fief, a smaller sort of holding. He is very conscious of Traladaran sentiment towards “land-grabbing Thyatians” (as he termed it) and doesn't want his title to be misperceived. Of course, he notes, he hopes one day to prove successful enough a ruler to be elevated to full baronial status by King Stefan.

The People

At the last census, only 1,700 people lived in Rifflian on a year-round basis. During peak trading times, however, this figure can increase by several hundred, as Callarii elves from the nearby woods show up to hawk their wares with merchants from elsewhere in the kingdom. Most of the residents are elven, with a small minority of Traladarans. Some Thyatian merchants also live here, as well as at least one fellow hin—a jolly fellow by the name of Stubbs Plattermann, proprietor of the Silver Swan Inn. You must try his golden-panned silverfish!

Recent History

The Callarii elves used to meet with Traladaran merchants at the edges of their forest to barter, rather than allow the humans entrance into “their” woods. Over time, some of the elves and humans began to settle there permanently and Rifflian was founded. It has been mostly overseen by the chief trader of the town, an elven woman named Prestelle. Stefan's appointment of a human lord over the town has raised a few eyebrows, but it seems as if Prestelle was not interested in the position, preferring to concentrate on her business ventures. Lord Rosattas has an extensive background in administration, having served as an officer in the Thyatian Ministry of Trade for several years. He is confident that his skills will complement Prestelle's own business acumen and turn Rifflian into a viable and booming town.

I hear word that another recent landed Thyatian noble, Basileios Zarides, Lord of Krakov, is making similar strides in his fief. [*Krakov was incorrectly called the Barony of Traldar in last year's almanac; we apologize once more for any problems due to inaccurate reporting. Ed.*]

Don't Miss

Obviously, you must not miss visiting the Silver Swan Inn while you're in town (did I mention their silverfish?) The king's Elvanguard makes regular stops here on their way to and from Specularum. The sight of their elven ship in the harbor of Rifflian is a wonder to behold.

KERENDAS (*Duchy of*)

Location: Southeastern coast of the continent of Brun, north of the Sea of Dread, east of Vyalia, west of the Duchy of Thyatis and south of the Altan Tepes Mountains. OW

Area: 7,560 sq. mi. (19,580 sq. km.).

Population: 540,000 including the city of Kerendas (pop. 100,000; 95% human, 4% elven, 1% dwarven and hin), the towns of Bayville (pop. 5,000) and Bridleton (pop. 10,000) and the Kerendas Outpost (pop. 1,250).

Languages: Thyatian (Kerendan dialect), Elvish (Vyalia dialect).

Coinage: Thyatian Standard: *emperor* (pp), *lucin* (gp), *asterius* (sp), *denarius* (cp).

Taxes: 25% income tax collected quarterly on the aristocracy, nobility and wealthy; 20% income tax collected quarterly on everyone else (Va. 1, Ya. 1, Fy. 3 and Ei. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. Expensive and magical items are also taxed 25% of their worth. 10% imperial *commercias* sales tax on all goods except food, clothing and fixed assets; levied on imports, rebated on exports. Tax on slave owning equal to 50% of the slave's value annually. Property tax levied based on quality of land, roughly 6% of its value annually.

Government Type: Dominion, member of the Thyatian Empire.

Industries: Agriculture, ale, common metals, crafts, fishing, hides, mounts, preserved meat, trade, wine.

Important Figures: Maldinius Kerendas (Duke, human, male, F20), Vincentius Hallicarnasas (Magist, human, male, M20), Cyril Christophorus (High Priest, human, male, Pr20 of Tarastia).

Flora and Fauna: Mulberry trees (for sericulture), grape vines, olive trees, cedar, peach, pear, orange and cherry fruit trees in cultivated orchards, maple, birch and oak trees. Herds of cattle, sheep, horses, goats and mules. Bees kept for honey. Bears, boars, centaurs, lycanthropes, mountain lions, foxes, dryads, wolves, unicorns and goblinoids can be found in the wilds of the empire. Hill giants and ogres in the hills.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, DDA1 *Arena of Thyatis*, DDA2 *Legions of Thyatis*, previous almanacs.

Description by Vivianna Romanones.

This duchy is the center for cavalry training and the source of the best horses within the empire. The land is mostly grassland and everyone in the duchy is a horseman. The capital, Kerendas, is the second largest city in the empire (pop. 100,000). Much grain is grown in Kerendas and the surplus is exported throughout Thyatis.

The Land

The bulk of Kerendas consists of lush plains and grasslands, used for growing grain and as pasturage for horses and cattle. There are patches of forest, especially in its eastern extents. Kerendas becomes hilly in the north, along the Trevanion River. The soil here is indescribably rich and its farmlands can feed not only Kerendas's own large population; they export vast quantities of grain to Thyatis City as well.

The northern hills are recent additions to the Duchy of Kerendas and except for a few herdsmen they have not been put to much

use yet. These hills are the wildest areas of Kerendas, but still cannot be considered dangerous by any stretch of the imagination.

The city of Kerendas lies on the eastern bank of the Kerenda River, at the western edge of Kerendas. This is Thyatis's second city—recently recovering from population losses. Like most Thyatian cities it is a thriving seaport, visited by (and home to) many merchants. It has a proud military tradition and its people lead simpler, somewhat more vigorous lives than the inhabitants of The City. Kerendas City is surrounded by broad expanses of pasturage, used for cavalry training and recreational riding. North of the city of Kerendas, overlooking the Kerenda River, is the famous cavalry officer's academy at West Reach.

Closer to the center of Kerendas is the town of Bridleton. This is a major horse-breeding center. There is a rivalry between the breeders of Kerendas and Ylari horse breeders. In general, the Ylari are able to raise swifter horses, but Kerendan horses are stronger and able to carry or pull heavier loads. But many Kerendan steeds are very fast and many Ylari horses are very strong, so these generalizations must be taken as such. The forests to the north of Bridleton are used for fox and stag hunts by the wealthy of the region.

To the south of Bridleton, on the coast, is Kerendas Outpost, a military base and citadel. Though the Duke of Kerendas joined the rebellion, the soldiers of the outpost have remained loyal to Eusebius. This gives the emperor a small outpost deep in enemy territory, supplied by sea. For now, the rebels have largely ignored it, keeping only a small force nearby while they concentrate their efforts on capturing Thyatis City.

In the east is the town of Bayville, a community of fishermen and country villas of the wealthy. It was on the outskirts of this town that the first major clash of the War of the Crown rebellion took place. The imperial forces were defeated not so much by the

force of the rebels' arms as by the unusually effective magics the enemy used.

The People

The people of Kerendas are one of the ancient tribes of Thyatis. The Kerendans are enamoured with horses and horse races, jousting, polo, stock shows and the like are very popular here. Kerendans also tend to see themselves as more virtuous and less decadent than other Thyatians and often pat themselves on the back for not being close-minded like the Hattians. These attitudes tend to grate on their fellow citizens, but Kerendans as a whole are solid people and it is true that there is less corruption and treachery here than can be found in some parts of the empire.

This may make it seem odd that the Kerendans joined in the rebellion alongside the Hattians, but Kerendas saw less need for reforms to shake up the empire precisely because they were less affected by the trends that Eusebius hopes to reverse. Also, they tend to see themselves as guardians of Thyatis's ancient traditions and virtues and this was another reason for their support of the rebellion. Still, there are some signs that many Kerendans are growing less and less supportive of the rebel cause, especially as some of its darker natures have come to the fore. The screening force outside Kerendas Outpost has become more and more lax and there have even been friendly exchanges between the troops in the outpost and those outside it. On one day, late last year, they held a polo match against each other, with the losing side providing a feast that both groups attended. This is hardly a sign one would expect of a people at war with each other.

One of the customs of Kerendas is that the duke, whatever his own family background might be, always takes the name of the duchy for his own, replacing his own last name. While a curious custom, this is at least better than is found in some other lands, where the ruler makes the people take his name for their national name, rather than adopting theirs.

LUCINIUS (County of)

Location: Southeastern coast of the continent of Brun, spur jutting east from Thyatis into the Gulf of Kantrium and the Sea of Dawn. OW

Area: 2,240 sq. mi. (5,800 sq. km.).

Population: 100,000 including the city of Lucinius (pop. 40,000; 85% human, 10% elven, 4% dwarven, 1% hin), the towns of Lone Cove (pop. 5,000) and Hillcape (pop. 5,000) and Lucinius Outpost (pop. 1,250).

Languages: Thyatian (Thyatian dialect).

Coinage: Thyatian Standard: *emperor* (pp), *lucin* (gp), *asterius* (sp), *denarius* (cp).

Taxes: 25% income tax collected quarterly on the aristocracy, nobility and wealthy; 20% income tax collected quarterly on everyone else (Va. 1, Ya. 1, Fy. 3 and Ei. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. Expensive and magical items are also taxed 25% of their worth. 10% imperial *commercias* sales tax on all goods except food, clothing and fixed assets; levied on imports, rebated on exports. Tax on slave owning equal to 50% of the slave's value annually. Property tax levied based on quality of land, roughly 6% of its value annually.

Government Type: Dominion, member of the Thyatian Empire.

Industries: Agriculture, crafts, fishing, oil, shipbuilding, trade, wine.

Important Figures: Baldassare Patrizio (Count, human, male, Pr15 of Vanya), Alexandra Patrizio (Countess, human, female, Rake9), Philippicus Patrizio (Heir, human, male, F9), Satabus Lucasian (Fleet Admiral, human, male, F18), Pelagius Daphnorakenzes (Prelate, human, male, Pr20 of Protius), Theomisticus Chrysemion (Magist, human, male, M20).

Flora and Fauna: Mulberry trees (for sericulture), grape vines, olive trees, cedar, peach, pear, orange and cherry fruit trees in cultivated orchards. Herds of cattle, sheep, horses, goats and mules. Bees kept for honey. Bears, boars, centaurs, lycanthropes, mountain lions, foxes, dryads, wolves, unicorns and goblinoids can be found in the wilds of the empire.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, DDA1 *Arena of Thyatis*, DDA2 *Legions of Thyatis*, previous almanacs.

Description by Vivianna Romanones.

This county is a recent one, having been split from the Duchy of Thyatis in the early 10th century by Emperor Gabrionus IV.

The Land

Lucinius forms a large peninsula jutting off the Duchy of Thyatis's southeastern borders. It is rimmed by Vanya's Girdle to the south, the Gulf of Kantrium to the north and Carytion Sound to the east. The southwestern portion of Lucinius is an extension of the Thyatian plains, gradually rising to a hilly ridge that runs down the center of the county. It then descends gradually in the east to the shores of Carytion Sound.

Port Lucinius lies at the eastern edge of the vast Thyatian plain and is the third largest city in Thyatis. It is built around a broad, sheltered bay near the widest part of Vanya's Girdle. This port serves as capital of the county and as one of the empire's most important naval bases and fisheries. The grassy plains nearby are used for growing all sorts of grains, vegetables and even orchards for fruits.

The hills to the east of Port Lucinius are gentle and rolling, home to vineyards of olives and grapes. Some herding also takes place here, primarily sheep and goats. On the northern coast, looking out over the Gulf of Kantrium, is the town of Lone Cove, built around the rim of a small bay. Just southwest of Lone Cove, at the northern mouth of Carytion Sound, is the town of Hillcape, built at the end of a rugged peninsula. A few miles northeast of Hillcape is the village and lighthouse of Nortis, which guides ships into either the mouth of the Gulf of Kantrium or down the sound. All these communities are home to fishermen, who range out into the Sea of Dawn and sometimes beyond.

At the southeastern tip of Lucinius is Lucinius Outpost, a fortification that guards the eastern entrance of Vanya's Girdle. There is an anchorage here and the area around the outpost is dotted with farmsteads that serve the needs of the marines and seamen based here.

The People

Almost half of Lucinius's population lives in Port Lucinius itself. They are proud (some would say over proud) of their seamanship and nautical traditions. The harbor bustles with the comings and goings of ships of all types: warships patrolling the Sea of Dawn, fishing ships returning laden with their catch, merchants stopping over on their way to or from Thyatis City and the like. Lucinius also employs many people in its vast naval yards, used for constructing many of Thyatis's dromonds. These people work hard and play hard. Taverns and inns in Lucinius are noted for their raucousness, though the Sea Patrol makes sure things don't get out of hand. Port Lucinius is also home to Thyatis's naval college and training center, a walled compound where the study of seamanship and naval skills is taught.

The people outside Port Lucinius are often ignored by most of those who write about Lucinius. They tend to prefer it that way, living quiet lives overshadowed by the boisterous sailors and fishermen of the county. Their olive oil is much in demand, as well as the seasonings they grow—without which the fish would be rather bland indeed.

MACHETOS (Duchy of)

Location: Southeastern coast of the continent of Brun, along the eastern border of Karameikos and the Kerenda River, north of the Sea of Dread and south of the Altan Tepes Mountains. OW

Area: 1,580 sq. mi. (4,090 sq. km.).

Population: 30,000 including the town of Machtetos (pop. 2,500) and Blackpoint Citadel (pop. 1,250).

Languages: Thyatian (Kerendan dialect), Elvish (Vyalia dialect).

Coinage: Thyatian Standard: *emperor* (pp), *lucin* (gp), *asterius* (sp), *denarius* (cp).

Taxes: 25% income tax collected quarterly on the aristocracy, nobility and wealthy; 20% income tax collected quarterly on everyone else (Va. 1, Ya. 1, Fy. 3 and Ei. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. Expensive and magical items are also taxed 25% of their worth. 10% imperial *commertia* sales tax on all goods except food, clothing and fixed assets; levied on imports, rebated on exports. Tax on slave owning equal to 50% of the slave's value annually. Property tax levied based on quality of land, roughly 6% of its value annually.

Government Type: Dominion, member of the Thyatian Empire.

Industries: Agriculture, timber, fishing, trade, wine.

Important Figures: Callastian Jowdynites (Duke, human, male, F15), Michaelius Vaanes (Prelate, human, male, Pr16 of Halav).

Flora and Fauna: Mulberry trees (for sericulture), grape vines, olive trees, cedar, peach, pear, orange and cherry fruit trees in cultivated orchards, maple, birch and oak trees. Herds of cattle, sheep, horses, goats and mules. Bees kept for honey. Bears, boars, centaurs, lycanthropes, mountain lions, foxes, dryads, wolves, unicorns and goblinoids can be found in the wilds of the empire.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, DDA1 *Arena of Thyatis*, DDA2 *Legions of Thyatis*, previous almanacs.

Description by Vivianna Romanones.

A small but rich farming duchy that is now, with Kerendas, a main source of food for the empire. It has only recently regained its agricultural state after being severely taxed over 30 years ago by the emperor. At the time Thyatis needed extra money, still recovering from the recent invasion by Alphatia. The Karameikos family once held this duchy, but the duke exchanged his

birthright with the emperor for rulership of the Grand Duchy of Traladara (which he humbly renamed after himself). More recently, the Duke of Machetos joined the rebels and Eusebius is considering reducing its status to county, which would be more appropriate given its size and population.

The Land

Machetos is a strip of coastal plains sandwiched between the Kerendas and Rugalov rivers. It is covered with small, prosperous farmsteads. There are some forests in its northern portion, which are carefully tended and used to produce timber for construction and shipbuilding.

There is only one settlement of appreciable size in Machetos, a small but picturesque town, dominated by the ducal castle—a powerful and menacing fortification built by the Karameikos family. On the western border of Machetos is Blackpoint Citadel, an imperial garrison that protects Thyatis's borders from any spill over from Karameikos's disorderly wilderness.

The People

Machetos is a somewhat sleepy backwater of the *imperium* and you can see why an ambitious and grasping man might prefer to trade away his responsibilities here for something elsewhere. None the less, it is filled with decent, hard-working people. These are mostly free farmers, as Thincol sold the Machetan slaves elsewhere when he exchanged the duchy with Stefan. Though this made for economic hardship during the subsequent decades, Machetos has developed since then as a region largely free of plantation-style agriculture. Recently Eusebius has taken some of the lessons learned from Machetos's experience and applied it elsewhere in Thyatis, attempting to avoid some of the pitfalls that resulted in the dislocation of Machetos's economy and the hardships that it caused.

MINROTHAD (Exarchate of)

Location: Island chain in the Sea of Dread, off the coast of Karameikos, west of Hattias; southeastern Brun. OW

Area: 8,120 sq. mi. (21,030 sq. km.).

Population: 200,000 (approximately 50% elves, 43% humans, 5% dwarves, 2% hin), including Minrothad City (pop. 25,000; mixed, primarily human and elven), Harbortown (pop. 12,000; mixed, primarily human and elven), Malfton (pop. 5,000; 80% hin), Seahome (pop. 25,000; 95% sea elven), Verdun (pop. 13,500; 99% elven), Gapton (pop. 5,000; mixed), Stronghold (pop. 10,000; 99% dwarven), Cove Harbor (pop. 7,000; mixed).

Languages: Thyatian (official; used for trade purposes), Minrothaddan, Elvish (Meditor/Verdier dialect).

Coinage: Thyatian Standard: *emperor* (pp), *lucin* (gp), *asterius* (sp), *denarius* (cp) official. Guild coins still common: *crona* (gp), *byd* (ep), *quert* (sp), *plen* (cp).

Taxes: 25% income tax collected quarterly on the aristocracy, nobility and wealthy; 20% income tax collected quarterly on everyone else (Va. 1, Ya. 1, Fy. 3 and Ei. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. Expensive and magical items are also taxed 25% of their worth. 10% imperial *commercia* sales tax on all goods except food, clothing and fixed assets; levied on imports, rebated on exports. Tax on slave owning equal to 50% of the slave's value annually. Property tax levied based on quality of land, roughly 6% of its value annually. In addition, all imports (goods or services) have an 18% tariff, though all Thyatian dominions are exempted from this, paying only the *commercia*.

Government Type: Dominion, member of the Thyatian Empire. In Minrothad the traditional council consisting of the various guild masters of Minrothad advises the *exarch*.

Industries: Agriculture, crafts, fishing, mining (Fortress Island), services, shipbuilding (Minrothad City and Harbortown), trade.

Important Figures: Demetius Vannopolus (*Exarch*, human, male, F16), Oran Meditor (Guild Master, elf, male, F10/M12), Nosmo Beldan (Merchant-Prince, human, male, F15/MP12), Ormun Corser (Priest of Minroth, human, male, Pr16 of Minroth), Saroso Elsan (Merchant-Prince, water elf, male, F10/M16), Ulard Forester (Guild Master, elf, male, F10/M12), Murl of Vlaardoen (Wizard, human, male, M18).

Flora and Fauna: Birds, donkeys, goats and lizards are commonly spotted on the various islands. Monkeys and small, wild pigs are also known to be present deeper inland.

Vegetation consists primarily of mahogany and teak, although numerous fruit-bearing trees are also common.

Further Reading: GAZ9 *The Minrothad Guilds*, previous almanacs.

Description by Demetius Vannopolus.

Minrothad is an archipelago of moderate-sized islands. It is home to crafty, enterprising traders who are also somewhat insular. How the people of Minrothad can combine these two features—their traditional parochialism and their obvious success as cosmopolitan merchants—is beyond me. Until recently, the people of Minrothad had largely cut themselves off from external contact. Even now they hold themselves somewhat aloof from foreigners. None the less, their merchants can be found in almost every port in the region.

The Land

The nation of Minrothad consists of two large islands (though nowhere near the size of Ochalea or Nuar), three medium-sized islands, two smaller but still noteworthy islands and countless scattered islets which are only a few square miles in size. The seas around Minrothad are often fog-shrouded and only the best maps accurately mark the location of the tiny islands, various rock formations and reefs. This makes the waters of Minrothad somewhat dangerous for

inexperienced navigators and in part explains the skilled seamanship that is common among the people of Minrothad themselves. The seas here are teeming with fish of all sorts, providing much of the diet for the inhabitants.

As far as visitors are concerned, the major island is Trader's Island. Located here is Minrothad's capital and busiest port, Minrothad City. This city lays on the eastern half of this roughly circular island. The town of Harbortown is at its western edge. The island itself is bifurcated down the middle, roughly north-south, by a ridge of volcanic mountains, the Diamond Spurs. These have been dormant for a long time, but in the distant past they covered the island in volcanic ash. This resulted in good soil and much of the island is forested or given over to fields that grow crops for the residents.

The other major island is Alfeisle. This is a long island, just to the west of Hattias. It has a narrow waist in the middle. Down the spine of Alfeisle runs a range of rough ground, hills and mountains, which are mostly uninhabited. The two ends, which spread out into forested plains, are the settled areas. Seahome, the major city of the sea elves, dominates the northern half of Alfeisle. At the southern end lies Verdun, a city of forest elves. Apart from the craggiest, rockiest of the hills and mountains, Alfeisle is covered in dense forests.

Open Isle is situated just south of Terentias. Except for the southern tip (which consists of grassy knolls), it is an island of forested hills. Open Island is home to Minrothad's hin population; their main town is Malfon on the southeastern coast.

Fortress Island is an extremely rugged, rocky mountain which is home to Minrothad's dwarven community. A long, narrow sound runs into the heart of this island, at the end of which, perched high up on the cliffside, is the town of Stronghold. Defensive emplacements line both sides of the sound, insuring that this island truly lives up to its name. The island itself has little noteworthy vegetation, just some hardy bushes and grasses clinging to the rocky soil.

North Island is like several of the others in miniature; a mountainous ridge divides it down the middle and the island itself is heavily forested and very hilly. North Island doesn't have much of an anchorage, so aside from a fortified refuge up in the mountain country it is largely wilderness.

Though Fire Island and Blackrock Island are located at opposite sides of Minrothad they are virtually identical—piles of volcanic rock, both dominated by active volcanoes. Some vegetation grows in the areas least frequently struck by volcanic eruptions and only a few fishermen deign to live on either.

The People

As I mentioned, the people of Minrothad somehow manage to combine the cosmopolitan spirit of international traders with a strong streak of parochialism and isolationism. By and large the people of Minrothad don't like contact with outsiders. Trader's Island is by far the most welcoming—most foreign merchants who visit Minrothad dock in either Minrothad City or Harbortown. Living here also are most of the few people not of Minrothaddan heritage who live in the isles. The other islands are quite clannish and insular; not only do they set themselves apart from outsiders, but they also form distinct subcultures within Minrothad itself. Their rivalries with the other peoples of Minrothad can be fiercer than with anyone else, including the rival merchants of Darokin.

The main method of enforcing cooperation has been through the various guilds of Minrothad. In Minrothad these are not just associations of craftsmen, like the guilds of other countries. In Minrothad the guilds combine the aspects typical of guilds in Thyatis, for example, with the functions typical of merchant houses in Darokin (or Thyatis City). In addition, there is a strong racial component to these guilds. Thus, each faction, political and racial, in Minrothaddan society is given a piece of the action. By dividing responsibilities in this fashion and giving each race, through its guild,

monopolistic control over aspects of Minrothad's economy, rivalries were reduced (but not eliminated). Note that these guilds are not exclusively made up of one race or clan. But the dominant race or clan controls access into the various trades under their authority and can prevent people from practicing a craft if they choose. Most citizens of Minrothad belong to one of these guilds. Career changes are almost unknown, because of the nature of the guilds as being not only craft associations but also expressions of clan allegiance.

The recent adhesion of Minrothad to Thyatis has, so far, had little impact on Minrothad's social order. The center of Thyatian influence is on Trader's Island—this is the *exarchate's* administrative hub and the location of the small Thyatian garrison. On most of the islands Thyatian influence is represented by a consular liaison—a single official with a small staff (usually fewer than ten persons total). The guild masters form an advisory council and for the most part there has been as little change as possible from the way the previous government handled things. Each island is semi-autonomous, with strong local governments in any case. The affiliation with Thyatis, for now, is more akin to a strong alliance or a patron-client state relationship than to absorption. If I may say, the good relations so far have been in no small part due to my own policies, deliberately aimed at changing as little as possible. This has made the transition as smooth as possible, with minimal impact on the daily life of the average citizen of Minrothad. The biggest impacts, in my opinion, have been positive, like the extension of Thyatian law and the rights of Thyatian citizenship to the people of Minrothad. Shortly after Minrothad joined the *imperium*, envoys were dispatched to Seahome to discuss strategies to defeat the Twaelar. Though the Crown Rebellion interrupted these talks, no doubt they will resume later. In winter one unit of Home Guards, consisting mostly of volunteers, was dispatched to Thyatis City to help the emperor defeat the rebels. Minrothad will select senators to send to Thyatis City

sometime this year, further cementing the bonds between us.

The biggest impact, however, has been the spread of people from Minrothad throughout the empire. After last year's problems, numerous leaders of Minrothad were found complicit of various crimes, most notably the assassination plot against Darokin's House Linton. These were exiled to various parts of the Thyatian Empire, taking with them their families and followers. More people followed and small settlements of Minrothaddan people were established in many of Thyatis's cities (including Thyatis City, where several hundred moved to River Guard Town and a similar number live in the trading quarters of the city). These emigrants have established a strong trading network throughout Thyatis, both competing with and complementary to that of other Thyatian merchants. This has expanded trade throughout the empire's colonies greatly. Though there have been some frictions as a result, especially as relates to the emperor's policies on the expansion of trade in Thyatis through programs favoring Thyatian merchants. Still, this relationship has benefited both parties and the merchants of Minrothad, alongside those of Thyatis proper, sail the trade lanes as far east as Bellissaria and as far west as the Savage Coast baronies.

MOSITIUS (Duchy of)

Location: Island off the southeastern coast of the continent of Brun, east of Hattias, south of Carytion. OW

Area: 1,232 sq. mi. (3,190 sq. km.).

Population: 20,000 including the town of Argevin (pop. 8,000).

Languages: Thyatian (Thyatian dialect), Elvish (Vyalia dialect).

Coinage: Thyatian Standard: *emperor* (pp), *lucin* (gp), *asterius* (sp), *denarius* (cp).

Taxes: 25% income tax collected quarterly on the aristocracy, nobility and wealthy; 20% income tax collected quarterly on everyone

else (Va. 1, Ya. 1, Fy. 3 and Ei. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. Expensive and magical items are also taxed 25% of their worth. 10% imperial *commercia* sales tax on all goods except food, clothing and fixed assets; levied on imports, rebated on exports. Tax on slave owning equal to 50% of the slave's value annually. Property tax levied based on quality of land, roughly 6% of its value annually.

Government Type: Dominion, member of the Thyatian Empire.

Industries: Light agriculture, fishing, oil, magic, tourism, trade, wine.

Important Figures: Triella Tien-Tang (Duchess, human, female, M20), Allatine Proavistes (Lord, human, male, M18), Frederick Beckman (Provost Marshal, human, male, F17), Dong Luc-Thu (Priest, human, male, Pr15 of Koryis).

Flora and Fauna: Grape vines, olive trees, date palms, cedar, peach, pear, orange and cherry fruit trees in cultivated orchards. Bees kept for honey. Pegasi, griffons, rocs, ruby, gold and white dragons as well as other aerial mounts are sometimes found as mounts for tourists. Merrow, dolphins and other aquatic life off the coasts.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, DDA1 *Arena of Thyatis*, DDA2 *Legions of Thyatis*, previous almanacs.

Description by Vivianna Romanones.

This island duchy is, with Carytion, a center of tourism for the empire. There is an active volcano that releases strange mists unto the island, influencing the behaviors of the inhabitants.

The Land

Mositius is a long, gently curved island with beautiful beaches and exceptionally good weather. The island is good vine-growing country and Mositius is known for its wineries. The northern head of the island is hilly, leading up to a semi-active volcano that sits at the center of the island. Mood-altering mists periodically pour forth from the volcano and cover much of the island.

When the mist hits the residents, the whole island seems to fall under the sway of the emotion brought on by the mist. Duchess Triella Tien-Tang insures that only positive emotions can escape from the volcano's core, so a fun time is had by all that are affected.

The rest of the island consists of beaches surrounding verdant plains. The plains are given over to vineyards or recreation facilities (riding fields, polo grounds, parks for romantic walks and the like). Interspersed along the length of the island's coasts, from tip to tip, are hostels, resorts, inns, villas, taverns and the like, all catering to Mositius's tourist trade. The main community, Argevin, is built at the foot of the volcano. Argevin is full of taverns, dance halls, casinos and a variety of other entertainment establishments.

The duchess's palace is built into the caldera of the volcano, Mount Mositius. It is heavily defended by all sorts of guards, magical and mundane. Visiting the duchess personally is by invitation only. At the northern tip of Mositius is the Cuneus Tower, a lighthouse that appears to be carved from a single huge piece of ivory, like the horn of a narwhal - a beautiful spire soaring high into the sky. The tower's keeper, Lord Allatine Proavistes, is a former apprentice and adventuring companion of the duchess.

The People

The duchess herself is a powerful sorceress who long ago aided Thincol in repelling the Alphatian Spike Assault and was later rewarded with rule over Mositius when she discovered how to control its mists. She is quite personable on the rare occasions when she appears in public, but generally prefers privacy, devoting her time to arcane studies and to the governing of Mositius.

The inhabitants of Mositius work at one of two trades: either in the vineyards and wineries or serving the tourist trade. Though the island's vineyards are small by mainland standards, they produce wines of excellent vintage. Some say the mists are responsible

for imbuing these wines with their special qualities, which consist not only of excellent taste but (reputedly) bringing emotions closer to the surface of the drinker. Recently a community of sea elves from Actius moved nearby and opened a new tourist concession - for a reasonable fee they will equip patrons with equipment that allows them to breath underwater and take them for a tour of the nearby reefs and submerged grottos. The views are spectacular, along with schools of multi-colored fish that shimmer in the diffused light of the sea.

The other sorts of people commonly found on Mositius are, of course, the tourists. Most vessels dock in Argevin, but many of the finer establishments further down the coasts have their own piers. Yacht racing in the waters off the western coast of Mositius is common as well. The eastern coasts see some races, but because the winds here are less predictable only experienced sailors participate in these. Many like to swim off the beaches, but an increasingly popular past time is the use of a shaped and polished board paddled out to sea. The sport then consists of standing atop the board and riding the largest waves back to the island. This is usually done off the eastern beaches, where the waves are generally better suited for this sort of thing. This custom supposedly started in the Pearl Islands and has spread here only recently.

The tourists themselves range from wealthy dilettantes to loutish rakes and everything in between. Be careful when visiting Mositius: though the Island Guard keeps most crime fairly well under control, pickpockets and confidence men proliferate. Violence is almost unheard of (except in establishments that specifically cater to such tastes—be it sporting matches between pugilists or wrestlers, or bars known for and designed around the theme of, no-holds barred bar fights.)

Crime is kept under control partly by the strong weapons—regulations the duchess put in place. No weapon larger than a dagger is permitted on Mositius, nor is the wearing of armor allowed. The Island Guard is particularly well trained, consisting not only

of uniformed guardsmen but men wearing regular garments as well, to appear inconspicuous. Both the uniformed guards and the undercover operatives operate in teams, well-supported by magic (including magical equipment enchanted by Triella and her apprentices and spellcasting clerics and mages). This insures that the relaxation of the island's guests is not disturbed. The Island Guard has a seemingly uncanny ability to sniff out criminal intent before it even occurs and is known for being at the right place at the right time. Some suspect the heavy use of divinatory magics, but more likely the guard is simply very well trained. As mentioned, though, they either permit or aren't as well able to deal with con men and petty pickpockets. Do not think that you're going to be swindled or have your money pouch stolen when visiting Mositius (such events are fairly uncommon) but do be aware of the possibility.

Don't Miss

Just about everything on this island is geared towards serving travelers and tourists, so a better question might be "what not to see." However, of all the things on and under Mositius, I'd recommend the botanical gardens - a complex of greenhouses, gardens and the like, expertly arranged and maintained. Just about any sort of plant, even the rarest, can be seen here in excellent form.

Do Miss

Unless you're invited, stay off the high slopes of Mount Mositius and do not go into the caldera or the duchess's palace—as well-trained and equipped as the guard is, Triella's personal guards are even better prepared. Plus, where the guard is polite, the mount guards are stern: trespassers are given one warning (usually by magic—messenger or telepathy) to turn back. If they ignore it, they are treated as invaders and attacked without mercy.

ORCLAND

Location: Northeastern part of Darokin, northeast of Aengmor, southeast of Rockhome. OW

Area: Approximately 12,936 sq. mi. (33,504 sq. km.).

Population: Estimated at around 15,000 goblinoids (primarily orcs).

Languages: Most goblinoid tongues; Orcish is most common.

Coinage: Any (mostly stolen).

Taxes: Whatever can be taken from one's underlings.

Government Type: Coalition of semi-autonomous nations, each ruled by a chief. Nominally part of Darokin.

Industries: Warfare, subsistence herding, limited mining (primarily in the region of Tlazepetec).

Important Figures: Moghul *Khan* (*Khan* of Dast, yellow orc rumored to be a devil swine, male, F9), Tlatepetl (Governor-General of Tlazepetec, red orc, male, F10), Khordarg (red dragon). General Tlatepetl has annexed the settlements of Xorg and New Hobgobland, territories formerly under the command of Hutai *Khan* and Alebane. The two goblinoid leaders both left Orcland last year with raiding hordes.

Flora and Fauna: Aside from the predominance of goblinoids in the region, many monsters can be found here. These include animal herds (primarily deer), apes (snow and white), black bears, mountain lions and wolves. There are rumors that a large red dragon made its home in the area near Tlazepetec a long time ago.

Further Reading: GAZ10 *The Orcs of Thar*, GAZ11 *The Republic of Darokin*, O2 *Blade of Vengeance*, previous almanacs.

Description by Ursula Bremen. [*Note that this correspondence describes the region in Klarmont and not in Nuwmont like other atlas entries. Ed.*]

Being one of the agents most familiar with the region known as Orcland, I was chosen to accompany the group of DDC agents and

ambassadors on their diplomatic mission to visit the court of Governor-General Tlatepetl. It is my pleasure to provide a description of my journey to your readers, from my personal journal (and thus not subject to the censoring that accompanies my usual reports).

Klarmont 4, 1016 AC: Accompanied by troops from Ft. Hobart, our party skirted the eastern portion of the Canolbarth, heading north towards the Dwarfgate Mountains. We were met a few miles south of Xorg by an envoy sent by the governor-general, who escorted us the rest of the way through the hills and into the mountain valley.

Xorg was little more than a military camp: a few wooden buildings and fortifications and some stone structures built into the side of the mountains. It was immediately apparent that most of the humanoids in the camp lived underground.

The commander of the camp, Tequiua Axteca (a hobgoblin) took us on a short (and closely supervised) tour of the facilities and then allowed us to retire and rest from our journey. I was able to gather that the term "tequiua" indicates a military title of some sort.

We dined with the commander and his lieutenants that evening, but the atmosphere was tense, particularly between the escort from Ft. Hobart and the humanoids. Tequiua Axteca was surprisingly cordial and accommodating to our questions.

Klarmont 5: We arose shortly after dawn, ready to continue our stay with the Orclanders. Tequiua Axteca and his guards greeted us and we broke our fast together. There was little conversation this morning—I sensed the commander was eager to have us on our way. From the glares I received from several of his soldiers, I was ready to agree with him.

After our meal, the commander bid us farewell and put us in the care of one of his lieutenants—an Oenkmarian, like the commander (this one goblin)—and several other soldiers. We were led into one of the stone structures and began a descent into

the caverns of Xorg. The tunnels were extensive—many were obviously natural, but far more were man-made; several very recent excavations. Clearly this camp was in the process of intense fortification. For what purpose, I can only speculate.

We walked for what seemed like an eternity before our escort finally began to lead us upwards. We emerged into a wooded valley, the moon high in the sky above us. We had been walking almost an entire day below ground! We made camp for the night, the guards from Ft. Hobart keeping a close watch on our companions.

Klarmont 7: We finally arrived in the settlement of Tlazepetec (formerly known as C’Kag). This was the seat of the new ruler, Governor-General Tlatepetl’s, power. (Governor-general is a rough translation of his Oenkmarian title.) We had been brought to the surface several miles from the valley where the settlement lay, rather than continuing underground. When questioned about this, our escort gave a non-committal shrug. There are obviously secrets that lay beneath Tlazepetec that must remain hidden from us at this time.

The settlement itself was quite an amazing sight. Far from the crude stone and earth keep that formerly housed the trolls of C’Kag, a large pyramid-like structure now dominated the far end of the valley. Though only half finished, it was nevertheless an impressive structure. Even as we observed, orcish soldiers were herding trollish slaves in the hauling of the massive blocks of stone that comprised its bulk. Governor-General Tlatepetl had made interesting use of the once-dominant trollish overlords—their vast regenerative abilities and strength made for an almost tireless task force. Small wonder at the incredible structures and caverns that had been created in the few years since his arrival.

Klarmont 8: After an evening’s rest, we were finally taken to meet the governor-general himself. Rather than greeting us in the opulent palace he was building, he broke fast with us in his tent. When I had the chance to ask him about this observation, he

didn’t seem to see the contradiction in it. Tlatepetl was quite apparently more general than governor.

He showed us around the settlement, taking great pride in demonstrating his achievements. He even allowed us to observe a game of *tlachtli*, on a ball court outside the pyramid. The ball game (which seemed quite like the Alphatian game of hard-ball and like a game played among various cities of the Tiger Clan), was obviously a favored pastime of the governor-general. He boasted to us of his days as a *tlachtli* player in the old city of Oenkmar.

Klarmont 10: In our discussions with the governor-general today, we learned that the keep of New Hobgobland, to the west, has been annexed by the Oenkmarians (in similar manner to the annexation of Xorg). The governor-general feigned ignorance as to the whereabouts of Hutai *Khan* and was obviously unconcerned.

He holds Moghul *Khan*, the yellow orcish leader of Dast, in disdain. He seems to have no plans to move against his fellow humanoid ruler, but he obviously wouldn’t take measures to assist him in the defense of his keep, if outside agents were to attack Moghul *Khan*.

Klarmont 12: There is little in the way of religious activity among the inhabitants of Tlazepetec. In my experiences dealing with superstitious and (generally) uncivilized humanoids, this is unusual. Though I noted occasional utterances to goblinoid Immortals, there is nothing in the way of organized (or even crude shamanic) activity. The Oenkmarian overlords of Tlazepetec seem to discourage this. I gather that the military and the priesthood of Oenkmar were not on good terms. Governor-General Tlatepetl seems intent on making the military way the sole activity in his dominion.

Klarmont 14: I am continually surprised by the Oenkmarians. While observing the work on the pyramid, I noted one red-skinned orc, who seemed to pay close attention to the construction. Though clad

as a soldier, he was obviously serving as an engineer. Our escort confirmed this observation for me. Evidently the soldier had taken an interest in stonework while growing up in the city of Oenkmar. These Oenkmarian humanoids were obviously a cut above most of their breed. Which could either bode well or ill, depending.

Klarmont 18: Our envoy resumes its journey homeward today from Xorg. Tequiua Axteca saw us off personally. The guardsmen of Ft. Hobart were especially relieved; I suppose it must be difficult for them to be on civil terms with a group of people they have spent much of their lives fighting. Still, that attitude will have to change if a decision is made to open diplomatic ties with the Orclanders.

I will not be able to say for sure what my position is until I have collated and reviewed my reports of the past few weeks. For now, though, it would be best to keep a close watch on the Orclanders. Governor-General Tlatepetl and his Oenkmarian lieutenants seem sincere in their effort to civilize the other humanoids of Orcland and capable of doing so. Yet all the obvious military activity worries me. It might be best to cooperate with the Orclanders and keep our ties close.

OSTLAND (Kingdom of)

Location: Off the coast of the Sea of Dawn, east of Vestland and southeast of Heldann. OW

Area: 8,920 sq. mi. (23,103 sq. km.).

Population: 131,000.

Languages: Heldannic.

Coinage: *Krona* (gp), *eyrir* (sp), *oren* (cp).

Taxes: None. All revenue is gained through raids into other nations.

Government Type: Feudal monarchy.

Industries: Piracy, agriculture (grain, potatoes and beets), fishing, logging and trade.

Important Figures: Finn Hordson (King, human, male, F5), Yrsa Svalasdottir (Queen-Mother of King, human, female, Pr10 of

Odin), Asgrim the Bowed (Royal Adviser, human, male, Pr15 of Odin)

Flora and Fauna: Sheep, horse, cattle, goats, dogs, deer, elk and brown bears can be found on the islands of Ostland. The forests are composed of ash, yew and conifers.

Further Reading: GAZ7 *The Northern Reaches*, previous almanacs.

Description by Misha Mananov.

Ostland, the kingdom on the northern seas. Bastion of tradition among the realms of the northern reaches. Home of pirates and berserker raiders. Ostland has long held itself free and proud above its neighbors, but is its long tradition finally being forced to accommodate the changes in the world around it?

The Land

Ostland's population spreads itself across four large islands (Noslo, Kalslo, Osterslo and Kunslo), as well as dozens of smaller ones located off the coasts (in fact, legend holds that at least one such island, the so-called Isle of the Sea Witch, floats at will across the northern Sea of Dawn). The lands are cold but fertile, perhaps the most suited to farming in the entirety of the northern realms. High-sea cliffs make excellent locations for fortifications to defend Ostland's territory from invaders, while providing safe havens for the longships that freely raid and plunder neighboring lands.

The People

The Ostlanders are organized in clans, much like their landbound cousins. Above all others, though, the Cnute clan has held sway ever since the fifth century AC, when the clan's founder Cnute Bearchest established himself as the strongest and most influential among the neighboring clans. More recently, however, the Ostman clans of Kalslo island have been at odds with the royal Cnutes. The more traditional Cnutes had been forced to put down two rebellions by the progressive Ostmans (and,

it is rumored, longed to plunder the tombs of the Cnute kings that lay on Kalslo island). Such conflicts are typical of the aggressive and territorial nature of all Ostlanders.

Recent Events

Enmities between the Cnute and Ostman clans seem to have stabilized since the events of last year, when war broke out between the two factions. King Finn Hordson seems to have done a passable job of making compromises with both sides. Indeed, he has proven popular among the Ostman clans, who have demonstrated (through a long history of embracing sorcerous practices of outside nations) that they wish to usher in a new era in Ostland politics. King Hordson is treading a fine line, however, between the traditions of the Cnute clans and the progressive tendencies of the Ostmans. He has already been victim to several assassination attempts and there are many grumbles from both factions that he isn't working quickly enough towards their interests.

In AC 1016 Ostlanders gained the right to settle within the Confederacy of Heldun and retain local village autonomy. The king repaid the gesture by sending help to his Thyatian ally, torn by a civil war. Ostland also expended in the north, as Bardeen Longwalker agreed to turn his Jarldom of Nordenhafen into an Ostlander protectorate.

RETEBIUS (Duchy of)

Location: Southeastern coast of the continent of Brun, south of the Altan Tepes Mountains, west of the Gulf of Kantrium.
OW

Area: 5,100 sq. mi. (13,210 sq. km.).

Population: 180,000 including the city of Retebius (pop. 20,000).

Languages: Thyatian (Thyatian dialect), Elvish (Vyalia dialect).

Coinage: Thyatian Standard: *emperor* (pp), *lucin* (gp), *asterius* (sp), *denarius* (cp).

Taxes: 25% income tax collected quarterly on the aristocracy, nobility and wealthy; 20%

income tax collected quarterly on everyone else (Va. 1, Ya. 1, Fy. 3 and Ei. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. Expensive and magical items are also taxed 25% of their worth. 10% imperial *commercia* sales tax on all goods except food, clothing and fixed assets; levied on imports, rebated on exports. Tax on slave owning equal to 50% of the slave's value annually. Property tax levied based on quality of land, roughly 6% of its value annually.

Government Type: Dominion, member of the Thyatian Empire.

Industries: Agriculture, crafts, fishing, oil, magic, rare mounts (flying), trade, wine.

Important Figures: Callastian Retebius (Duke, human, male, Rake16), Mitasula Retebius (Duchess, human, female, M18), Desdemona Retebius (Heir, human, female, Rake7/M12), Alexandrus Maxentinos (Air Fleet Academy Commandant, human, male, F20), Marcus Kelephius (Prelate, human, male, Pr16 of Odin), Phillipia Caeseria (Magist, human, female, M20), Sabattius Laskaris (Lord Knight Commander of the Knights of the Air, human, male, F18/Pr16 of Vanya).

Flora and Fauna: Grape vines, olive trees, cedar, peach, pear, orange and cherry fruit trees in cultivated orchards, maple, birch and oak trees. Herds of cattle, sheep, horses, goats and mules. Bees kept for honey. Bears, boars, centaurs, lycanthropes, mountain lions, foxes, dryads, wolves, unicorns and goblinoids can be found in the wilds of the empire. Hill giants and ogres in the hills. Pegasi, griffons, rocs, ruby, gold and white dragons as well as other aerial mounts are common near Retebius.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, DDA1 *Arena of Thyatis*, DDA2 *Legions of Thyatis*, previous almanacs.

Description by Viviana Romanones.

The capital city of this duchy (pop. 20,000) is home of the Retebius Air Cavalry Training Academy, a flying-mount cavalry renowned throughout the world. The Retebius Air Fleet suffered tremendous casualties during the Wrath of the Immortals war but is

beginning to recover from the losses. Eusebius is considering renaming the air fleet as the Retebius Air Cavalry to differentiate it from Thyatis's growing fleet of air ships, but it is likely to remain the Retebius Air Fleet in the hearts of many. The duchy was one of those recently enlarged, receiving additional land all the way to the Trevanion River, to help provide land grants to air knights.

The Land

For centuries Retebius was a small duchy, bounded in the west by the Mesonian River. Last year its borders were extended westward as far as the Trevanion River (though at the same time administration of the town of Hillfork was transferred to the Duchy of Thyatis). Retebius is, geographically, divided into two parts: the coastal lowlands that the Polithius River drains into from the Altan Tepes and the interior hill country around the Mesonian River. Both these areas are excellent pasturage for beef cattle, which is then driven to Retebius City or Thyatis City for sale in the markets there. The grasslands of Retebius are rich and plentiful, used to feed cattle, horses and other creatures (the mounts of the air fleet).

From the standpoint of settlement Retebius can also be divided into two similar, but not identical, portions: the old duchy and the new lands. The old ducal lands are centered on the coastal lowlands but include the hills east of the Mesonian River. This area has been well-settled since before Thyatis became an empire. The new lands consist of the hilly region between the Mesonian and Trevanion Rivers. This area was added onto Retebius last year, more than doubling its size, as a means of helping rebuild the numbers of the Retebius Air Cavalry. The Duke of Retebius has granted out these lands to new recruits and their families, people willing to serve as air mounted soldiers in the Thyatian military forces. Though kept as a preserve before, these lands—watered by the Mesonian and Trevanion, are as lush a pasturage as is

found in the eastern (old) lands. Though the Crown Rebellion has interrupted development, the Duke of Retebius has handed out many parcels to eager volunteers already.

Though dotted with many villages and small towns, Retebius's sole main settlement is the city of the same name. Retebius City is located on the coast of the Gulf of Kantrium, just to the south of the Polithius River. Heavy fighting took place around here during the Wrath War, but the citizens of Retebius have repaired most of the damage the Alphetian invaders caused. The city itself is considerably larger than its population demands; with over half of it (owned by the Retebius family) devoted to training academies, barracks halls, lodgment for mounts and other facilities for the air cavalry. This is the main base for aerial activity in Thyatis, still more famous and significant than the construction yards for *skyships*. Air fleet members, though often right out of the academy, have performed well in battle during the Crown Rebellion. The southeastern portion of the city, fronting the river and including the city's harbor, is the civilian portion of Retebius City.

The People

Though daily life is little different in Retebius than in typical Thyatian communities, the economy is clearly geared towards serving the air cavalry that is based in this duchy. Beef cattle are raised not only to feed the humans and demihumans, but to provide sustenance for carnivorous mounts as well. Air knights own much of the lands in the old duchy and the new lands are being granted almost exclusively to air cavalry recruits. The common citizens don't consider this devotion to the needs of the air cavalry and knights a hardship, since those who live here are air enthusiasts even if they never take flight themselves.

The people of Retebius City make their living, for the most part, provisioning the air base and in fisheries in the gulf itself. The city's population grew after the war, as many

came here to help in the rebuilding effort and then stayed afterwards finding work as craftsmen or with the fishing fleet. Others, folk skilled in training animals, were enticed to move here and assist in replacing the losses the air knights suffered in the war. This makes Retebius City busier than any time in recent memory, since so many new “pilots” and their mounts are being trained at one time. In fact, the duke’s fields are so busy he was forced to turn down the offer of creating a *skyship* construction yard here. Callastian does not actually seem that upset about this missed opportunity, however—he prefers his men and their mounts to such ships in any case.

Don’t Miss

People come to Retebius to see one thing—the air fields, the bewildering diversity of mounts flying overhead, the large training exercises which bring together more flying creatures of more varieties in one place than can be seen anywhere else. Air shows are frequently put on for the public (well, usually—during the current time of war, they have been suspended).

ROCKHOME (*Kingdom of*)

Location: East of Darokin and Aengmor, south of Ethengar, west of the Northern Reaches and northwest of Ylaruam. OW

Area: 41,140 sq. mi. (106,553 sq. km.).

Population: 1,000,000 dwarves, plus a very few humans who have been permitted to stay.

Languages: Dwarvish, Thyatian (which many dwarves learn during their trade dealings with the outside world).

Coinage: *Sun* (10 gp), *trader* (gp), *moon* (10 sp), *star* (sp), *stone* (cp).

Taxes: Annual (Kaldmont 1) 100% income tax collected by clan, which is then redistributed by the clan head according to need and productivity. Roughly 35% of the collected sum is paid as taxes to the king. Foreigners have a 5% sale tax on all goods purchased in Rockhome, as well as a 25%

income tax on all wages earned in Rockhome.

Government Type: Monarchy, heavily influenced by clan leaders.

Industries: Mining (precious metals and iron), metalworking, stoneworking, crafts.

Important Figures: Everast XVI (King, dwarf, male, F15).

Flora and Fauna: The most important creatures of Rockhome at this time are the countless goblinoids running rampant throughout the valleys. Otherwise, one would have to worry about wild horses, deer, mountain lions, wolves and yetis.

Pine forests seem to be the only type of forest that can make a living in the area.

Further Reading: GAZ6 *The Dwarves of Rockhome*, previous almanacs.

Description by anonymous.

As a longstanding former citizen of Rockhome, I am deeply saddened and disgusted by the current state of affairs in the mountainous kingdom. The dwarves, whom I have come to admire and respect deeply in my long stay in their realm, are largely forced to suffer due to the machinations of a small group of individuals of power and influence in the government, who are short-sighted and unwilling to compromise. Until and unless these individuals are replaced or forced to a change of opinion, I am sure that the people of Rockhome will only continue to suffer.

The Land

Rockhome is, as its namesake would suggest, largely a rocky, mountainous kingdom. Two large valleys exist in the interior, surrounding two large lakes. Since King Everast XVI’s institution of a policy of virtual isolation, the population has had to rely increasingly on the agricultural supplies provided by the dwarven farmers of the surface valleys (primarily of the Wyrwarf clan). This, in turn, has led to increasing tensions between the despised farmers and the more traditional elements of dwarven

society, represented primarily by the militant Torkrest clan.

The People

The large majority of Rockhome's dwarven population lives underground, in the caverns and subterranean passageways that wind their ways through the mountains that surround Rockhome. There, they mine the caverns for the gems and precious metals that the dwarves love so much and for which they are known to be able to so skillfully make into beautiful objets d'art. Their isolation from the surface folk, who live in cities and houses much like the humans of surrounding realms, has led to a great amount of malcontent and ignorance of the ways of their surface relatives. The most pronounced evidence of this sentiment, as already noted, is the tension between the farmers and underground laborers. It goes further, however, including a certain amount of distrust (if not enmity) towards those clans, such as the Syrklist, who engage in a great degree of contact with humans and other foreigners.

It should be noted, however, that such polarization of opinion, while not wholly absent among the "common" dwarves, is most prominent among the clan leaders and elders (many of whom have spent their entire lives below ground). I posit that such attitudes must change, or else the people of Rockhome will not be able to survive in a world that is far from static.

Recent History

The people of Rockhome have suffered many setbacks in recent years, beginning with the civil war of AC 1011. The return of the legendary Denwarf stirred up rivalries and sentiments among all the clans, setting dwarf against dwarf in one of the most tragic, if not bloody, moments in dwarven history. In the end, Denwarf was defeated, his confederates exiled and the royal family of Everast reinstated on the throne.

The troubles only compounded in the following years, as war erupted first with the shadow elves of the subterranean western

lands and, starting last year, with goblinoid raiders in our own homelands. Neither threat on its own might have proven so troublesome, had the people of Rockhome not still been so divided in their sentiments towards one another. The Torkrest clan, which had taken the most severe losses from the wars, virtually ignored the plights of their more surface-oriented relatives against the goblinoid armies. The Hurwarfs, still slighted from their loss of the throne following Denwarf's fall, mostly abstained from interacting with any of the other clans. The Skarrads and Syrklists steadily protested Everast's isolationist policy and the much maligned Wyrwarfs were left to fend for themselves. Indeed, many of the latter have begun to emigrate outwards from Rockhome. With their absence, the agricultural subsistence of Rockhome shall surely suffer.

The dwarves have suffered extensive raids from various humanoids throughout the year AC 1016: Thar, Alebane and an alliance between Psa'gh and the traitors Duric and Bifia have all invaded Rockhome, with a lot of success. It took the dwarves a long time to organize the defense of their homeland, but they have finally managed to drive out most of the humanoids and even kill the ogre leader Alebane.

Don't Miss

Lest it sounds as if I hold the dwarves of Rockhome in complete disdain, I assure you that I could not feel so negative towards the current government of that nation, did I not care for the people of Rockhome so much. Indeed, there are many wondrous sights to behold within the nation of dwarves and it is all the greater shame that foreigners are prevented from seeing them in these days. The Arena in Dengar's upper city is reminiscent of the Thyatian coliseums—boasting non-lethal bouts of boxing and wrestling between competitors. The Dwarfheart Cavern, in the lower city, is a truly stupendous sight—one of the largest natural caverns documented in the annals of

the Old World and providing homes to hundreds of dwarves in its desmesnes.

SCLARAS (Protectorate of)

Location: Island off the southeastern corner of the continent of Brun, east of Actius, south of Mositius. OW

Area: 64 sq. mi. (165 sq. km.).

Population: 5,000 (including 250 estate-masters, 1,250 apprentices and family members, 3,000 slaves and servants). Numerous uncounted monsters and creations serve as guards. Population figure is notoriously unreliable when it comes to such servitors.

Languages: Thyatian (Thyatian dialect).

Coinage: Thyatian Standard: *emperor* (pp), *lucin* (gp), *asterius* (sp), *denarius* (cp).

Taxes: 25% income tax collected quarterly on the aristocracy, nobility and wealthy; 20% income tax collected quarterly on everyone else (Va. 1, Ya. 1, Fy. 3 and Ei. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. Expensive and magical items are also taxed 25% of their worth. 10% imperial *commercia* sales tax on all goods except food, clothing and fixed assets; levied on imports, rebated on exports. Tax on slave owning equal to 50% of the slave's value annually. Property tax levied based on quality of land, roughly 6% of its value annually.

Government Type: Dominion, member of the Thyatian Empire.

Industries: Specialty agriculture (mostly herbs), crafts, magic.

Important Figures: Demetrion Karagenteropolus (Magist, human, male, M21), Triella (Duchess of Mositius, human, female, M20), Sarapammon (Magist, human, male, M20), Athanasia Romanones (Proctor of the Collegium Arcanum, human, female, M20), Philoxenus Scholasticus (Curator of the Great Library, human, male, M20), Irene Trenzantenbia Tatriokanita Isaurica (Former Empress, human, female, M20), among many others.

Flora and Fauna: Virtually anything can be found here due to the eclectic tastes of the wizards who live here and create menageries according to their tastes.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, DDA1 *Arena of Thyatis*, DDA2 *Legions of Thyatis*, previous almanacs.

Description by Vivianna Romanones.

This tiny island is divided into some 250 estates, each a quarter of a mile in size, each by ancient tradition the retreat of a powerful Thyatian wizard where they can conduct their researches undisturbed by even each other.

The Land

This small island consists of rolling forested hills perched atop high cliffs that ring its coasts. Most of its area is divided into quarter-mile square estates. Of the remaining approximately 1.5 square miles, part of it is used for a common harborage and the rest for pathways allowing access to each estate. The harborage is used by ships transporting supplies for use by the residents (and stored in warehouses until collected). While the estate-owners themselves can use magic to enter and exit their domains, not all their family or servants are so capable. Thus, the need for connecting roadways, which allow non-wizards to get to the estates.

As for the estates themselves, each is individually different, molded to suit the needs and desires of its master. Neither space nor discretion permits describing them in any detail.

The People

For as long as anyone can remember, the Protectorate of Sclaras has been the abode of the most powerful wizards of Thyatis. It is said that Empress Valentia herself was the first to establish an estate here. Only the most powerful of arch-mages are permitted a domain on Sclaras and even so there is a waiting list. Though many (if not most) are active in Thyatian affairs more generally, participating in social and political affairs,

here they have absolute privacy. It is here that they may retire to conduct their arcane studies and researches in peace, away from prying eyes. There is one law on Sclaras and that one simply states that no one may enter the estate of a wizard without his permission. Flying at an altitude of a thousand feet or more is not considered entering the estate, but the airspace below that is likewise sacrosanct, as is the ground under it down to a similar depth. Despite this law that allows privacy and isolation, the mages of Sclaras are usually professionally cooperative when they do encounter each other.

Don't Miss / Do Miss

There are more fantastic and wondrous things to see here than can possibly be listed and because of dimensional and distance-altering magics used by many of the residents, the estates often seem much larger than they really are. But unless you have invitation to enter you are best advised to not try and see them. In this case willful stupidity is not its own punishment. Ignoring this advice is hazardous to your health.

SERRAINE (Flying City of)

Location: Anywhere—last seen above the Isle of Dawn.

Area: Approx. 6 sq. mi. (15,5 sq. km.).

Population: Approx. 1,310 (110 nagpas, 200 tabi, 20 harpies, 50 kobolds, 30 orcs, 10 ogres, 90 human mercenaries, 800 slaves of various races); there are an unknown number of gremlins and gnomish revolutionaries aboard the vessel.

Languages: Gremlin, Harpy, Tabi, Nagpa, numerous others.

Coinage: Any.

Taxes: None.

Government Type: Oligarchy.

Industries: Slavery.

Important Figures: Bargle the Infamous (Mercenary, human, male, M17), Branwys

Skyratchet (Leader of Revolutionaries, gnome, male, F8/C8), Erik Helsing (Blackmailed Wizard, human, male, M13), Horrobin (Leader of the Grey Front, nagpa).

Flora and Fauna: In addition to the population above, there are hordes of undead servants to the nagpas—mostly skeletons and zombies, but other lesser undead may be found as well (anything less powerful than a vampire).

Further Reading: PC2 *Top Ballista*, previous almanacs.

Description by Thurgood Lodestar.

Excerpt from an intelligence report smuggled out of the city (most of the report was damaged in transit—only parts survived):

“Were contacted today by a man we will call “Agent W” who is in the upper city. He is under almost constant surveillance, but he informs us that our current location is above Sind. The Grey Front has begun to hire on mercenaries to supplement their forces and reinforce the city. “W” notes that they have contracted Serraine for military use, in exchange for money and supplies.

“Other agents report 11 remaining planes in the city—3 *polecats*, 2 *topcats* and 1 *bomber*. The rest are clippers, though we suspect the Grey Front is arming them with magical weaponry. It is unclear how many planes currently survive outside the city. There are 5 confirmed destroyed, but other accounts vary. The Grey Front is currently training human mercenaries in flight operations with the assistance of traitors within the Top Ballista academy.

“Had to withdraw to a deeper level of the Undercity. The nagpas and their minions seem uncomfortable delving past the [CENSORED] level, but their mindless legions of undead have no such qualms. Fortunately, moving too far out of their masters’ control range makes them largely ineffectual. I maintain my fears about venturing too far below surface level, however. Perhaps the Grey Front knows something that we don’t about the Undercity’s inhabitants?”

SHADOW ELVES (Kingdom of the)

Location: Continent of Brun, roughly 6,000 ft. (1,800 m.) below the Broken Lands.
OW

Area: Estimated 500,000 sq. mi. (1,295,000 sq. km.), but the underground territories can hardly be accounted for in terms of surface only.

Population: Roughly 400,000 elves.

Languages: Elvish (Shadowelf dialect).

Coinage: *Bright* (gp), *shine* (sp), *glint* (cp), *kalafi* (varnished strips of hard, bark-like fungus, they come in 10 gp, 50 gp and 100 gp denominations).

Taxes: One fourteenth of the yearly earnings goes to the Temple of Rafiel and the king.

Government Type: Monarchy.

Industries: Agriculture (fungus farming, giant slugs and spiders raising), hunting, mining.

Important Figures: Telemon (Radiant King, elf, male, F13/M15), Porphyriel (Radiant Shaman, elf, female, M16/Pr13 of Rafiel).

Flora and Fauna: Many cavern creatures, some of them unique to this environment, like boneless, giant slugs, lava fish and skinwings. Goblinoids from the Broken Lands sometimes wander in the shadow elves' lands too.

Further Reading: GAZ13 *The Shadow Elves*, previous almanacs.

Description by Balinor "Silverblade" Audriel.

My home: a vast network of caverns and caves interlinked by countless tunnels and canals.

The Land

The shadow elves' kingdom extends for countless miles of tunnels and caves, over an area that, if brought to the surface, would stretch from Glantri City in the north, to Darokin City in the south. Some of those

caves and caverns are natural, but most of them have been modified by the shadow elves in the last millennia. Some tunnels have been enlarged to make traveling safer and quicker, other have been flooded to allow for sailing between our four main cities (City of the Stars, Alfmyr, Losetrel and New Grunland). Some of the tunnels bring in fresh air from the surface, other are filled with molten magma. There are really thousands of them.

The bigger caverns usually host fungal forests (some natural, some magical), that the shadow elves harvest for food. Lakes and mountains are not uncommon either. Only the sun is missing.

The People

The land is inhabited mostly by shadow elves, though other less intelligent species like goblinoids or geonids can be found in our territories. The shadow elves are a breed of elf that adapted to the life underground millennia ago, when a terrible disaster hit Mystara and our ancestors were forced to flee underground.

Life was not easy underground, but the shadow elves managed to survive and develop new forms of rock magic, that allowed them to modify the landscape and defend themselves from the evil creatures that wandered in those caves. Over the years the population has slowly increased and the four original clans that fled underground (Celebryl, Porador, Felestyr, Gelbalf) moved to four different areas of the kingdom, creating new towns and villages.

Physically speaking the shadow elves have a pale skin, white hairs and very clear eyes (usually sparking blue or gray in color). Lower and thinner than their surface counterpart, the shadow elves have a squeaky voice and a keen sense of hearing, thanks to their large ears.

Recent History

Last year the shadowelf kingdom was invaded by an army of Schattenalfen, a race of elves very similar to us that lives deeper

underground, in a fabled place called “Land of the Red Sun.”

Their massive invasion caught us by surprise and soon our capital, the City of the Stars, a wonderful city built on the ceiling of the Great Cavern, in an area where gravity works very oddly, was under siege. Those were sad days for our race, for many of our kin lost their lives fighting bravely to defend the city, the king and the temple.

At last the invaders managed to break into the walls that surround the city, but when they launched their final attack, on the so-called Day of Dread, our shamans popped out of the temple and wiped out the attackers casting extraordinary magic never seen before.

After they defeated the Schattentalen assault on the City of the Stars, we started to rebuild our city and the rest of the country. Radiant protectors would now protect the heart of the Temple of Rafiel, while a resurrected Gilfronden became the new spymaster. We opened some level of diplomatic relations with our neighbors. Meanwhile, the shamans have been studying new ways to harness the power of the completed Chamber of the Sphere.

Don't Miss

I seriously doubt that you will ever have a chance to enter the shadow elves' territories alive, but if you do then don't forget to stop by Jennafer, proprietress of Candle's Work in the City of the Stars and bring her a flower from Balinor.

Do Miss

Do miss to enter the shadow elves' underground territories unless you are not invited, because we distrust foreign people and trying to enter our lands by force or stealth would certainly put you in trouble.

SHAJARKAND (Mumlyket of)

Location: Kingdom of Sind, west of the Atruaghin plateau. OW

Area: 25,000 sq. mi. (64,750 sq. km.).

Population: 65,000. This includes the capital of Naral (pop. 10,000).

Languages: Sindhi.

Coinage: *Guru* (25 gp), *rupee* (5 gp), *bhani* (gp), *kbundar* (sp), *piaster* (cp).

Taxes: See Sind.

Government Type: Feudal monarchy. The *Rajah* of Shajarkand owes fealty to the *Rajadhiraja* (king) of Sind, Chandra ul Nervi.

Industries: Trade (salt, hides, goat milk). The rulers of Shajarkand also make a modest income from the export of tigers.

Important Figures: Ramanan Venkat (*Rajah*, human, male, F7).

Flora and Fauna: See Sind.

Further Reading: *Champions of Mystara* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Ryuk-uk Tshaa.

The Land

Shajarkand encompasses a wide variety of terrains. The border with the Atruaghin Territories is heavy grassland, dotted with many small farming communities, from which most of the *mumlyket's* agriculture comes. There are some small forests along the border as well, which play home to a tiger preserve—the only one of its kind in the Old World.

The Asanda River forms the southwestern border, culminating in a great swamp. To the north of the province lay large stretches of desert and badlands—mostly uninhabitable, save for a few oases. The capital of Naral was built in one such spot, a miles-wide grassy valley.

The People

Much like Jalawar to the south, the people of Shajarkand have a more pronounced reddish tone to their normally brown skin color. This is doubtless due to the closer presence and ties to the Atruaghin peoples to the east. Similarly, most of the population is rural, living in small farming and fishing communities along the Asanda and in the

grasslands. The northern reaches of Shajarkand are very sparsely populated.

Foreign presence in Shajarkand is small; most of the population is exclusively Sindhi, with a small minority of Atruaghin peoples along the grasslands and forests of the west. Naral and villages along the Asanda occasionally boast peoples of other ethnicities, but the reduced emphasis on trade and foreign contact has limited the admixture of non-Sindhi.

Recent History

Shajarkand won back its independence from occupying hordes of Hule in AC 1015. Together with forces from Jalawar and some northern *mumlykets*, the *rajah* led his army north to Sindraestan, where he participated in the liberation of the Sindhi capital of Sayr Ulan.

Currently, *Rajah* Venkat is attempting to rebuild his nation, root out any remaining pockets of Hulean intruders and reopen trade ties with outside nations.

Don't Miss

Rajah Venkat reveres the tiger and evidence of this can be seen throughout his palace in Naral. His soldiers wear tunics of yellow striped with black, like a tiger's pelt and their standard bears a tiger's snarling visage. The *rajah's* throne is decorated with jewel-studded carvings in the shape of tiger heads and pelts of the animals adorn the walls and floor of his bedroom. He also keeps several of the felines as pets—rumor has it that particularly unwelcome guests find their way into the tiger's pens for supper.

SIND (*Rajahstan of*)

Location: West of the Atruaghin Territories, Darokin, southwest of Glantri. OW

Area: 200,000 sq. mi. (518,000 sq. km.).

Population: Approx. 550,000, plus hordes of occupying goblinoids and other minions of Hule.

Languages: Sindhi, some Thyatian (Darokinian dialect).

Coinage: *Guru* (25 gp), *rupee* (5 gp), *bhani* (gp), *khundar* (sp), *piaster* (cp).

Taxes: The three privileged castes—*himaya*, *rishiya* and *jadugerya* (fighters, clerics and mages)—of Sind owe annual taxes of 25% on all profits, taxes, services and goods received from others, but this tax may be waived if they offer their services to the government or others of the privileged castes. Members of the *prajaya* caste (farmers and craftsmen) owe 25% of all produce to their *mumlyket*, with another 25% going to the *rishiyas* for spiritual services. The *kuliya* caste (slaves and unskilled laborers) are not taxed. Additionally, a white-skinned sub-caste (called *urdu-varna*) must pay a poll tax of one *khundar* per person.

In areas still occupied by forces of Hule, an annual poll tax of one *khundar* per person, regardless of age, gender, or caste is imposed in addition to regular taxes.

Government Type: Feudal monarchy. Nobles (called *rajahs* and *maharajahs*) owe fealty to the *rajadhiraja* (king). Several states (called *mumlykets*) are currently under the control of the Master of Hule.

Industries: Agriculture, trade (salt, silk, cotton, rice and especially tea).

Flora and Fauna: Monsters that are found in the regions of Sind include animal herds, giant ants, bandits (in the desert), basilisks, camels, cockatrices, djinn, red dragons, efreet, elephants, ghouls, gnolls, giant lizards, lupins, manscorpions, mummies, giant scorpions, shadows, sphinxes and trolls.

Further Reading: *Champions of Mystara* boxed set, Dragon #169 (*Voyage of the Princess Ark* part 16), previous almanacs.

[See the following individual listings for Jalawar and Shajarkand for more information about Sind. Ed.]

SODERFJORD (*Kingdom of*)

Location: South of Vestland, east of Rockhome, north of Ylaruam and southwest of Ostland. OW

Area: 31,060 sq. mi. (80,445 sq. km.).

Population: 153,000 humans, 8,000 dwarves.

Languages: Heldannic.

Coinage: *Markeka* (gp), *penne* (ep), *gundar* (sp), *oren* (cp).

Taxes: None. Most revenue is raised from tolls to use roads and bridges. The rest of the money is raised by raiding other nations.

Government Type: Monarchy, although the *jarls* (lesser nobles) still hold tremendous power.

Industries: Cattle, goats, sheep, fishing, logging, furs, piracy and trade.

Important Figures: Ragnar the Stout (King, human, male, F17).

Flora and Fauna: Deer, elk and wolves can be found throughout the coniferous forests of Soderfjord. Various herd animals, such as sheep, goats, cattle, horses and bison can be found in the plains of the nation. Goblinoids used to be very common in the southern Hardanger Mountains, but they have been defeated and now pose little threat.

Further Reading: GAZ7 *The Northern Reaches*, previous almanacs.

Description by Starkad Grimmson.

Truly, the *jarldoms* be the last true home of the warriors. E'en though the upstart Ragnar hath tried to forge the realm into a kingdom, in the manner of the westerners, the spirit of freedom and independence lives strong in the blood of the men of Soderfjord.

The Land

I be from Nordcastel, in the Snowvale Valley just north of Castellan. It be a harsh region, just right for making strong warriors like me. The Makkres Mountains tower over the valley to the west and the cold winds sweep in over the hills of Nordcastel—

winters be harsh and none but the strongest can survive long if they be fools enough to venture forth unprotected.

The Saltfjord River be the readiest access to the lands east, but it borders on the dangerous Great Marsh. Lizard men, troglodytes, dragons and worse haunt that place. Verily, it be no place for any but the strongest fighters—like we breed in Nordcastel.

The People

We highland people be a tough breed, from long years of fighting goblinoids and giants in the nearby Makkres and Hardanger Mountains. The folk of Castellan be mostly pushover cityfolk—traders and foreigners—not like us freemen in Snowvale. Sometimes we go down there in groups and raid their farmsteads, just to keep them on their toes. Verily, it be no wonder that the Castellans be such strong supporters of Ragnar—they'd ne'er last in a straight fight against us real Soderfjorders.

Recent Events

Ragnar the Stout, head of the Soderfjord clan, managed to convince the other *jarls* to nominate him as their king several years back. Verily, I believe he must hath used magic to do so, for the *jarls* are ever resistant to giving up their freedom.

From what I hear, things hath gone downhill for the “king” e'er since—his campaign against the kobolds and gnolls of the Hardanger in 1013 cost him more dearly than he cares to admit. E'en joining with the Ostland rebels in their civil war of last year gained him little in the way of prestige.

Long has been the talk in taverns of o'erthrowing the would-be monarch of Soderfjord and returning to the days of the free *jarldoms*. Verily would I be surprised if Ragnar's rule lasted much longer in my homeland.

Don't Miss

I hear tell that Ragnar's hired a bunch of dwarves and set them to working around the

clock to try and reopen the Falun Caverns in the Hardanger. I'd guess he's keen on getting at any treasures that the kobolds might have left in there when they were driven out. Adventurers looking to earn a few *markkas* can find work down there, fighting off leftover kobolds and dire wolves. There might e'en be a fiend or two still lurking down underground.

TEL AKBIR (Duchy of)

Location: Southeastern coast of the continent of Brun, south of Ylaruam, east of the Altan Tepes Mountains, along the shores of the Sea of Dawn. OW

Area: 3,640 sq. mi. (9,430 sq. km.).

Population: 140,000 including the city of Tel Akbir (pop. 20,000), the town of Dawnpoint (pop. 10,000) and the fortress of Zendrol (pop. 3,000).

Languages: Thyatian (Thyatian dialect), Alasiyan (Akbiran dialect).

Coinage: Thyatian Standard: *emperor* (pp), *lucin* (gp), *asterius* (sp), *denarius* (cp).

Taxes: 25% income tax collected quarterly on the aristocracy, nobility and wealthy; 20% income tax collected quarterly on everyone else (Va. 1, Ya. 1, Fy. 3 and Ei. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. Expensive and magical items are also taxed 25% of their worth. 10% imperial *commertia* sales tax on all goods except food, clothing and fixed assets; levied on imports, rebated on exports. Tax on slave owning equal to 50% of the slave's value annually. Property tax levied based on quality of land, roughly 6% of its value annually.

Government Type: Dominion, member of the Thyatian Empire.

Industries: Agriculture, crafts, oil, shipbuilding, trade, wine.

Important Figures: Tarik ben Nadir (Duke or Sheik, human, male, F15), Farid ben Nadir (Heir, human, male, F9), Jamila ben Nadir (Daughter of Tarik, Runaway and Local Hero, human, female, T12), Sarapammon (Magist, human, male, M20),

Ralak Ahman al-Mustafa (Priest, human, male, Pr18 of Protius).

Flora and Fauna: Mulberry trees (for sericulture), grape vines, olive trees, date palms, cedar, peach, pear, orange and cherry fruit trees in cultivated orchards. Herds of cattle, sheep, horses, goats and mules. Bees kept for honey. Bears, boars, centaurs, lycanthropes, mountain lions, foxes, dryads, wolves, unicorns and goblinoids can be found in the wilds of the empire.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, DDA1 *Arena of Thyatis*, DDA2 *Legions of Thyatis*, previous almanacs.

Description by Vivianna Romanones.

This is a grassy duchy inhabited by Thyatians of Alasiyan descent untainted by the cult of the Ylari brigand al-Kalim. The legion keeps a close eye out for Ylari raiders in the area.

The Land

The Duchy of Tel Akbir forms the northern arm sheltering the Gulf of Kantrium, its northern shores an arc sweeping into the waters of the Sea of Dawn. Its frontier with Ylaruam is strongly protected, as raiders and brigands from that land have frequently crossed over the border on forays seeking plunder and rapine. This area is somewhat hilly, but the bulk of the peninsula of Tel Akbir consists of plains and grasslands. Farmsteads line the coastal areas, but most of the interior is given over to pasturage for herds of sheep and goats. Though arid, it is not nearly as dry as the wastes of Ylaruam, receiving rainfall from the gulf and the Sea of Dawn to water its surface.

The city of Tel Akbir itself is strategically located at the tip of the peninsula as it arcs westward, forming the mouth of the Gulf of Kantrium. At its backside, northeast, is a large hill or *tel*. The city is only easily approached by sea or by the coastal roads. Atop the hill itself is a large citadel containing the palace of the duke. This elegant city functions as a seaport, military

base and entrepôt for the agriculture of the region. Here markets bustle with activities while fishermen and traders ply their trades on the seas. Many orchards and gardens lay within its walls. Tel Akbir's architecture is a blend of Thyatian and traditional Alasiyan—delicate, onion-domed towers soar over many-pillared halls. The common houses are usually of pristine white stucco, box-like but very well maintained. The sight of them covering a hillside is beautiful—despite their simplicity of design, or perhaps because of it, they are very lovely in aspect.

The town of Dawnpoint sits at the eastern tip of the Tel Akbir peninsula, jutting into the Sea of Dawn. Dawnpoint is a smaller replica of Tel Akbir and sits at the end of a causeway; the town itself is almost surrounded by the sea, with its anchorage sheltered by the bulk of the town itself. It is said that in the past Dawnpoint was built upon a pair of islands, but later became attached to the mainland when silt built up between the coast and the shores of the islands. This small port saw much activity during the Wrath War, as the empire based many of its ships here in its efforts to repel Alphatia's aggression against Glantri. It should be remembered that these fleets repeatedly defeated the Alphatian invasion armadas, forcing them to resort to violating the borders of Ylaruam (though, to be fair, the Ylari show no respect for the sovereignty of other nations either, so one could say they had it coming. Still, this was yet another example of why Alphatia needed to be opposed though most of the world still does not recognize this). Several miles southeast, off the shores of Dawnpoint, are several small, rocky islands. Here stands the lighthouse of Abukir Watch, built to warn ships away from the dangerous shoals of this area, which can rip the bottom out of unwary ships. Numerous old wrecks are found sunken beneath these waters and enterprising divers still occasionally find treasure in their wrecked hulls.

The People

In Tel Akbir the people of Thyatis and Alasiya have intermingled. Notice that I referred to Alasiyans and not Ylari—the people here are not followers of al-Kalim's cult of personality and many feel insulted if called "Ylari" by ignorant foreigners. Alasiyan and Thyatian customs are both respected here, an example of multiethnic harmony. Thyatian is the official tongue, but the Alasiyan language is also commonly spoken.

The duke (or, in Alasiyan, sheik—or, even more properly, *shaikh*) is himself both Alasiyan and loyal to the emperor—notably, he did not join the rebellion which is currently wracking Thyatis. Even more significantly, since there are those who believe Thyatian rule is unwelcome here, he has been exceptionally vigilant in protecting the border against Ylari raids during this time of troubles. Crossing him brings harsh and inevitable vengeance, even if he must wait years to spring it. This makes him both much feared and much respected as a man who cannot be taken advantage of or crossed without consequences. He does hold some of the more rigid Alasiyan customs, however, being resistant to the idea of women leading their own lives—he has not talked to either his sister or his own daughter in many years. The fact that both women have shown independence of mind does prove, in my opinion, that Alasiyan (and Thyatian!) culture is changing in this area and people are becoming more open to such things than in the past. Though tradition should be preserved, in some cases it is best preserved by enlightened modification and should not be too rigid to evolve.

Still, many of the people under Tarik ben Nadir's rule share his attitudes—both good and bad. They are commonly aloof to strangers, but should you win their friendship you will never find a more stalwart friend in the entire world. If you cross them or betray their trust, they will remember and exact punishment. On the other hand, some of them speak of honor but are as crafty at circumventing it when it

suits them, while still putting on a mask of virtue, as their northern cousins in Ylaruam. They are legendary storytellers and one of their customs is that a guest should share a tale of his exploits or travels with his hosts. Tel Akbirans are also very devout folk, even for Thyatians. Proper reverence towards the virtuous (non-entropic) Immortals is not only common, but also expected. Infidelity (unfaithfulness and lack of faith) is frowned upon severely.

In Tel Akbir there are no nomads as in the north. Oh, to be sure much of Tel Akbir is given over to pastoral use; many people make their livelihoods herding sheep and goats. But their way of life is not nomadic, it is centered around ranches. People also grow crops and orchards. Thus, in Tel Akbir there isn't the division between nomads and city folk as in Ylaruam—the situation is more akin to other Thyatian regions.

Don't Miss

The bustling *souk* (marketplace) of Tel Akbir City, with its maze of merchant stalls and energetic bartering, is the best place in Tel Akbir to exchange not only goods, but also rumors. Many caravans full of goods find their way here and the wares of Tel Akbir then find their way throughout the region.

Of special interest to scholars and would-be students is the recently-founded university. Though only three years old, special efforts have been made to attract professors and build up its reputation. It is well funded by the wealthy merchants of Tel Akbir and with the recent addition of a department of antiquities due to the generosity of the emperor, it is well on its way to becoming one of the world's great centers of higher learning. Tel Akbirans have always been a studious and learned people, but in the past had to travel to Thyatis City or other locations to gain a university-level education, but now with their own local institution academics can flourish even more.

TERENTIAS (*Grand Duchy of*)

Location: Island off the southern coast of Thyatis, south of Kerendas and north of Minrothad. OW

Area: 520 sq. mi. (1,345 sq. km.).

Population: 25,000 (60% human, 40% elven, some hin) including the town of Crossbones (pop. 5,000).

Languages: Thyatian (Thyatian dialect), Elvish (Meditor/Verdier dialect).

Coinage: Thyatian Standard: *emperor* (pp), *lucin* (gp), *asterius* (sp), *denarius* (cp).

Taxes: 25% income tax collected quarterly on the aristocracy, nobility and wealthy; 20% income tax collected quarterly on everyone else (Va. 1, Ya. 1, Fy. 3 and Ei. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. Expensive and magical items are also taxed 25% of their worth. 10% imperial *commercia* sales tax on all goods except food, clothing and fixed assets; levied on imports, rebated on exports. Tax on slave owning equal to 50% of the slave's value annually. Property tax levied based on quality of land, roughly 6% of its value annually.

Government Type: Dominion, member of the Thyatian Empire.

Industries: Light agriculture, crafts, fishing, oil, magic, privateering, shipbuilding, trade.

Important Figures: Derentarius (Archduke, human, male, T22), Vaanes Ornogorius (Commodore, human, male, F18), Phoebammon (Magist, human, male, M18), Zemarchus Raetelarius (Priest, human, male, Pr17 of Asterius).

Flora and Fauna: Mulberry trees (for sericulture), grape vines, cedar, teak and mahogany cultivated for woodwork, sheep and goats. Bees kept for honey. Sea creatures off the shores of the island.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, DDA1 *Arena of Thyatis*, DDA2 *Legions of Thyatis*, previous almanacs.

Description by Viviana Romanones.

This island was hotly contested between Thyatis and Minrothad in the past. The

elven inhabitants seem to prefer the empire and focus their lives on pirating and sailing and many Thyatians have immigrated here. So far, Terentias has remained a dominion of Thyatis for over 200 years.

The Land

This moderately-sized island is the northernmost isle of the Minrothad archipelago. The town of Crossbones sits in a sheltered cove on the northern coast of the island, facing away from major storms that occasionally sweep through this part of the Sea of Dread. Much of the island is ringed with coral reefs, home to a multiplicity of fish. These reefs do make the currents and tides around Terentias somewhat unpredictable, however, so only experienced navigators should sail here.

The isle itself is very beautiful, with wide beaches of white sand. Bluffs rise from these coasts and much of these uplands are densely forested. Only the area right around Crossbones itself is not forested, consisting instead of fields and plains.

The People

The inhabitants of Terentias consist in roughly equal parts of elves related to the clans of Minrothad and Thyatian humans. The citizens of Terentias, human and elven alike, are a seafaring folk, world renowned as both traders and corsairs. They welcome the presence of fellow seamen and swashbucklers. Anyone with a good tale of raucous adventure on the high seas is likely to be treated to a round of drinks and then learn the latest exploits of the captains of Terentias—these nights of revelry are excellent places to get information. The folk of Terentias are strongly connected to the Sea of Dread's rumor mill and as such a good place to go for those seeking lore and tips of goings on in the area. Crossbones is also a port of call for smugglers and the empire tends to look the other way when it comes to activities directed at moving goods past the borders of unfriendly neighbors.

During the Wrath War the folk of Terentias were the empire's foremost

privateers, striking at Alphatia's shipping lanes. Though this did not alter the fundamental course of the war, they did make a good account of themselves, seizing hundreds of Alphatian vessels and plundering their cargoes. Now, as the empire turns more towards commerce, the seafarers of Terentias are being encouraged to shift their attentions towards merchant activities, something the recent accession of Minrothad into the imperial orbit as an *exarchate* should spur.

Added to this mix last summer were a different sort of "sailors"—members of the ancient Thyatian Air Fleet, *skyships* and their crew. There is a rivalry between them and the true seamen of Terentias, which has remained friendly so far. Trainees at the Air Force Academy often come to town when they have leave and it is arguable that they pick up more practical knowledge from the mariners of Terentias than they do in class.

Don't Miss

Crossbones is a freebooter's paradise. It is a town of high spirits, full of shady warehouses, busy docks, rowdy taverns full of lively gamblers and bawdy inns. It's the sort of place adventurous travelers generally cannot get enough of. It is also a good place to buy a ship, as its yards build them sleek, strong and fast.

Do Miss

The same place is full of shady characters, sharpers who are quick to swindle the naive and unwary of every copper they have and press-gang them into service as a swabby on a disreputable vessel. Many, if not most, Terentians are friendly, good-natured folk. But some of those friendly smiles mask dark intentions, people who are happy because they know they are robbing you blind and you are unlikely to know it until it is too late. Be careful and you will have a wonderful time. If you're a sucker, you're likely to find yourself floating home in a barrel with a terrible headache and no possessions—not even the shirt on your back.

The Terentias Air Shipyards were built here last year, just inland of Crossbones. Access is restricted to authorized persons only and the yards are under martial law, so intruders can expect harsh punishment.

THYATIS (Duchy of)

Location: Southeastern coast of the continent of Brun, north of Vanya's Girdle spanning the banks of the Mesonian River in Thyatis. OW

Area: 4,000 sq. mi. (10,360 sq. km.).

Population: 600,000 including the towns of Julinius (pop. 12,000) and Hillfork (pop. 10,000). Other communities include Arcadiapolis (pop. 5,000), Raedestos (pop. 5,000), Selymbria (pop. 5,000), Mesembria (pop. 5,000) and countless other villages and communities.

Languages: Thyatian (Thyatian, Heldann, Kerendan and Tel Akbiran dialects). Many other languages are spoken within Thyatis City.

Coinage: Thyatian Standard: *emperor* (pp), *lucin* (gp), *asterius* (sp), *denarius* (cp).

Taxes: 25% income tax collected quarterly on the aristocracy, nobility and wealthy; 20% income tax collected quarterly on everyone else (Va. 1, Ya. 1, Fy. 3 and Ei. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. Expensive and magical items are also taxed 25% of their worth. 10% imperial *commercia* sales tax on all goods except food, clothing and fixed assets; levied on imports, rebated on exports. Tax on slave owning equal to 50% of the slave's value annually. Property tax levied based on quality of land, roughly 6% of its value annually.

Government Type: Dominion administered by civic officials and elected representatives on behalf of the Emperor of Thyatis, member of the Thyatian Empire.

Industries: Agriculture, crafts (especially metalworking, tanning), fishing, military, mounts, raw silk, shipbuilding, trade, wine.

Important Figures: Eusebius Torion (Emperor, human, male, F16).

Flora and Fauna: Mulberry trees (for sericulture) along the Mesonian River, grape vines, olive trees, cherry peach, pear and orange tree orchards. Herds of cattle, sheep, horses, goats and mules. Bees kept for honey. Lycanthropes, wild cats and dogs, giant rats, goblinoids. Pegasi, griffons, rocs, ruby, gold and white dragons as well as other aerial creatures are used as mounts. Currently, undead outside Thyatis City itself, as well as other unknown varieties of monsters in the catacombs underneath The City.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, DDA1 *Arena of Thyatis*, DDA2 *Legions of Thyatis*, previous almanacs.

Description by Viviana Romanones.

One of the smaller duchies in terms of size, but the heaviest populated, the Duchy of Thyatis is the core of the empire's mainland, just as Thyatis City is the heart of the empire.

The Land

The lands of Thyatis (Duchy) are incredibly fertile and wealthy, outmatching even Darokin's famous Streel River valley in population density. Just as the Streel River irrigates that valley, so too are the lands of the duchy irrigated by the mighty Mesonian River, shorter in length but no less important for that. The southern coast of the duchy consists of bluffs and beaches overlooking the sparkling waters of Vanya's Girdle. Here in more peaceful times yachting races were often seen. It is now patrolled by Eusebius's ace in the hole during the Crown Rebellion; the sharp-prowed dromonds of the imperial fleet. The channel, eight or to twelve miles wide in most places, separates the mainland from Hattias to the south.

Rich estates and palaces line the shores of the girdle and the banks of the Mesonian River, amid the hills and woodlands. More towns than can be conveniently shown on any map dot this domain, each with a unique charm. The most important of these are Julinius and Hillfork. Julinius is a port on the western coast of the duchy, a well-armed

naval base protecting Thyatis City from invaders from the Sea of Dread. The waters in this area can be treacherous, so the area features a much-needed and famous lighthouse, the beacon of Julin's Torch. South of Julinius, at the western mouth of Vanya's Girdle, is the lighthouse known as the Tower of Aes, which has its own community nearby. North of Julinius is the Crisaeen Gulf, a region of calm waters and excellent fishing.

The town of Hillfork lies on the western bank of the Mesonian River at the northern border of the duchy. It sits atop hills amid a forested area, carefully maintained and grown woodlands. These woods are used for silkworms, vital in the silk industry of Thyatis City and harvested for shipbuilding materials. Replanting and magically-induced growth insure that this area is not deforested. Until recently the Duchy of Retebius administered Hillfork, but it was transferred to the Duchy of Thyatis last year when the emperor and senate made several frontier adjustments in Thyatis proper.

It should not be forgotten that many other communities dot the almost manicured countryside of the duchy. Halfway upriver between Thyatis City and Hillfork is the town of Arcadiapolis, which is often the site of military exercises. East of Thyatis City near the border of the County of Lucinius is the town of Raedestos, while to the west on the road to the Tower of Aes the town of Selymbria can be found.

Often ignored is the fact that the duchy shares the shores of the Gulf of Kantrium as well. Several communities of fishermen line the shores of this gulf, the most significant being the town of Mesembria, located at the tip of a peninsula that juts into the gulf. The area in between the shores of the girdle and the gulf contains the empire's richest farmlands and vineyards, estates of wealthy magnates and farmsteads of hardy peasants both.

The People

This region has been a center of trade and military recruits for over a millennium and

will likely be so for a millennium more or longer. The Duchy of Thyatis is home to typical Thyatians: olive-skinned folk with dark hair and eyes and sophisticated civilized ways. Though the duchy is rural in nature, the people who live here are almost as cosmopolitan as those of The City—they see much foreign commerce, most sell their wares in the markets of Thyatis City and visit it often and town life is typical. Those who live outside towns and cities live comfortably on estates or in prosperous farmsteads and likewise are in easy reach of the amenities of town life.

The exception to this are the slaves; they are limited to the activities their masters permit and work as servants and in some cases as agricultural labor, though this is frowned upon because it is thought that free farmers make the best soldiers, while slaves are poor troops at best. Still, slavery is unwarrantedly common here despite opposition by some who see it as an anachronistic and wasteful institution. The good thing is that the slaves of the duchy are closest to the imperial eye and the legal protections accorded to Thyatian slaves are more often enforced here than elsewhere.

Don't Miss

The villas and palaces of the wealthy, which line Vanya's Girdle and the Mesonian River, are wonders of architecture, displays of wealth and engineering artistry. Getting inside is often tricky, as the owners can afford the best protections (magical and mundane) against thievery. They are always looking for good servants and clients, however and if you have a good reputation and solid references you can find highly-paid employment. The various lighthouses are also worth seeing, as are the mills along the river.

Do Miss

As I write this the western half of the duchy is under occupation by the rebel army and thus dangerous. Though lightly garrisoned (since most of their forces are

gathered before the walls of The City), it is none the less patrolled, sometimes by fiendish creatures. This area should be avoided for the time being.

THYATIS (*Empire of*)

Location: Southeastern peninsula on the continent of Brun, east of Karameikos, north of the Sea of Dread and south of Ylaruam along the Mesonian and Kerenda rivers. OW

Area: 62,300 sq. mi. (161,350 sq. km.), plus 797,678 sq. mi. (2,065,985 sq. km.) of overseas colonies (973,143 sq. mi. (2,520,440 sq. km.) if Heldun is included).

Population: 2,765,000 of various races (95% human, 3% elven, 2% other), plus 815,000 in overseas colonies (935,000 if Heldun is included).

Languages: Thyatian (Thyatian, Hattian and Kerendan dialects), Alasiyan (Akbaran dialect) is also common around Tel Akbir. Many other languages are spoken within the empire, especially in Thyatis City.

Coinage: Thyatian Standard: *emperor* (pp), *lucin* (gp), *asterius* (sp), *denarius* (cp).

Taxes: 25% income tax collected quarterly on the aristocracy, nobility and wealthy; 20% income tax collected quarterly on everyone else (Va. 1, Ya. 1, Fy. 3 and Ei. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. Expensive and magical items are also taxed 25% of their worth. 10% imperial *commercias* sales tax on all goods except food, clothing and fixed assets; levied on imports, rebated on exports. Tax on slave owning equal to 50% of the slave's value annually. Property tax levied based on quality of land, roughly 6% of its value annually.

Government Type: Parliamentary *imperium*. monarchy heavily influenced by elective senate overseeing vassal domains.

Industries: Agriculture, crafts (especially metalworking, glassworks, tanning, cloth), fishing, herding (cattle, sheep, goats), horse breeding (Kerendas mainly), magic (Sclaras and Thyatis City), military, mining (gold and other minerals in the Altan Tepes),

shipbuilding (Thyatis City, Lucinius and Actius), textiles (Thyatis City especially), trade, wine.

Important Figures: Eusebius Torion (Emperor, human, male, F16), Lucianna Torion (Empress, human, female, Bard9), Coltius Torion (Prince, human, male, Bard5), Gabronius Torion (Prince, human, male, F2), Demetrium Karagenteropolus (Imperial Magist, human, male, M20), Manfred Torion Dörfer (Usurper Emperor, human, male, F15).

Flora and Fauna: Mulberry trees (for sericulture), grape vines, olive trees, date palms, peach, pear, orange and cherry fruit trees in cultivated orchards, maple, birch and oak trees, pine and aspens in the Southern Altan Tepes Mountains. Herds of cattle, sheep, horses, goats, swine and mules. Bees kept for honey. Bears, boars, centaurs, lycanthropes, mountain lions, foxes, dryads, wolves, unicorns and goblinoids can be found in the wilds of the empire. Hill giants and ogres in the hills. Pegasi, griffons, rocs, ruby, gold and white dragons as well as other aerial mounts are common near Retebius, sea monsters around Borydos, while absolutely anything can be found near the magical estates of Sclaras. Currently, undead outside Thyatis City itself, as well as unknown varieties of monsters in the catacombs underneath The City.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, DDA1 *Arena of Thyatis*, DDA2 *Legions of Thyatis*, previous almanacs.

Description by Vivianna Romanones.

No one could possibly do justice to the imposing and glorious Thyatian *Imperium* within the scope of an entry in the *Mystaran Almanac*. None the less, following in the footsteps of my illustrious predecessors as almanac corespondent, I shall endeavor to describe Thyatis as fully as possible to the best of my abilities. I do this in the hope that you may learn of this remarkable country, the triumphs and the tribulations of its citizens and our contributions to Mystaran civilization and perhaps impart to you a new perspective so that you may view it in a fresh

light. Thyatis, once merely a spur of land on Brun, began its rise from obscurity over a millennium ago to become the dominant power of the western world. In this *imperium* races blend freely, organization and efficiency are the hallmarks of national character, trade and negotiations are taught to children on their mothers' knees and anyone from any part of the empire can become a warrior-knight. Due to the character of its people, Thyatis has always persevered through periods of trial and tribulation to return to greatness. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that the civilization of the Old World is a byproduct of the will of the Thyatian Empire to survive and the simple feat of endurance it has performed, the historic function of Thyatis as a barrier against the invading hordes of Alphatia. Under the shelter of Thyatis's defense of its own eastern frontier, the rest of Brun could fashion its own life.

This entry describes the COUNTRY of Thyatis, which is the heart of the EMPIRE of Thyatis. Thyatis is a state surpassing all nations in wealth and might, small though great in influence. What allows the Thyatians to call their state an empire is the fact that it includes several other nations elsewhere in the world as members. These nations are called provinces and at the moment there are: The Provinces of the Isle of Dawn; the Thyatian Hinterland Provinces on Davania; Eusebius recently emulated Valentia and returned Ochalea and the Pearl Islands to the imperial fold and Minrothad has voluntarily incorporated itself into the empire. This entry will deal solely with the imperial heartland on the continent of Brun. The other regions will receive full attention elsewhere.

The Thyatian language is the common tongue of many nations throughout the area, even those which have never been part of the empire. Within Thyatis itself there are three main dialects, all mutually intelligible. The first is the clip dialect of the City of Thyatis, which is found throughout much of the empire. The other two are the drawling Kerendan dialect spoken in western Thyatis

and the abrupt Hattian dialect spoken on Hattias.

The Land

The country of Thyatis is mainly composed of rich farmlands, with hills and mountains filled with mineral wealth to the north. Still, much variety exists and only a brief overview will be given here, with each region covered in complete detail elsewhere. Thyatis is composed of eighteen dominions, called counties or duchies (baronies are no longer found in the Thyatian heartland as official imperial domains, though many of the dukes have made barons in their duchies, but at the imperial level such domains are found only among the colonies now). These dominions will be discussed separately elsewhere, as I mentioned.

Alert readers will notice that the area given above is slightly higher than the total of the areas of its constituent dominions. This is because, in addition to the four large islands that have their own entries, there are many small islands within Thyatian waters. The islands discussed here do not include the scattered outposts being developed in the vast reaches of the Sea of Dread or which are a part of some dominion or colony (like the Pearl Islands), but only those nearest the heart of Thyatis itself. Some of these little islets lay near Terentias, but most are scattered in the same chain that forms the larger islands of Carytion, Borydos, Actius and Sclaras. These are not marked on most maps and many of them are not part of a dominion. Instead, the imperial government directly administers them. A few of these hold secret facilities or are used as private retreats. But most of them are not very significant, though they might hold some reclusive residents and pirates have been known to use them as bases. All are very small (none approach even tiny Sclaras in size). Some of them are very beautiful, however.

The People

Thyatians are a justly proud people, the possessors of a long tradition of civilization

and imperial might. Most Thyatians have olive complexions and dark hair, although since any member ethnicity becomes a part of the empire, equal to any other citizen, absolutely any characteristic can be found among the Thyatian people. This is because the Thyatian people are not a race as such; anyone of any ethnicity can be a citizen of Thyatis, providing they are loyal to the empire, speak Thyatian and adopt Thyatian mores. Because of this openness, Thyatis has produced a vibrant, multiethnic culture and civilization. In Thyatis there are Thyatians, Kerendans, Hattians, Alasiyans, Ochaleans, Nuari, Alphatians, Thratians, elves, dwarves, hin, even Antalians, Traladarans, Milenians and persons from many other nations—but all are Thyatian citizens first and foremost.

Thyatians are efficient, disciplined and practical. They believe in doing whatever it takes to succeed when all else fails. Others view this as treacherous, even while excusing similar behavior in their own nations and friends, but Thyatians simply do what is needed to do to achieve their goals and preserve their nation, resorting to expediency only if other means falter. To do otherwise would not only be wasteful and inefficient, but potentially ruinous to a people who have always faced threats on every frontier. Most Thyatians are cosmopolitan, quick to embrace new cultures and customs. Thyatian scholars eagerly rush to learn more about them, writing treatises about their history and lore that are widely read by Thyatians, who learn and absorb much. This makes Thyatian culture rich and robust, strengthened by the best ideas, techniques and philosophies of many lands.

If there is one thing Thyatians respect, it is fighting prowess. Coliseums can be found in almost every Thyatian city and gladiatorial combats draw in crowds like never seen in other nations. When a Thyatian feels himself slighted by another, a duel will usually be arranged. The challenged party is permitted to set the terms of the duel, after which the challenger may withdraw or reaffirm the challenge. Duels between well-known, skilled participants are very popular,

attracting large audiences and at times even larger wagers. Indeed, with the liberation of most gladiators by the senate and emperor last year, some thought has been given to supplementing the voluntary gladiatorial matches in the arenas with duels held there. Such duel-matches would “book” the highest profile of arranged duels.

In Darokin they have a saying, “he who has the gold makes the rules.” In Thyatis, the saying is “he who makes the rules wins the gold.” Thyatians respect sound laws and good order in their behavior, knowing that prosperity is the product of virtue, not the other way around. The virtues Thyatians hold most dear are dignity, duty, efficiency, self-discipline, loyalty, respect, honor and piety [*some would say in that order. Ed.*] But, ironically, while those who discipline themselves and follow the code of virtues are respected, Thyatians tend to reserve their adoration for the self-reliant person who achieves greatness in preserving the empire but who do not surrender their individuality to it. It is the insolent but worthy rogue who receives the accolades of the crowd, if not their respect.

There are fewer Thyatians than there once were—enough fewer that the dead would equal the population of Karameikos and then some. Many of these fell during the Final Alphatian War, others were laid low by the dark, necromantic magics of mummy rot that Thothia unleashed on the civilian, non-combatant population of Thyatis, a true crime against sentient creation. This demographic change has impacted Thyatian society. Though any waste of life is tragic and some will think me callous for even saying what I shall say next, it is true that even in the darkest of clouds there are silver linings. The deaths, especially those caused by the Thothian mummy rot, largely fell on the indolent poor and the slave population. Fewer idle hands makes Thyatis more efficient, with less resources going to a non-productive segment of the population. Similarly, I hold that slavery, as a national institution, is retrograde and inefficient. Anything that reduces the proportion of slaves in Thyatian society, or which culls out

the weak and unfit making room for the strong and capable to prosper and restore vitality to the empire cannot be all bad. *[Pretty cold-hearted if you remember she's talking about death on a massive scale here. Ed.]*. Though I must admit that Eusebius's enlightened policies of freeing many slaves in exchange for service to the empire and making them Thyatian citizens is far to be preferred over the wicked and nefarious Thothian-caused method of killing hundreds of thousands of people. Many of their sympathizers might want you forget who committed this foul and barbarous deed. Similarly, sending idle hands out to colonize the distant lands of the empire and thus strengthen it, is certainly better as well. Still, these things, bad as they were, have compelled those who formerly relied on slave labor to innovate and adopt innovative labor-saving devices that are already commonplace in areas like Darokin and it has begun to sink in that slavery is the wave of the past, not the future. Perhaps some day this pernicious, inefficient institution will go the way of the Alphanian Empire and other obsolete artifacts. It would be ironic if we had the moribund, stagnant Thothians to thank for shaking us out of our complacency regarding these matters, even while they cling to the past.

Also, these demographic and social realities, which we have been forced to face, have compelled policy re-evaluations about land use and pattern of settlement. Already before the current unpleasantness *[the Crown War rebellion. Ed.]* broke out, Eusebius was fostering resettlement. Not only in the distant colonies, but here in the heartlands as well. There is a recognition among most Thyatians that a more efficient, productive use of Thyatian lands and resources is necessary for long-term success and recovery. Thus, you can be sure that once the current unpleasantness is behind us, many positive changes will be initiated, putting people and land to work and giving them a stake in making the most productive use of their opportunities.

Thyatian History

The Thyatians have a long and glorious history, a history of both triumph and tragedy. Many non-Thyatians judge it harshly, not aware of the burdens and responsibilities Thyatis carried. These duties led Thyatis to make pragmatic decisions in the interest of not only itself, but of all Mysterans.

The people now known as Thyatians had their origin on the distant shores of the Davanian continent. Some sixteen centuries ago the tribes, Thyatian, Kerendan and Hattian, departed from Davania settling on the small southeastern spur of the continent of Brun, a continent some scholars believe they came from originally. The tribes were warrior people, hardy and unafraid of death. Upon their migration to Brun they fought against a nation, forgotten by time, that it is believed held in them bondage in the murky past and sent them to Davania, fighting them until even the very name of this nation was forgotten. For four centuries they lived free, eventually encountering the ruthlessly expansionistic and despotic Alphanian Empire, a nation that dominated others through fear and intimidation. The Thyatians resisted the Alphanians' drive for conquest with raids (which Alphanian histories depict as piracy) and maritime strength. Eventually the Alphanians came to learn that the mountains in Thyatian lands held rich deposits of gold and ever greedy for resources and people to exploit, the Alphanians set out to conquer the Thyatians as they had so many before them. The Thyatians resisted valiantly but were no match for Alphania's magical power at the time.

For two centuries the Thyatians lived under the cruel and despotic yoke of the Alphanian Empire, forced to work in its mines in conditions that the Jennites of today nod knowingly about when they hear of it. But the Alphanians inadvertently also taught much to the Thyatians, who took what they learned and improved it and also learned what not to do. Hardened by their experience after two centuries of Alphanian rule, the Thyatians led a grand revolt against

the Alphatian despotism. The Alphatian regime crumbled and only their timely surrender prevented their collapse. In exchange for peace, the Alphatians ceded much of the lands they had occupied for so long. Thus, the Thyatian *Imperium* was born.

For a millenium Thyatis stood as a bulwark against Alphatian expansionism. The Known World was shielded from Alphatian aggression by Thyatian strength and thus allowed to develop in its own way. The modern world owes its shape and its culture to Thyatis in more ways than one. Many nations never ruled by it speak Thyatian and have derived elements of their civilization from its own. Empress Valentia's enlightened Citizen's Proclamation twenty years after the empire's foundation made all the people of the Thyatian Empire full participants in the empire, unlike Alphatia's tradition of subjugation and oppression of conquered people. She took the further step of granting independence to both the Pearl Islands and Ochalea, then formally inviting them back into the empire under the terms of her proclamation and they accepted. This made Thyatis strong in ways that Alphatia could not replicate without changing its society, something the Alphatians would not do. So, while Alphatia was larger and ostensibly more powerful than Thyatis, Thyatis made more efficient use of its strength.

In the last century, the Alphatians once again attacked Thyatis, which was ruled by a kind, artistic but unmilitary emperor, Gabrionus V. Emperor Gabrionus V had forgotten that the first duty a ruler has is war and had let the Thyatian military and fleets decline while he shifted funds to artistic pursuits and grand building projects, like the theater in Thyatis which still bears his name. The Alphatian Spike Assault was initially successful and many Alphatians to this day insist that this war was a great victory for them. However, though their "Grand Imperial Army" managed briefly to pierce the walls of The Queen of Cities and they went on a bloodthirsty rampage, believing they had won, the Alphatians had once again miscalculated the Thyatian spirit and the

resiliency of its people. The Alphatian invaders were defeated so utterly, their fleets crushed so decisively, that they were unable to hold back the Thyatian tide even enough to retain their gains on the Isle of Dawn. Within two years' time, the Alphatians had suffered crushing a defeat not only in Thyatis but on the Isle of Dawn as well. This debacle was so humiliating to them that they forced their reigning emperor, Tylon IV, to abdicate as a result. His successor, Eriadna, knew the only wise choice she had was to sue for peace with the new Thyatian Emperor, Thincol Torion, before our soldiers advanced into Alphatia's territory. So, rather than being an example of Alphatian supremacy, as they often claim, the Spike Assault is an emblematic example of the indomitable spirit of the Thyatian people, our refusal to be defeated and our ability to overcome great odds.

More recently and Immortals willing for the last time, Thyatis again used its strength to shield the world from the advance of the bloodthirsty Alphatian hordes. This Final War between Thyatis and Alphatia lasted from AC 1005 to AC 1009. It was a war Thyatis fought on behalf of Glantri and by extension all the nations, against the threat of Alphatian dominance. The Alphatians sought to conquer and destroy Glantri, while we sought to prevent their expansionist aims, hoping to curb their appetite for destruction. We also fought because it would not have been in our interest to see Alphatia expand in Brun, flanking us by conquering Glantri. These antagonisms set the stage for a horrific war like none other. The war is often called the Wrath of the Immortals because the Immortals punished Alphatia for attempting to impose their regime on the world, sundering the Alphatian Empire, while some call it the Great War, but I call it the Final Alphatian War in an expression of optimism. Thus, it is poetic justice that the Alphatians, while seeking to destroy Glantri, were instead destroyed themselves. Also, this war was an echo of history, as Glantri is named such because it was a Thyatian, Alexander Glantri, who foiled the

Alphatians the last time they tried to impose themselves on that nation.

During this war the Alphatian attackers caused much death and destruction in the empire, only to be thwarted in the end, just as during the earlier Spike Assault. During the war, Thyatis suffered numerous setbacks and defeats, though we did succeed in throwing Norwold into a series of disruptive wars, thus preventing the Alphatians from marching south from Landfall through Heldann and Ethengar and right into Glantri. My friend, Knight of the Air Carolianus Ellorius, summed it up best when he said “All throughout the war we had a strange, surreal feeling, as if we were an audience in a theater, watching the events of our own struggle and yet powerless to affect it. After awhile, it was clear they could not be stopped.” As fate unfolded, the Alphatians overran much of the Isle of Dawn. After early reverses the situation seemed to stabilize as we held them off in the northern head of the Isle of Dawn. It seemed for a time that the course of the war might turn in our favor, but our supposed allies, the Heldannic Knights, sent no aid but rather engaged in a series of reckless and unnecessary campaigns which were only distractions. But far more ominously, Eruul Zaar treacherously betrayed the empire to Alphatia, turning traitor in exchange for the title of king and the hand of Asteriela. His betrayal allowed the Alphatian hordes to occupy this strategic position on the Isle of Dawn, giving their fleets an opening to invade Brun.

But our forces were ready to intercept them and finally free of the debilitating weaknesses that undermined their effectiveness in the early stages of the war, they finally showed what they were capable of doing. In a mighty clash in the Eastern Sea of Dawn in the summer of AC 1008, our Retebius Air Fleet, with the vaunted Spitfire and Hurricane squadrons in the vanguard, defeated their dread skynavy, while our imperial navy repulsed their fleet, sinking many transports and forcing the enemy back to the Isle of Dawn, though at heavy cost to our valiant troops. It took the Alphatians

nearly six months to recover from this blow, licking their wounds and rebuilding their fleets. Then, thwarted in their effort to invade Thyatis directly, the Alphatians once again turned to disreputable methods to achieve their goal. Pinning down our forces and those of Heldann with diversionary feints, the Alphatians sneaked into Ylaruam at Cubia in the dead of winter, invading it without a proper declaration of war. Though the locals resisted, the Ylari could not hold off the Alphatian onslaught. The enemy dispatched them and marched down into Thyatis.

The Alphatian war machine pushed through Thyatis throughout AC 1009, slowly but inexorably, despite a valiant and desperate defense. The emperor brought our fleet around to cover Vanya's Girdle, thwarting their fleet's effort to push up the channel and attack The City directly, but their armies continued to march through Thyatis, wave after wave their hordes came. *[I believe that by this time the Thyatians knew they were doomed. But where another people might have given in to despair, the Thyatians strove with even greater determination. They made the Alphatians pay dearly for every inch of ground. No one who saw them fighting against the inevitable could help but be moved by their stubborn bravery. Dorrik Stonecleaver.]* Many battles and skirmishes took place as we fought fiercely to defend our homes, but I will limit myself to a brief description of only the most significant of these. Our defenders repulsed their attack at Kantridae, but they were able to bring up reinforcements to outflank our positions, forcing us to withdraw because we did not have enough troops to prevent this maneuver. Again, we beat back their first attempts to cross the Kantridae River, but again they brought up more men to cross upriver while the Alphatian general formed his army into a large square to ford the river in the teeth of our forces. Though we inflicted severe casualties on them, there seemed to be endless numbers of them, always coming and they forced us to withdraw again. Our main forces managed an orderly withdrawal to the City of Thyatis while a cadre of volunteers and local

defenders bravely held Retebius and fended off the Alphatian war machine for over a month. They finally managed to take that city in a furious assault, overrunning and slaughtering the defenders, though their own casualties were so horrid they were stalled again, forced to bring up additional fresh troops from their lands. Which, in the end, seemed to be our undoing, as by this point our reinforcements consisted largely of youths and old men, plus a very few Heldannic Knights and Glantrian wizards who finally came to support us, their allies in this war. But still the Alphatians came on, disregarding and ignoring their own severe casualties. Though we picked off their elite forces with surgical strikes and valiant charges by forces formed late in the war, such as the Order of the Silver Shield, whittled them down and made them pay dearly for every advance. This bought precious time for Thincol to prepare the defenses of the capital and for our Glantrian allies to complete their own preparations. But the Alphatians always seemed to have more common troops whose lives they sacrificed unsparingly in their drive for conquest and no method was too despicable for them to resort to in their efforts to terrorize the people into submission. They then managed to ford the Retebius River, again in the face of our resistance, but using their numbers to cross in multiple places so we were forced to withdraw and they marched into the Duchy of Thyatis.

The Alphatian forces at length pushed forward to the eastern bank of the Mesonian River, where we drew up our forces to oppose them. With us at last were strong contingents from Heldann and Glantri, as well as some northerners sent as “mercenaries” by our allies in Ostland to fight by our side. A skillful battle plan had been drawn up, but a body of Heldannic Knights charged prematurely and was slain by the Alphatians. Though these men went down in Heldannic lore as heroes, for us it seemed like a senseless waste that, worst of all, threw things into disorder. Seeing this, the imperial generals withdrew the remaining troops into River Guard Town, with the

Order of the Silver Shield covering their withdrawal and boarded them on ships, where they crossed over to The City, to defend behind its stout walls, with the Retebius Air Fleet controlling the airspace above. With our ships patrolling the river and girdle, the Alphatians were faced with the difficulty of crossing over in the face of this. Though they could have landed some troops by *skyship* to attempt to make a beachhead on the west side, they knew that we would then be able to strike at these forces before more troops could be brought over to swell their numbers and that thus such efforts were likely to be defeated piecemeal. They were facing this challenge when Thincol’s envoys submitted a peace proposal to Eriadna, reminding her of the difficulties the Alphatians would face if they tried to assault the Queen of Cities again and what Thyatis’s response would be. Though many uncomprehending Alphatians believe to this day that Eriadna made a mistake in not attacking the City of Thyatis and believe they would have won, Eriadna knew better the capabilities of Thyatis. Because she knew what Thyatis would do if cornered, in the treaty she agreed to a staged withdrawal not just from the Thyatian mainland, but from all the areas of the empire the Alphatians had occupied during the war. Many Alphatians will try to persuade you, as they have in past almanacs, that Alphatia defeated Thyatis, just as they try to claim the Spike Assault was a victory for them. But in the end, Thyatis achieved its war aim, while Alphatia was foiled in their goal of destroying Glantri. In the end, only one empire was destroyed by the war and it was not the Thyatian Empire, which persevered, as it always has, due to the character of the Thyatian people. Next the Alphatians planned on trampling on the sovereignty of the Five Shires and Darokin in their effort to invade and destroy Glantri, just as they had trampled upon Ylaruam in their effort to invade Thyatis. They commandeered many ships for this purpose, to replace the ones we had sunk during the fighting.

But they didn’t last long enough to carry this out, because the legacy of this Final

Alphatian War was not be the triumph of Alphatian despotism, nor will it be the irrevocable exhaustion of Thyatis.

Emperor Thincol became gravely ill towards the end of the war, as the Alphatian onslaught entered Thyatis itself, for the first time showing his age, so great was the burden he bore on behalf of the Thyatian people. The Week Without Magic took place while the Alphatians were marching across Thyatis and into Karameikos. Many Thyatians took advantage of the confusion this caused among the Alphatian forces to exact retribution for atrocities visited upon their families during the Alphatian invasion. *[These actions possibly explain why, in the aftermath of the war, the surviving Alphatian forces, including those who settled in Karameikos as refugees, those who withdrew to the Isle of Dawn and those who took service with Thyatis, were considerably fewer than one might have expected. Ed.]* Shortly after the continent of Alphatia sank and the Alphatian Empire was destroyed, the tides of war turned. Imperial authorities impounded the wreckage of the Alphatian *skyships* which had crashed on imperial soil during the Week Without Magic, for study and because some of them might prove repairable. The empire also, mercifully in a gesture of benevolence, took into its service those Alphatians who were willing to put past differences behind us and work together with Thyatis in post-war recovery efforts. Some, more spiteful and uncooperative ones, withdrew to the Isle of Dawn however, where they indicated they would attempt to carry on the cause of their destructive and yet destroyed empire.

Emperor Thincol scrupulously remained true to his word and observed the terms of the treaty he had signed with Eriadna at the close of the Final Alphatian War, even though a treaty with a dead nation is not binding. This treaty stipulated that the Thyatians would not attack Karameikos, Helskir, Ochalea, or the Pearl Islands and we did not. But the Alphatians once again let their sense of racial superiority get the better of them, never believing that others would treat their lands the same way they had treated the lands of so many other peoples

before. Thus, they had left a welcome loophole in the treaty, which Thincol promptly (but prematurely, as it turned out) exploited to our advantage.

In AC 1010, the emperor tried to absorb the remaining Alphatian kingdoms, so they would never again rise to threaten the world. He did this instead of focusing on rebuilding Thyatis, spending the last of the empire's strength to secure a lasting victory. These plans were shattered when Thothia's undead minions defeated the legions on the Isle of Dawn using dark necromancy and spread a plague of mummy rot throughout Thyatis. The old Thincol would have known how to deal with the Thothian threat, dispatching Thyatian clerical orders and members of the Retebius Air Fleet to vanquish Thothia's dark magics, causing upheaval and civil strife. But by this time Thincol was a shadow of his former self, senile and decrepit. These battles ended in AC 1012 when Thincol died and was replaced by his son Eusebius. Eusebius restored order to Thyatis, taking steps to end the plague and famine the Thothians had spread into Thyatis. Thothia requested a truce and signed the Treaty of Dawn with the empire insuring peace on the Isle of Dawn. This treaty cost the empire the cities of Ekto and Trikelios and a few minor Alatian Islands, but the empire has now recovered almost fully and continues to hold a position which allows us to keep an eye on the machinations of the surviving Alphatians.

It was recently revealed that the Immortals, for mysterious reasons of their own, had restored the Alphatian continent and many of its people in the Hollow World. But they wisely placed it in isolation from the remnants of their surface empire and indeed in isolation from the rest of the Hollow World, so that the Alphatians' passion for destruction can no longer threaten others. The Alphatians now hope to build another new version of their empire, but the truth remains that the Alphatian Empire that made the world tremble was destroyed and is gone forever. In Thyatis, Eusebius is now looking at Davania and plans on expanding the empire

into the unclaimed jungles of the southern continent, so that we will remain strong and vigilant should the surviving Alphatians plot once again in the future. The current unpleasantness has delayed some of these projects, but no doubt they will resume once this crisis is overcome.

This past year Eusebius initiated several long overdue reforms intended to restore the empire to its former glory, doing what Thincol perhaps should have done after the Wrath war. His critics said he was pushing things too far, too fast and that some of his changes threatened Thyatian traditions. Eusebius pressed ahead though, pushing his plans through and working in concert with a senate friendly to these ideas [*a senate made friendly by his previous ruthless purges. Ed.*]. Though these reforms were greatly needed and will strengthen Thyatis in the long run, Eusebius's critics may have been right in one sense. The rapidity of his innovations vexed many and his precipitous actions may have sparked the seriousness of the War of the Crown that now plagues Thyatis. The outcome of the rebellion will likely determine the course of the empire for generations to come. Perhaps even whether Thyatis remains a great power or continues its decline will rest on this conflict.

Don't Miss

There are many things to see in Thyatis, notably the various gladiatorial games—especially during holidays when they are spectacularly bloody. Thyatis also boasts fine theaters and plays and many well-stocked libraries and noted universities. Many nobles throw lavish galas in their estates throughout The City. Thyatis is a center of theology, with large temples and clerical orders dedicated to many of the virtuous Immortals.

Of note, I would recommend a trip to Argevin Town in Mositius. This island is geared for tourism and the taverns are open at all hours. In fact, no business ever closes, regardless of how late at night you visit. Servants are found everywhere and are ready to cater to your every need. Theaters,

dancing halls and gambling establishments make up every second building. What makes the place even more famous is Mount Mositius, a volcano that emits magical mists that descend upon the population of the island. This mist radically alters the behavior of those who inhale it, causing blind optimism, love, drunken giddiness, laziness, giggling hilarity, or almost any other emotion imaginable. Duchess Triella Tien-Tang somehow controls this mist and makes sure only harmless emotions are inspired by its magic.

Some would caution you to stay away from the Queen of Cities at this time of war. But such people lack the stalwart heart Thyatians respect and should stay away in any case. Entering the City by water is by far the preferred method. Sailing up the sparkling sound of Vanya's Girdle to approach the capital by sea will give you a fine panoramic impression of its greatness, the glittering domes of its temples rising above the strong walls, the magnificence of its palaces and public buildings. If you are most fortunate you will arrive to witness the valiant defenders repelling an assault by the rebel army.

THYATIS (The City)

Location: Southeastern coast of the continent of Brun, at the midway point of Vanya's Girdle on the banks of the Mesonian River in Thyatis. OW

Area: 50 sq. mi. (130 sq. km.).

Population: 600,000.

Languages: Thyatian (Thyatian, Heldann, Kerendan and Tel Akbiran dialects). Many other languages are spoken within Thyatis City.

Coinage: Thyatian Standard: *emperor* (pp), *lucin* (gp), *asterius* (sp), *denarius* (cp).

Taxes: 25% income tax collected quarterly on the aristocracy, nobility and wealthy; 20% income tax collected quarterly on everyone else (Va. 1, Ya. 1, Fy. 3 and Ei. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. Expensive and magical items are also taxed 25% of

their worth. 10% imperial *commercias* sales tax on all goods except food, clothing and fixed assets; levied on imports, rebated on exports. Tax on slave owning equal to 50% of the slave's value annually. Property tax levied based on quality of land, roughly 6% of its value annually.

Government Type: Municipality administered by civic officials and elected representatives on behalf of the Emperor of Thyatis, imperial capital of the Thyatian Empire.

Industries: Arts (especially mosaic, sculpture, stonemasonry, theater), crafts (especially metalworking, glassworks, tanning, cloth—including brocade, cotton, linen, satin, velvet, wool), fishing, finance, magic, military, services (including finance, insurance), scholarship, shipbuilding, silk (including spider silk), textiles, trade.

Important Figures: Belissarian Strategius (Imperial Marshal and Chief of the General Staff, human, male, F20), Constantine Lecapenus (First Sea Lord and Grand Admiral of the Imperial Admiralty, human, male, F20), Antonina Alessandrasia (Lady Knight Commander of the Air Guard, human, female, F20/M10), Marcian Lactanius (Commander of the Sacred Guard, human, male, Pa20) andronicus Ducatzes (Commander of the Hetaereia, human, male, F18), Tredorian (Prince of Alphatia, human, male, F12), Maximius Colophorius (Lord Knight and Grand Master of the Glorious Wings of Vanya, human, male, Pr20 of Vanya), Nikephorus Logotharion (Praefect of Thyatis, human, male, Rake15), Julius Sartorius (High Priest of the Endless Seas of Protius, human, male, Pr18 of Protius), Regino Helioprobus (Patriarch of Solarios, human, male, Pr16 of Solarios), Helena Daphnotarthius (Priestess of Valerias's House of Passions, human, female, Pr16 of Valerias), Theophylact Cerularius (Chief Priest of Tarastia, human, male, Pr20 of Tarastia), Trasaricus Theophilus (High Priest of Asterius, human, male, Pr16 of Asterius), Yalag (ex-Gladiator, orc, male, F12), Carolus Anthemion (Gladiator, human, male, F9/Werewolf), Phaedra Daphnorakenzes (Priestess of Vanya, human, female, Pr10 of

Vanya), Theodosius Kantinomeiros (Con Man, human, male, T15), Tanobari Nuar (Pearl Islander Consul, human, male, Rake9), Dylan son of Penn (Thratian Consul, human, male, F9), Athanasia Romanones (Proctor of the *Collegium Arcanum*, human, female, M20), Philoxenus Scholasticus (Curator of the Great Library, human, male, M20), Methodius Armorakius (Dean of the Imperial Academy, human, male, M12/Pr17 of Halav), Elektra Sharpblade (Gladiator, human, female, F17), Hukkt (Gladiator, ogre, male, F18), Stult Bearclaw (Gladiator, human, male, F15), Speriopitis Melanikas (Gladiator, human, male, F7/Rake15), Valnor Acidelyrovius (Master of the Shadow Hand, human, male, T22). A multitude of other characters of all levels also inhabit the City of Thyatis.

Flora and Fauna: Lycanthropes (especially wererats under the city), wild cats and dogs, giant rats, goblinoids. Pegasi, griffons, rocs, ruby, gold and white dragons as well as other aerial mounts are used as mounts. Currently, undead outside Thyatis City itself, as well as other unknown varieties of monsters in the catacombs underneath The City.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, DDA1 *Arena of Thyatis*, DDA2 *Legions of Thyatis*, previous almanacs.

Note: *The scale of the map for Thyatis City (and Sundsvall, although the city is now in ruins) has been semi-officially re-designated. Instead of 1" = 1,000' use the scale 1" = 1,000 yards. This works better given the size of the Coliseum as depicted in DDA1 anyhow, as anyone who has tried to fit it into the 1,000' scale will have noticed. In addition, the floor plan of that map should have a scale of 1 square = 15' rather than 1 square = 25'. It will then fit with the map of the upper basement, as it should and will precisely fit within the area allocated for the Coliseum on the main city map with its scale revised at 1" = 1,000 yards.*

Description by Vivianna Romanones.

At the center of the Duchy of Thyatis lays the Queen of Cities, the wealthiest, grandest and most powerful city of Mystara, from which all things are measured. It has been

called the foremost city of luxury, fashion and culture, but also the city of vice, corruption and materiel temptation. What is certainly true is that the survival and prosperity of Thyatis City is crucial to the survival and prosperity of the Thyatian Empire. As the first settlement founded when the Thyatians migrated here from the south, it is over sixteen hundred years old and perhaps the oldest continuously inhabited city on the continent. Though most people use the calendar that dates from the crowning of the first emperor, some scholars and pedants still use the traditional calendar, dating from the foundation of the city in BC 600 (this is AUC 0, thus this year is AUC 1,617 in this ancient calendar of Thyatis). This is a city that surpasses all in wealth and might, its motto (“Gold in Peace—Steel in War”) sums up the attitudes of its people, which can shift from an obsession with commerce and wealth to martial stoicism in the blink of an eye. [*Some in other countries say the motto should be “greed in peace—steal in war.” Ed.*] More people live in the city of Thyatis than live in many entire nations of the Old World or in the whole continent of Bellissaria. Normally, half a million people live within its walls with another hundred thousand in the immediate exurbs surrounding the city (not including Port Hatti, which itself could be seen as a suburb of the city).

From here, Emperor Eusebius Torion and the Imperial Senate govern the Empire of Thyatis. People of all races and cultures can be found in the city of Thyatis, as it boasts trade from around the world. Glorious temples and magnificent palaces share space with humble residences. The city’s emporiums and harbors bustle with activity, merchants from every nation can be seen here as Thyatis lies at the hub of the world’s trade routes. The city of Thyatis is not only the financial and governmental capital of the empire, but also its military capital. The city is headquarters of many Thyatian fighting orders, from older ones like the Order of the Grey Lady to newer ones, like the Order of the Silver Shield, which was formed during the recent Final Alphatian War. Since the

foundation of the empire, the city of Thyatis has never fallen to an outside force and only once have its walls been breached. That time, some fifty years ago, was when an Alphatian strike force managed to enter the city, powering their way to the imperial palace to kill then-Emperor Gabrionus V before being defeated and expelled. The city and its immediate hinterland, roughly 4 miles in every direction from the center of The City (around 50 square miles) was recently given a special status of its own, further highlighting its pivotal nature as the hub of the empire.

The Land

Built where the Mesonian River flows into Vanya’s Girdle, the city of Thyatis is strategically situated for both war and commerce. Its site at the midpoint of the great channel separating Hattias from the mainland, Vanya’s Girdle and alongside the empire’s main river, is a major asset. As such the city is sheltered from attack while laying astride the main trade lanes between northeastern Brun and the Isle of Dawn on the one hand and southwestern Brun and the Sea of Dread on the other.

The city itself is built on a series of hills, the most prominent being at the Zendrolium overlooking Vanya’s Girdle and the massive Emperor’s Hill which overlooks the entire city. Part of the city, River Guard Town, is located across the Mesonian River. River Guard Town (Riovigila in classical Thyatian) also functions as a sort of foreign quarter, though in reality people of all nations can be found almost anywhere in The City.

The most important harborages of Thyatis City are not those of the Mesonian River, however. The Great Harbor, a deepwater anchorage seemingly carved out of the city and sheltered behind its walls is the greatest trading port in Brun and perhaps the world. A veritable forest of masts fills it at any given time; ships of all nations come to Thyatis to sell their wares and buy the products of the empire. Jutting off the southern end of the Great Harbor is the Lesser Harbor, a port that would be

considered large in many a city. This is the anchorage for the imperial fleet, located in the Zendrolium district of the city, where most of the soldiers based in the area have their barracks; this district is separated from the bulk of Thyatis City itself and is a miniature city in its own right.

A huge double wall that is studded with towers protects the city of Thyatis. Outside the wall lay a pair of ditches or moats, preventing our enemies from easily approaching its defenses. Though battered by the attacks of the rebels, they have not been pierced. Aqueducts crossing through bring fresh water to the city, which are deposited in a series of cisterns from which water is then diverted through pipes to individual buildings. Last year the rebel forces tried to infiltrate the city using some of the passages that run beneath the walls. Beyond are military training fields and the city's immediate exurbs; some pleasant regions where the wealthy repose when not in the walls, others used for crafts not suitable for conducting within the walls. None of the exurbs are built closer than a thousand yards from the walls of Thyatis, except for River Guard Town. In this zone is only fields, parklands and some livestock pens for animals driven to the city, where they are kept before slaughter. This empty zone is maintained so that in time of war, the defenders have a clean line of fire and attackers cannot sneak close to the walls, but the exurbs are still close enough to the city for convenience in normal times.

The area outside River Guard Town (or Riovigila), is known as the Xenos and is home to many slaughterhouses and tanneries serving The City. Outside the city walls along Vanya's Girdle region the city is known as Reginas and is in normal times where homes of military officers, desiring to live close to the Zendrolion but in a pleasant countryside, reside. Along the banks of the Mesonian River outside the walls is the district of Abydos, which itself is lined with mills and docks, including quays where many of the wealthy keep their yachts. Counting the city itself along with the exurbs of Riovigila, Reginas, Abydos and the Xenos

there are five boroughs of Thyatis administered by the prefecture, with Port Hatti being part of Hattias instead. Also found outside the walls are the graveyards and mausoleums of over sixteen centuries of habitation. The rebel army and its undead minions currently occupies these areas.

But the bulk of the city's population and main points of interest are sheltered inside the walls. Its structures range from the marble halls and gilded-roofed palaces of The Estates and Emperor's Hill to the brownstones of recently rebuilt Axetown. In the renovation and rebuilding performed in the aftermath of the great fire of AC 1013, the squalid, rickety tenements were replaced with well-built three to five story brownstone residences on the *insulae* (blocks). Other buildings built in the aftermath of the great fire, also of stone, frequently have small shops fronting the street on the ground floor, which not only provide services to residents, but jobs as well, with apartments on the upper floors. Overcrowding was significantly reduced around the same time. Flagstone-paved forums see debate between the city's fractious factions. Colonnaded porticos line its main avenues, where merchants set up their shops. At night these boulevards are lighted by lamps enchanted with *continual light*. The roadways are paved and by law must be at least 12 feet wide, thus the dark, narrow, mud-drenched twisting alleys of other cities are not found here. All streets are lined with pedestrian sidewalks, sheltered from inclement weather by colonnaded arcades. At the very center of Thyatis is the Heart, the great merchant district where goods from throughout the world are traded. Here grand emporiums throng with traders and their customers. Along with the Imperial Palace, the Curia (Senate House) and Coliseum, which are the structures which come to mind when most people think of Thyatis City, there are numerous other examples of monumental architecture. It is said that seven wonders reside within the walls of this one city.

In addition to the ones mentioned there is the Liberty Pharos, which overlooks Vanya's

Girdle from the northern mouth of the Great Harbor. This is a lighthouse in the form of a gargantuan statue of a woman, robed in the classical style, holding the torch of Thyatian freedom aloft with one hand, with the other held forward as if to ward off enemies. Sheathed in copper and several hundred feet high (if you count its pedestal), the statue was constructed after the reign of Empress Valentia and some say its face uses hers as its model. Another monumental structure is the Great Imperial Library. Though only three stories high, the stories themselves are each 30' in height, the building constructed out of marble. In the interior, tiered balconies line the walls of each floor, giving access to the huge store of books held here. Then there are the Imperial Bakeries, which supply food to the city's needy and the orphanages and poor houses that care for the indigent. These too are grand buildings, not only in architecture but also a monument to Thyatis's generosity. The Imperial Bakeries were built many centuries ago in the early days of the empire, while the poor house was endowed by Emperor Gabrionus V, who also refurbished the orphanage as well. Similar foundations exist in many of the empire's cities, in emulation of its megalopolis. Many of these were also the creation of Emperor Gabrionus V, who believed in good will towards men. And we haven't even discussed the High Temple of Vanya and other religious structures that can be found here, the many colleges and other places of learning, the baths and theaters, the parks and gardens, the clubs, bistros, inns, taverns and other establishments catering to every sort of taste. The latter are centered in the Long Portico that runs between the district of The Heart and Emperor's Hill but can be found almost anywhere in The City. If you can name it, it can probably be found here in this City That Never Sleeps.

In AC 1013 a conflagration swept through Axetown and the Blocks, Thyatis City's poorer sections. This caused widespread hardship at the time but proved to be a long-term boon for the city. Axetown had long been scheduled for renovation, but various

impediments resulted in it being put off time and again and the region became the worst slum in Thyatis. For all the damage it caused at the time, the fire finally forced Thyatis to face the problem of Axetown and renovate it while rebuilding the burned-out portions of the city. Two fifths of Thyatis, the area most in need of it, was rebuilt. The new brownstones built on the *insulae* (blocks) were constructed of solid stone and brick rather than wood, with bistros, taverns, bodegas and other establishments on the ground floor and residences built on upper levels. Much of the land was given over to parks, hospices, hospitals and other public works. Streets were widened and straightened in many cases and lamps lit by magic set up on every block to cut down on crime. A few months later, several sewers in Axetown exploded due to a build up of gasses (some say this was caused by the Shadow Hand's machinations), but the affected area was rebuilt better than before, as a market district surrounding a broad plaza. A new aqueduct was begun (completed in 1015) to bring more water into this area of Thyatis as well. This is still the poor section of town, but it is far less crowded, filthy and run down than it was previously, with the squalid tenements almost entirely absent.

In Vanya's Girdle, within a few miles of the city, are about a dozen small islets, known as the Princess Isles. Lore has it that Empress Valentia herself raised these from the rock of the floor of the girdle. None of the isles are more than a few acres in area. Most of these are pretty, home of estates of some of Thyatis's wealthiest families. The emperor himself has one of these islands for his own use, with a palace used whenever he or his family wants to get away from the city's politics but does not want to go all the way to Carytion. Two of the islets are exceptional, however. One, a relatively barren islet known as the Isle of Pelicans or just simply The Key, is home to a fortified imperial naval and marine facility, which bars the seaward door to Thyatis. The other, known as the Isle of Seahawks, formerly known as Treasure Island, was at times an

emporium for a world-renowned fair, but is now the docking base for the imperial airships whose crew are stationed at the Queen of Cities. It will likely be a future site for repair and construction facilities for such vessels as well. It was here where the Alphatian *skyships* that crashed on Thyatian soil during the Week Without Magic were taken after their impoundment by the empire for study and it may be possible to repair a few and put them into Thyatian service.

The People

The Queen of Cities is a microcosm of the empire, or if you prefer, the empire is The City writ large, as some say Thyatis is the largest city-state in the world. People swarm everywhere in Thyatis City, talking of incomprehensible theological and philosophical matters, in hovels and mansions, streets and squares, marketplaces and crossroads. Though most of the people are native Thyatians, the trading districts swarm with a cosmopolitan crowd, as if the whole world had arranged to meet here. Dwarves with pointed beards and black hair falling to the shoulder; turbaned traders from Nicostenia and Abbashan, shaven, dirty Heldanners wearing an iron chain around their waists as a belt; Traladarans with long, drooping mustaches, dressed all in furs; Ethengars and Alasiyans with outlandish accents; caravan drovers from Athenos and Selenica; and merchants from Minrothad and Ierendi. All races, languages and religions meet and mingle here. Even the current rebellion has done little to slow down commerce—protected by the imperial navy, ships of all nations find their way to the city's magnificent port.

The citizens themselves are a clever and crafty lot, sharp and perhaps even sometimes cynical. Though the wealthy senatorial families can be haughty and snobbish, the common folk of Thyatis City tend to be friendly and egalitarian. Most merchants are organized into guilds, which are regulated by the government through the office of the Civil *Praefect* of Thyatis. Anyone

who's dealt with a government ministry knows how irksome dealing with supercilious bureaucrats can be. The good news is that, thanks to Eusebius's reforms, they are more efficient now than they have been in recent memory and corruption has been tempered. Likewise, due to the charter issued to Thyatis City by Eusebius last year, there are very few slaves in the city, almost all its inhabitants are now free citizens with all the rights thereof, able to participate in civic life.

Not all is wondrous, though. Although there is a renewed sense of civic spirit, the city is not without its poverty and squalor. Thieves and reprobates of all sorts can be found here preying upon the productive but gullible members of society, happy to swindle the unwitting visitor (or native!). The criminals of the Shadow Hand have their base here and an untold number of hidden cabals and conspiracies are afoot at any one time. Intrigue is a way of life to many inhabitants and a vengeful senator can be as fearsome as an angry dragon, if subtler in his schemes than a gout of fiery breath, no less dangerous for that.

Don't Miss

You cannot see all that is worthy in one visit to the city any more than one can see all that should be seen in Glantri in one visit. There is always a new theatrical production opening, some of which are truly works of art, which should not be missed. The city's many monuments; its triumphal arches, statues of famous emperors and heroes, museums housing ancient works of art. All have their virtues. Scholars should not miss the Great Imperial Library or the Imperial Academy. But of note to spellcasters will be the *Collegium Arcanum*, Thyatis's main college for the schooling of wizards. Though small by former Alphatian standards, its quality can be surmised by noting that most of the mages with estates on Sclaras first learned magic here and many now serve in its faculty. In recent years much attention has been given to schools of magic of much more recent foundation, but I believe that a

college's reputation should be based on what it has achieved over time. And by this measure the *Collegium Arcanum* compares favorably with the other such universities on the continent. Arguably not even the Great School of Magic in Glantri can claim so many students who have reached such a high level of skill as the *collegium*, though for sure the quality of the Great School cannot be slighted.

If you are lucky enough to receive an audience with the emperor, the Golden Throne Room (*Chrysotriclinos*) is another sight that will remain with you for the rest of your life. To get to the throne room one passes through a series of marble corridors and chambers, rich with mosaics and cloth of gold, through long lines of palace guards in white uniforms, through great crowds of patricians, prelates, senators and all of this to the music of organs and choirs, escorted by palace functionaries on either side of you. At last you enter an octagonal room, the Golden Throne Room itself. This awe-inspiring chamber's ceiling vaults skyward, roofed over in alabaster cut so delicately that the light of the sun filters through. The floor is all in porphyry, with a cloth of gold carpet leading up to the marble dais. Columns of rich marble soar upwards, capped in capitals that are carved into golden filigree, creating images of religious significance. The walls are done over entirely in mosaics, with gilded tiles surrounding images of the empire's greatest leaders and patron Immortals. The throne itself is of gold, with deep crimson upholstery beyond a veil of purple. A pair of golden lions flanks it and golden griffons and beside the lions and griffons are pillars in the shape of golden trees, with golden branches and leaves, upon which sit enameled golden birds. When the petitioner approaches, the lions can be made to roar and thrash their tails, the birds sing forth, the griffons whistle. As the petitioner bows to the emperor, the throne rises and when the envoy looks up again, he is likely to see the emperor apparently clad in new garments. All this might seem like magic, but it is an example of Thyatian engineering—

fine clockworks and steam power everything.

Do Miss

Unless you want to volunteer for service in the Thyatian military forces, I would suggest you avoid the rebel army encamped outside the walls. Enter Thyatis City instead by sea, or through River Guard Town (which has so far been left undisturbed by the rebel forces). Plowing through large numbers of undead and minions of dark Immortals might be some people's idea of vacation, but even the bravest should think twice before venturing against such a host.

Also dangerous are the catacombs under the city itself, a teaming warren of tunnels, some connected to the sewers and others to half-forgotten dungeons and crypts. These twisting passages and caverns are seemingly endless and some say they pass all the way through to the Hollow World. If you decide to ignore my warning, be sure to pack your best weapons and bring plenty of provisions; many have become lost in the maze-like catacombs and if you run short of supplies eating the creatures you find there is not recommended.

TWAEELAR (Merrow Empire)

Location: Seabed around the Thanegioth Archipelago. OW

Area: Approx. 250,000 sq. mi. (647,500 sq. km.).

Population: 1,000,000 (including 200,000 in the capital of Twaeloporis). Roughly 50% merrow, 15% aquatic ogre, 10% triton, 10% locathah, 10% sahuagin, 5% aquatic elves.

Language: Merrow (Twaelar dialect).

Coinage: *Black pearl* (5 gp), *pearl* (gp), *seed pearl* (sp), *coral* (cp). Merrow coins consist of mother-of-pearl into which seed pearls are embedded; none for the *coral*, one for the *seed pearl*, five for a *pearl* coin and five black seed pearls for the *black pearl*.

Taxes: 20% income tax collected biannually, 5% sales tax on all goods except

food, plus in-kind exactions and corvée labor on behalf of the empire.

Government Type: Monarchy advised by a council of priests.

Industries: Fishing, kelp-raising, pearl-harvesting.

Important Figures: Diviloplop (Emperor, merrow, male, Pr16 of Protius), Igilbolb (Empress, merrow, female, T15), Goblopob (High Priest of Protius, merrow, male, Pr18 of Protius).

Flora and Fauna: Kelp forests, coral, whales, dolphins, seahorses, hippocampi, narwhals, giant leeches, electric eels, lacedons, dragonfish, dragon turtles, giant lampreys, jellyfish (man o' war), water naga, piranhas, giant squid, ixitxachitl, giant sharks, marids, urchins, school fish, giant clams, nereids, eyes of the deep, krakens, giant octopi, aquatic jellies, giant sea snakes, giant lobsters, scraggs, sirines, giant sea spiders, kelpies, aquatic dinosaurs and in hidden areas, kopru.

Description by Favonius Viator.

[We are pleased that imperial officials have finally released this information for publication. We requested access to reports on the Twaelar Merrow Empire last year, but except for Favonius's heavily censored account of his imprisonment, we were refused. We are glad we can now bring this information to our readers. Ed.]

The Twaelar Merrow Empire consists of the nation of the merrow and members of other aquatic races that are subject to it as a result of the efforts of the Twaelar to expand and subdue their enemies and potential enemies.

The Land

The Twaelar don't rule land, they rule the space below the ocean surface. This is a span of territory roughly twice the size of Darokin around the Thanegioth Archipelago. Borders are rather indistinct and there seem to be some zones that the Twaelar don't completely control within this area (mainly mysterious submarine canyons, which are

feared and the subject of superstitions, supposedly some old master race is said to lurk therein). But they also have some enclaves beyond their core areas as well, colonies if you will. The seas here are relatively warm and because of the Thanegioth Shelf are not exceptionally deep.

The People

The Twaelar merrow dominate the merrow empire. These are merrow akin to most others, but more militant, aggressive and organized than those you might be familiar with. They have succeeded in either wiping out or subjugating and absorbing the other aquatic races of the area, creating a powerful empire. The sahuagin are supposedly restive and form a despised underclass. They were supposedly the merrow's greatest rivals for power in the area until they were crushed in a series of major and bloody wars. The aquatic ogres form a menial caste and serve as shock troops for the merrow empire. They seem to be almost blindly and fanatically loyal to their merrow leaders. The rest of the races are second-class citizens within the empire, denied positions of authority and rulership but otherwise able to pursue most careers. This is, however, not so much a race-conscious attitude but rather the relationship between a conqueror and a defeated population. Only the aquatic ogres (which have the status of, as the Hattians might put it, *Untermenschen* within the empire, menials and expendable soldiers) and the sahuagin (who are considered potentially dangerous and threatening) are discriminated against. The others are excluded from power not because of their race, but simply because they are the vanquished and the merrow are the victors and naturally rule over those they defeated. Oddly, however, none of the aquatic ogres are officially classed as slaves, but some of the members of the other aquatic races are enslaved. Approximately a third of each, with some variation—a little less than half of the sahuagin are enslaved, but less than a fifth of the aquatic elves are slaves.

The merrow of the empire are highly religious and the priest caste devoted to Protius is very influential. Indeed, it would almost be proper to characterize the empire as a theocratic state. These priests gained power, supposedly, during the days when the Twaelar were subjugated to the mysterious previous rulers of the area, as a quasi liberation movement. They then led the Twaelar in the wars against the other aquatic races, cementing their authority over the merrow themselves.

The Twaelar warrior caste forms the second-most respected rung of society (war-wizards included), due to the support they provide to the maintenance of the empire and its authority over the subject races. Note that the aquatic ogre shock troops, which are often used in war, while commanded by the Twaelar warrior caste, are not considered part of it. How the Twaelar keep the aquatic ogres so blindly loyal to them while treating them as servile minions is something that I was not able to discover. Some of the guards who kept me imprisoned were aquatic ogres, but I could never even get them to speak to me without permission from their merrow overseers.

I have some familiarity with the greatest city and capital of the Twaelar, Twaeloporis, since this is where I was kept during my imprisonment. It is a large city in size, covering as much area as the great city of Thyatis. The buildings are farther apart, though, to make it easier to swim through. Though many of these buildings (rock formations with chambers carved into them) are a couple dozen stories high, a comparatively small proportion of each consist of rooms, since carving out too much of the stone would weaken the structure and cause it to collapse. Thus, though it covers a wide area, I estimate its actual population is around 200,000. Still a larger population than in virtually any surface city. Around two thirds of its inhabitants, or perhaps even more, are merrow, as this is the center of their culture. Most of the rest of those who live here are their aquatic ogre servants, with some aquatic elves as well (perhaps 1% of the

population). Few, if any, sahuagin are permitted to live in Twaeloporis.

Their capital is a majestic, eerily beautiful but foreboding place, with schools of shimmering fish swimming between the spires that form the city's buildings. There is a huge palace-temple in the center of the city, which is seemingly carved out of multicolored coral, akin to the palace of Ierendi but several times larger. This palace is perched atop an ocean mesa, looming over the rest of the city, except for some of the taller spires. A sunken vessel damaged its upper stories, much to the anger of the Twaelar, who launched their war against all the surface peoples over this. Recent evidence may be that sahuagin saboteurs, rebels against the Twaelar, were responsible for this, in the hope of provoking just such a war that might weaken the Twaelar Empire and thus its grip on subject races (such as the insurrectionist sahuagin).

Twaeloporis is a heavily militarized city, with heavily-armed troops, aquatic cavalry and regiments of aquatic ogre shock troops. It would be difficult to invade and conquer, especially by a surface (air-breathing) power. Many of these troops are used to keep the rest of their empire under control, but additional forces have been mobilized for the war against the surface races. The Twaelar have some highly innovative artisans and enchanters, who are said to be working on developing weapons to permit them to expand their operations to the surface lands themselves.

There are also several dozen major temples in Twaeloporis, heavily patronized by the merrow, who seem to conduct religious ceremonies daily. The other races of the Twaelar Dominate worship their own Immortals, but all are required to give at least some veneration to Protius and obeisance to the Twaelar's version of His faith.

The Twaelar can be cruel and don't mind using torture on captives or corporal punishment on their subordinates. They have developed several ingenious methods and could possibly have taught the

Arogansans a trick or two. Though sometimes they hit them with a rod to get their attention, they never need to inflict punishment on the aquatic ogres to get their obedience. This is just another mystery I was unable to solve during my captivity.

History

I have learned little of Twaelar history. They seem to have had a small nation, centuries ago, which was dominated by some other race that was said to have ruled over the Thanegioth region, an aquatic race that dominated both the sea peoples and the air-breathing people. This race was defeated or overthrown somehow. Following this, the merrow re-established an independent kingdom, but conflicted with their neighbors. Out of these wars, the merrow managed to subdue their rivals to create the Twaelar Merrow Empire, which has dominated the undersea region in this area of the Sea of Dread for about a century. I admit this is very sketchy, but it is all I was able to pick up during my captivity.

VESTLAND (*Kingdom of*)

Location: Southeast of Heldann, east of Ethengar, north of Soderfjord and west of Ostland. OW

Area: 21,065 sq. mi. (54,558 sq. km.).

Population: 157,000, including the capital city of Norrvik (pop. 16,000). Dwarves make up about 5% of the population. Population figures are down due to wars with goblinoids over the past few years.

Languages: Heldannic.

Coinage: *Schilder* (5 gp), *guldan* (gp), *bellar* (ep), *floren* (sp), *oren* (cp).

Taxes: None. Revenue is raised from tolls to use roads and bridges. The king is planning on installing some form of income tax in the next couple of years.

Government Type: Monarchy, with a strong feudal aristocracy, member of the Western Defense League. There is also a significant middle class.

Industries: Agriculture (potatoes, barley and beets), logging, fur trading, crafts (with an increasing dwarven presence), trade.

Important Figures: Harald Gudmundson (King, human, male, F13).

Flora and Fauna: The deep forests harbor many normal animals—deer, boars, elk, bears and wolves. The western hills are thinly populated with trolls and other assorted goblinoids. The lowlands are home to many sorts of herd animals such as sheep, horses, cattle and goats.

Further Reading: GAZ7 *The Northern Reaches*, previous almanacs.

Description by Ryuk-uk Tshaa.

The Kingdom of Vestland is made up of numerous dominions, each owing fealty to the current high king. Though mostly begun as clan holdings—lands and settlements belonging to a single large family—many of these dominions have taken to styling themselves after foreign nobility. Thus, it is that, within the past few decades, baronies, counties and duchies have sprung up around the countryside. Such is the case with the duchy of Rhoona.

The Land

The Duchy of Rhoona is in the southwestern portion of Vestland, along the border with Rockhome, at a fork in the Vestfjord River. The presence of the Vestfjord provides irrigation for the normally infertile foothills around the Makkres mountains. As a result, the lands surrounding Rhoona consist of lush forests and softly rolling hills. The only major settlement of note in the duchy is the town of Rhoona itself, which houses almost 5,000 souls.

The People

Rhoona is a bustling port town located in a sheltered part of the Vestfjord. It is one of the most important trade towns in Vestland, providing the most direct access to Rockhome and parts west as well as having

ready access to the capital city of Norrvik and the further sea.

All of this has contributed to the diverse population found in Rhoona. Most of the inhabitants are of the same Heldannic stock as is found in the rest of the northlands. There is a substantial minority of dwarves in Rhoona, as well as a small proportion of Ethengar immigrants. The Ethengars initially moved to Rhoona about two decades ago, vanguard of a planned invasion of Vestland. Though that plot was foiled, many of the immigrants remained in Rhoona, settling into the town and bringing with them their fabulous horses and horse raising abilities.

Recent History

Duke Stephen Rhoona, fifth generation ruler of the dominion, was slain in 1014 by raiding goblinoids. A staunch supporter of King Harald Gudmundson, his reign was nevertheless plagued by mishaps. He is succeeded by his eldest son, Duke Eric Rhoona, named for the founder of the family realm.

Don't Miss

The ducal palace, finally completed after numerous delays and mishaps, is a truly wondrous sight to behold. Constructed by dwarven workers, it is located at the southern edge of the town of Rhoona. Eight towers and a stone wall surround the palace proper. The courtyard inside is dominated by a massive pool, fed by eight spuming fountains. At a less happy time in Rhoona, these fountains spouted beer, but now they are fed by the crystal waters of the Vestfjord. Inside the palace itself live the duke, his family and retainers. It is said that Duke Stephen Rhoona had the dwarves construct several deadly traps inside to discourage thieves, but I wouldn't know the truth of that.

VYALIA (County of)

Location: Southeastern corner of the continent of Brun, along the eastern border

of Karameikos and the Kerenda River, north of Machetos and south of the Altan Tepes Mountains. OW

Area: 2,748 sq. mi. (7,115 sq. km.).

Population: 25,000 (60% human, 40% elven, some hin) including the towns of Foreston (pop. 5,000) and Greenheight (pop. 1,000).

Languages: Thyatian (Thyatian dialect), Elvish (Vyalia dialect).

Coinage: Thyatian Standard: *emperor* (pp), *lucin* (gp), *asterius* (sp), *denarius* (cp).

Taxes: 25% income tax collected quarterly on the aristocracy, nobility and wealthy; 20% income tax collected quarterly on everyone else (Va. 1, Ya. 1, Fy. 3 and Ei. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. Expensive and magical items are also taxed 25% of their worth. 10% imperial *commercia* sales tax on all goods except food, clothing and fixed assets; levied on imports, rebated on exports. Tax on slave owning equal to 50% of the slave's value annually. Property tax levied based on quality of land, roughly 6% of its value annually.

Government Type: Dominion, member of the Thyatian Empire.

Industries: Light agriculture, crafts (especially woodworking, carving), fishing, magic, military, shipbuilding, textiles

Important Figures: Yldysyl Greenheight (Count, elf, male, F13/M12), Larandia Lymianoporus (Lady, Head of the Order of Foresters, human, female, F10/M12), Alexiana Hierydyl (Loremistress, elf, female, M18/Pr16 of Ilsundal), Formosos Treeshield (Warden Marshal, elf, male, F10/M10).

Flora and Fauna: The majority of Vyalia's territory consists of rolling hills, but the southern, settled portion is based in the forested valley around the Kerenda River. These consist mainly of immense, ancient redwood groves, but also of cedar, mahogany and teak carefully cultivated for woodworking use and peach, pear, orange and cherry fruit trees in cultivated orchards. The woods are filled with many animal species, both game and predators; wolves,

boars, deer, elk and other forest creatures roam the area. Pegasi, griffons, rocs, ruby, gold and white dragons as well as other aerial creatures are used as mounts occasionally.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, DDA1 *Arena of Thyatis*, DDA2 *Legions of Thyatis*, previous almanacs.

Description by Vivianna Romanones.

This county was enlarged by the emperor last year and is known for its elven population. With the recent arrival of some Alfheim refugees (some early last year came to work on the reforestation project and more arrived when they fled Wendar), Vyalia's population is now 40% elven. Many Vyalia elves live across the ostensible border, within the Dymrak Forest of Karameikos. Few Vyalia elves obey the rulings of their king, however, looking instead to their Clan Leader, Yldysyl Greenheight, the Count of Vyalia, for guidance. It originally became a county in the early 3rd century AC, when the Vyalia elves agreed to teach the Thyatians their arts and sponsor the Order of the Foresters.

The Land

The most densely settled portion of Vyalia consists of ancient and dense old growth forests, part of the Dymrak Forest. Nestled alongside the glittering Kerenda River, this area preserves the untamed beauty of the wilderness. Tall trees loom overhead, spreading a canopy of branches and leaves sheltering the scattered communities of elves, humans and hin who live here. Though one may hunt here (for food, not sport), tree-cutting is forbidden except by permission. Most wood gathered for fuel is deadwood or culled from dying trees.

The northern portion of the county and the largest portion, are the recently-added foothills of the Altan Tepes Mountains, granted to Vyalia in Eusebius's restructuring of the empire last year. These are sparsely inhabited, though the southernmost region (along the Kerenda River and adjacent to the area already settled) is the site of the Vyalian

reforestation project. Here elves and elf-friends, can be found planting seedlings and using *plant growth* and other magics to extend the Dymrak Forest northwards. This effort will no doubt take several years to complete, but those involved are patient.

North of this area lay the foothills proper. For the moment no plans have been adopted for this region; since they lack a ready water source such as the Kerenda River, it is considered less practical to grow forests here, at least for now. Many of the county's hin are considering making this area home, though. Open immigration is not considered a viable option for colonizing this area, however, since the inhabitants of Vyalia are very selective about who they think should live here (though they welcome many sorts of visitors) and the kind of activities they should pursue, which is roughly speaking the elven lifestyle.

The People

The inhabitants of Vyalia are almost exclusively elves and elf-friends. The area is named after the elves that live here, those of the Vyalia branch of the elven family tree. Though much of the lands they reside in lay across the official border with Karameikos, the Vyalia don't pay much attention to this boundary and frequently cross it back and forth. In case of disputes, those living in Karameikos are more likely to come to the elven court of Yldysyl Greenheight for redress than to seek out the authorities of the King of Karameikos. The Vyalians have long been friends and vassals of the empire and see no need to change this now because of some recent, fleeting change in control of Traladara.

The Vyalia are divided into several clans. These include the Blueleaf, Diamarak, Etheredyl, Greenheight, Hierydyl and Treeshield. The Blueleaf clan is known for its artisans—jewelers, painters, sculptors and the like. The Diamaraks prefer to reside in the deep forests and wilderness of Vyalia and serve as its protectors. They are ever vigilant against poachers and others who would despoil their woodlands. They are

experts in the use of botanical magics and are at the forefront of the reforestation efforts. Many of the Diamaraks are adventurers and others tutor the foresters. The Etheredyls are a philosophic and mystic-minded clan, which largely keeps to itself and avoids contact with outsiders. The Greenheights are more outgoing and gregarious. They are even hospitable to dwarves. It is they who built the town of Greenheight and who first agreed to sponsor the foresters. They also perform most of the few administrative functions that are required and liaison with the imperial government in Thyatis City. The Hierydyls are the scholars of the Vyalia, knowledgeable in elven lore and magic. Many travel abroad, conducting their studies and are among the more likely Vyalians to be encountered by travelers. One seeking the knowledge of a sage should go to the Hierydyls. The Treeshields are a clan of warriors. Many serve in the Thyatian military, usually in elite units.

Though Vyalia is considered the elven county, it should not be forgotten that most of its inhabitants are actually humans and that most Thyatian elves do not happen to live here. The human inhabitants of Vyalia are Thyatians who settled here, being attracted to elven ways and desirous of living in harmony with nature. If anything, they are even more fanatical in defending the wilderness than the elves are. Many of them live in the town of Foreston, but others live as the elves do, or as mountain men in the woods themselves or, increasingly, in the northern hills. They sell their wares in town but are careful to avoid despoiling the natural order. One will find few indiscriminate trappers and hunters in their number and those few usually do not last long—hunted and killed for their crimes by the other citizens of Vyalia, elf and non-elf alike.

Foreston is also home to a small community of hin, who find it more congenial here than elsewhere in Thyatis; the citizens of Vyalia do not tend to treat them as children. More might move in to explore and settle the dales and hillocks of northern

Vyalia, but they form less than 10% of the county's population.

In greater numbers are the Alfheim elves. Though not as many Alfheim refugees settled here as moved to Karameikos or Wendar and then, following the increasing strife there, on to other nations. In fact, most of the Alfheim elves that settled here did so after being expelled from Wendar, but still fewer moved here than went to other areas. Those that did come here came in no small part because the reforestation project offered them the possibility of a positive project to undertake, more welcome after the disappointments of their previous travels and the failure of the crusade to Denagoth.

Don't Miss

Foreston is a beautiful community blending elven and human architecture in a way not seen even in Wendar (where the two races tend to form distinct communities instead of intermingling). Greenheight is the largest elven settlement in Vyalia and home to some of their most breathtaking artistry, homes nestled in the branches of grand redwoods, statuary of the Blueleaf clan forming dioramas of wondrous nature scenes and other visions which must be seen to be believed.

But the most spectacular sight is one most of you will never see—the ceremony of adoption, where a trainee becomes a forester. The candidate is taken by his sponsors to their *Tree of Life*, deep in the forest, far off the beaten path. There the trainee is formally accepted into the clan as one of their own and visited by the Arm of Ilsundal, filling her with vitality. It is one of the most touching ceremonies on all Mystara, a living demonstration of the kinship of races. Only clan members and candidates can attend, however, so as not to expose the location of the *Tree of Life* to outsiders.

Do Miss

Or, rather, what to avoid doing when traveling here. Do not come as a poacher, logger, miner, or trapper. Don't do anything the residents would consider a desecration of the wilderness. Doing that invites a death sentence. Otherwise, this is one of the more pleasant areas of Mystara, with few rampaging beasts, kind and honest inhabitants, a true sanctuary. Don't cause trouble and you'll be welcomed here.

WENDAR (*Elven Kingdom of*)

Location: North of Glantri and Ethengar, south of Denagoth and west of the Heldannic Territories. OW

Area: 78,170 sq. mi. (202,460 sq. km.).

Population: 370,000, roughly 45% humans and 55% elves.

Languages: Elvish (Genalleth dialect), Heldannic.

Coinage: *Di* (gp), *on* (sp), *teci* (cp).

Taxes: 20% income tax, collected yearly.

Government Type: Monarchy.

Industries: Logging, agriculture (grows barely enough for its own use).

Important Figures: Bensarian of Kevar (Prince-Regent, human, male, M9).

Flora and Fauna: The region boasts tall ancient sequoias and pines, along with other evergreen trees that make the logging industry most profitable. Throughout the whole region the terrain is rocky and difficult to cultivate, hence only the most resistant and healthiest plants and crops can grow here. Animals commonly encountered in Wendar are moose, elks, bears, wolves (in forests), horses, boars, snakes (in open fields and hills) and even mountain lions. The land is far from being tamed and the monstrous species abound, especially near the Mengul Mountains and the Wendarian Range, including snow apes, white apes, giant bats, dragons (white and green), giant ferrets, sasquatches and unicorns. Tribes of ogres and trolls have been reported living in the Mengul Mountains, while actaeons, centaurs,

dryads, fairies, fairy folk, gremlins, treants and wooddrakes can be encountered in the forests.

Further Reading: X11 *Saga of the Shadow Lord*, previous almanacs.

Description by Christopher Dove.

Wendar, a land where Mother Nature dances cheek to cheek with Father Time and the Fairy Folk. Wendar, a land of mysteries to discover and monsters to slay. So similar to a frontier land, yet so overflowed with ancient traditions and customs that are all but barbaric. It is a nation of proud men and stout elves, of sages and fearless rangers, of monster hunters and heroes. It is a country not so different from the so-called civilized ones. Yet the traveler that arrives here for the first time can almost breathe the feeling of bravery and of steadfastness that fills the heart of the Wendarians.

The Land

Nestled among two plateaus and two mountain ranges, Wendar—or Genalleth, as the elven race calls it—is a secluded and ancient land that still holds many secrets and marvels even for its inhabitants. Thick evergreen forests blanket more than half of this region, their beauty and stateliness mirroring the Canolbarth Forest in its glory days. There are four major reserves—this is the best translation of the term the elves use—in Wendar, all closely guarded and tended by Genalleth elves.

The first and most important one, the Korrigan Forest, lies in the western part of the nation, touching Wendar City and Sylvaire, the two most thriving Wendarian cities. It is renowned for the beauty of its sequoias and for the many shrines sacred to the Korrigans, the Nine Elven Protectors that watch upon Genalleth. The legend says that they drew their name from the mythical (and believed extinct) korrigan, a woodland animal that once lived here.

The Forest of Bounty, renamed Forest of the Curse after the events of AC 1013 and 1014, lies in the southwestern corner of the

nation and is currently inhabited by Alfheim refugees. Mighty and sturdy oaks grow here, protected by a small group of treants simply called The Elders. Woodgate and Oakwall, the other two large towns, lie at the easternmost border of this forest and use its wood to boost their logging industry.

Right in the center of the Genalleth Valley we find the Enchanted Forest, a mysterious patch of trees that the elves hold as sacred. According to the legends, here live the fairies with their friends, the centaurs and actaeons and those who dare trespass against Nature in this place are bound to be abducted by actaeons and serve the fairies for the rest of their lives. Tales of missing wanderers abound in this region.

The last important reserve lies at the northwestern border and is referred to as the Dark Woods of Baamor. The Wendarians tell frightening tales about this area, whose trees are strangely darker and more twisted than the common trees of the region and whose fauna is made up of deformed and evil parodies of the common woodland animals. The elven sages blame all this to a mysterious being (or race, this is not really defined) called Baamor, who tried to poison the entire continent in the ancient days to appease the Dark Immortals. However, the Korrigans rebelled against Baamor and ultimately defeated him/them, imprisoning the evil Baamor inside one of the blighted trees of this forest. So, in order to avoid freeing him/them, it is strictly prohibited to cut down any tree in this region. In fact, few people venture there, for it is said that Baamor tries to possess anyone who walks into the forest and use them to achieve freedom.

The rest of the region consists of rolling rocky hills to the east and to the south, where the few herders raise their cattle (horses and sheep mostly), protecting them from predators. In the central plains and moors the humans raise their crops, fighting against the elements. Wendar is indeed a harsh land and only the fittest can survive here. The valleys and plains are usually safe and free of monsters, but the nearer one gets

to the mountain ranges, the more the trip becomes dangerous.

The Wendarian Range to the south and the Mengul Mountains to the north are renowned for their snowcapped peaks and for the fierceness of their inhabitants. The Wendarian Range, whose peaks average 11,000 feet in height, is home to many tribes of yeti, sasquatches and even a few white dragons and the few passes known are so unreliable that nobody ever tries to enter Wendar from the northern Glantrian region. The only two southern passes maintained and guarded actively by the Wendarians are the Elven Pass to the southeast, which leads directly to Oakwall and the Kevar Pass to the southwest, from which the Royal Way leads to the capital winding through the Korrigan Forest. There is a third pass leading northwards through the Mengul Mountains and up to Denagoth, but it has not been used since the last war with Essuria, about 80 years ago. Gylharen Keep has been built near the border with Denagoth under the supervision of King Gylharen and the standing garrison has the sole purpose of stopping (or slowing) any possible invasion attempt from that land. However, since Denagoth has not given any significant trouble in the last decades, the soldiers stationed here have taken on the duty to harass and annihilate any humanoid band trying to cross the border and cause mayhem in Wendar.

The People

The Wendarians are no weak folk whatsoever. The climate, the wild land and the wilder monsters living here have toughened them, so that even the elves seem somewhat fiercer and braver than their Alfheim cousins. The humans, all descended from the Antalian stock, are used to the cold and humid weather so common here—it snows and rains seven months a year—and the elves, who have been dwelling here for a longer time, are no less tough than their human countrymen. But even though the Wendarians could seem at first a united and

peaceful folk, there are many differences and problems that still divide this people.

Just an example: the name of the country is different for each race. The elves call it Genalleth after a mighty figure of their obscure past, while it is Wendar for the humans, in honor of the man who created the Wendarian League at the beginning of the millennium. Even the label “elven” near the word “kingdom” in the entry for Wendar in every Thyatian almanac would be considered questionable by the majority of the humans living here; but there’s more. Every major town has its name translated into both Heldannic and Elvish [*the ones written on the map given in the almanac for AC 1010 are the human terms. Ed.*] and the proclamations and laws must equally be issued and written in these two languages. Also, every town with a mixed population has two *bürgermeisters*, one for each race and they both must cooperate and agree before issuing anything, from a simple announcement to a legal document. The Wendarian militia is composed 50% of elves and 50% of humans and each division is either made up of humans or of elves only. It seems that in the ancient days things didn’t go this way, but in the last decades many small frictions have arisen and the wizard-king deemed it right to reshape the political and military system this way to avoid bigger problems.

As for the Alfheim refugees, they’re not happy these days. The first and foremost concern they have is of course the fate of their beloved Canolbarth Forest and from my observations in Wendar I’ve noticed they’ve not yet given up the hope to once again walk under the sturdy trees of Alfheim. Now, eight years after what they call The Expulsion from Alfheim, the clanmasters are readier than ever to reclaim their homeland and they seem sure that their comeback is near at hand. Anyway, as long as they remain in Wendar, they have to face another issue, that is the open feeling of hostility and sometimes xenophobia the humans show towards them. The events of AC 1014 and 1015 [*see Recent History section below. Ed.*] have caused an uproar of the human population

of Wendar against the Alfheimers and the elves have not reacted very wisely. The so-called Alfheim Avengers have indeed undertaken retaliatory acts against some minor provocations by the humans and now the situation is escalating in a very unpredictable way. I fear that if King Gylharen is not able to contain these acts of violence, we will soon have another nation in turmoil after the cases of the Heldannic Territories, Ylaruam and Ethengar [*this report doesn’t factor in the rumor that King Gylharen is reportedly dead. Ed.*]. I wonder if mental disease has not spread amongst the people of the Old World to cause so much unrest in this brief lapse of time...

Recent History

The past three years have been troubled ones for the Wendarians. First of all, a plague originated by the magical healing fruits found in AC 1013 in the Forest of the Bounty (the Alfheimers’ territory) killed over 40,000 humans during AC 1014 and only the intervention of King Gylharen with the use of the *Elvenstar* has prevented the disease from claiming more souls. However, this plague caused the humans to loathe and mistrust the Alfheimers, who were held responsible for not testing—or even for creating—the malign fruits on purpose [*because they only killed humans, merely draining the elves of their strengths for a while. Ed.*]. The situation degenerated in a matter of months, despite the king’s attempts at lowering the tension and this caused a few minor skirmishes between Alfheim Avengers and human purists, with casualties on both sides. King Gylharen was forced to issue a decree confining the Alfheimers in the southern part of their forest and repeatedly suggested to their clanmasters either to stop the Alfheim Avengers’ activity or to relocate to another country.

Since the situation was becoming too dangerous in Wendar, some of the Alfheim clans decided to find another land to live in and they sent explorers up to Denagoth, where, according to historical evidence, another clan of elves had lived.

Unfortunately, the returning explorers reported of the extermination of that clan by the minions of the Shadow Lord, a mysterious being that is said to live in a fortress called Drax Tallen, where now the remaining Geffronell elves (this is the name of the clan) were held prisoner along with some members of the exploratory party. The clanmasters of the Grunalf and Long Runner clans thus decided to go on a crusade to reclaim the lost Forest of Geffron and to avenge (and possibly rescue) their brethren. The elven army made up of representatives of these two clans and some others (including Genalleth elves) marched towards Denagoth to battle against the Shadow Army in AC 1015.

[We still lack actual reports about Wendar's current state. However, word has reached our almanac that the Alfheim elves living there have all been dislodged by the current Wendarian government and forced to leave the country. Also, rumors tell that the former Wizard King Gylharen is now dead, killed by a coup staged by Beasthunter of clan Long Runner (now in hiding) and that the sage Bensarian of Kevar now rules in his place, until elves and humans find a better accommodation. As for the fate of the elven crusade in Denagoth, according to Professor Dove's accounts, the elves have suffered a total defeat at the hands of the Shadow Army and have been totally vanquished. Our correspondent from Denagoth is currently under the merciful protection of the Most High Priest of Idris. Ed.]

Don't Miss

All the reserves are worth paying a visit, with the obvious exception of the Dark Woods of Baamor. In particular, the Enchanted Forest is the place to go if you want to relax and receive "inspiration." But beware: only those who don't trespass against the laws of Mother Nature will be allowed to see the realm of the fairy folk. However, even if you don't meet the fairies face to face, you will remain enthralled by the beauty of the plants, the purity of the air and the gentleness of the landscape. To many Alfheimers this place seems the perfect copy of what they called the Dreamlands back in Alfheim and many like

to visit it two or three times a year to forget their fears, attaining peace of mind and soul.

And talking about legends and mysterious places, I've heard of a shrine called Shadowmere that lies somewhere south of Wendar, near the mountains. According to the elven sages, this wood is an ancient sanctuary sacred to the very father of all the dragons! Could you have ever imagined: the dragon's worship something other than themselves! However, nobody has ever found it—or rather, never found it and lived to report this discovery, according to the elves. Rumors hold it to be guarded by the spirits of dead dragons and by a clan of elves that has sworn fealty to this Great Old Dragon instead of the normal elven Immortals. I've always thought the elves have no rival to spin tall tales... besides him, of course.

Also, in the western part of Wendar, near the small hamlet of Kevar, lives a wise old sage known as Bensarian, respected by both elves and humans *[if the rumors about Wendar's current political state are true, then Bensarian is the new leader of the country and may likely be found in Wendar City, the capital of the nation. Ed.]*. I had the pleasure to have a nice and scholarly talk with him and I have to say that all the rumors about his great knowledge and quickness of mind are well earned. He looks like an old wizened man in his eighties, but there are slight physical traits that reveal a bit of elven blood in his veins (he is probably one of the half-elves hiding in the forests of Wendar). He is undoubtedly the greatest living expert about the history and the races of Wendar and I suspect from the conversation we had that he's well-versed in the history of the region known as Denagoth, too. Strangely enough however, he seemed a lot less talkative about this topic. However, Bensarian of Kevar is a trustworthy and friendly sage and I advise any of the readers who have problems and travel through Wendar to pay him a visit.

The last important feature of Wendar is the Korrigan Forest, the biggest forested area of the country. It is dotted with shrines dedicated to the Nine Elves, the Korrigans, the Immortals who according to legend

saved not only the Genalleth Valley, but also the whole of Norwold from the Great Rain of Fire. According to the Alfheimers, this forest resembles Canolbarth in its glory days and its inhabitants are friendly and helpful towards all the goodhearted travelers that stop in their small communities. There is a wonderful holy festival that is performed once a year in this part of the country and that all the worshippers of the Korrigans must attend at least once every fifty years: *Adàn Dainyàs* [*The Land Reborn. Ed.*]. This celebration usually takes place around the first two weeks of Fyrmont, when the temperatures and the climatic conditions are the most pleasant in these lands. The sacred festival begins at noon of the first day of the week and ends at dusk of the 9th day, going on unbroken for the whole time. Each day at noon the holy keeper of one of the Nine Sacred Shrines “lights up” the shrine dedicated to one of the Korrigans, using some herbs and minerals that provoke an alchemical reaction that makes the whole area glitter. Each of the nine shrines has a different color, mirroring those of the rainbow plus pink and gray and the hue slowly extends to the forest around the shrine during the following days. At the end of the ceremony the forest is divided into nine zones of different colors and it is said that each one color is somehow magical and related to spells that can be invoked by the followers of the Korrigans during the last day. Aside from this mystical ceremony, all the elves in the forest celebrate the festival with dances, songs and tales about the goodness and bravery of the Korrigans, who saved the Genalleth Valley from various perils and were finally invited to join the Immortals in the upper skies.

Do Miss

If the demons had a place to call home on this planet, it would surely be the Dark Woods of Baamor. This forest—I’ve only seen it from a hill far enough to be considered safe by the elves—is literally pulsing with negative energy. I’ve looked at it especially at night and what has impressed me most is the faint greenish haze that

envelops all the trees like a foul cape. It’s not just the bright green of the evergreen forest so common in this land, but it’s a more sick and disgusting color, like that of the mould on a bad-preserved cheese. I am neither an emotional nor a superstitious person, but I can assure you, dear reader, that even looking at these woods from over a mile’s distance made me shiver. This forest is alive with an evil far older than the oldest dragon living on this planet, but I am sure that if the Genalleth elves will watch over it, nothing will come out of the Baamor Woods to reclaim its lost heritage.

Another obvious place to avoid—if you’re not interested in testing personally what’s in the afterlife, that is—is Geron Pass and in general the whole Mengul Range. This part of the country is literally infested with goblinoids and feral beasts like mountain lions and wolves and dragon-like shadows have been reported much more frequently near the highest peaks. Suffice to say that the pass leads to Denagoth and nobody wise enough would ever go there without an army as a personal escort.

YLARUAM (Emirates of)

Location: North of Thyatis, west of Rockhome and Darokin, south of Soderfjord. OW

Area: 54,180 sq. mi. (140,325 sq. km.).

Population: 208,000 (recent losses due to civil wars within the emirates).

Languages: Ylari (also known as Alasiyan).

Coinage: *Dinar* (gp), *dirham* (sp), *fal* (cp).

Taxes: 10% sales tax. Also, a monthly head tax according to social rank (peasants: 1 cp, townsfolk and nomads: 1 sp, merchants: 1 gp, nobles: 10 gp). Heretics (those who refuse to follow the edicts of the Eternal Truth) pay double the monthly head tax. Foreigners used to pay the same rate as heretics, but they have recently been outlawed from residing within the emirates.

Government Type: Bureaucracy with administrative departments called *voucheris*

(such as the *Vouchery* of Water Resources), under the supervision of the sultan and his grand vizier.

Industries: Textiles, horse-breeding, mining, marble-quarrying, glassmaking and the cultivation of dates.

Important Figures: Hassam “the True” al-Kalim (Sultan, human, male, F9), Khalid-al-Sharif “the Tale Teller” (Grand Vizier, human, male F4/Pr14 of Protius).

Flora and Fauna: Horses, camels and cattle are by far the most common animals found, followed by sheep and goats. In the wilderness of the desert, djinn, chimerae, dragons, undead, giant lizards, sphinxes and manscorpions are all rumored to be present. Demons recently released into the Prime Plane near the Emirate of Nithia are also a rare sight.

Further Reading: GAZ2 *The Emirates of Ylaruam*, previous almanacs.

Description by Omar-ibn-Chukri.

The Emirates of Ylaruam might more properly be called the Emirates of Abbashan, as that is where the new Sultan Hassam al-Kalim and his supporters in the Kin faction have moved the capital. It is from this remote oasis town that the sultan coordinates his efforts to bring the desert peoples under his control.

The Land

The oasis at Abbashan is a haven from the harsh deserts that fill most of this emirate. As one moves further to the east, the desert basin drops gradually into the coastal plains that make up the eastern portion of the Emirate of Abbashan. Fewer roads and trails exist in this region than in the Emirate of Alasiya to the west, a badge of honor amongst the Abbashani people, who cling proudly to their nomadic heritage. There is very mixed sentiment towards the sultan’s recent attempts to complete caravan routes from the coastal towns that had been started many years ago.

At the westernmost edge of the Emirate of Abbashan is its newest addition, the town of

Hedjazi. Formerly a part of the Emirate of Alasiya, the oasis town was recently annexed to the Sultan’s own holdings, further diminishing the former center of power in Ylaruam.

The People

As I noted above, the Abbashani still cling largely to the traditions and customs of a time when the Ylari people roamed the deserts as nomads. They are a very isolationist people, being far less tolerant of foreigners and unbelievers than any other people in the emirates. It should not be surprising, then, that this is the region the Kin faction has chosen as their center of power.

The population of Abbashan has been on the rise since the sultan’s ascension to power, though its levels still come nowhere near those of Ylaruam itself (even in its current, diminished state). There is not enough housing available for all of the newcomers, despite an increase in construction in and around the city. Thus far, it isn’t a serious problem—the Abbashani are adaptable and simply set up their own tents and shanties in the outskirts of the town. As more outsiders’ flock to Abbashan from elsewhere in the nation—people who do not share the Abbashani nomadic tendencies—I suspect there will be major issues with overcrowding.

Recent History

The sultan seems to gradually be coming around to the notion that the Ylari people cannot live in a vacuum (rumor has it his new grand vizier is responsible for his changes in attitude). Now that the emirates seem to be firmly under his control, he has begun to ease the emirates’ isolationist policies, while trying to keep a firm hand under foreign influence. It is a fine line he walks, as he tries to keep the emirates a viable force in Old World politics and yet appease his people’s fears at the taint of outsiders.

Atlas of The Alphatian Sea

Introduction to the Alphatian Sea

The once mighty Alphatian Empire has sunk beneath the ocean and in its place now sits the Alphatian Sea. Dotted with several hundred isles representing the top of drowned mountains, the Alphatian Sea is rich with pirates and island fortresses.

The Alphatian Sea is also the place to be to search for magical treasures. The ocean floor is littered with thousands upon thousands of magical items from the former empire and many adventurers are doing their best to try and acquire them. Several hundred have been found already and most now reside in the hands of the pirates who then plundered the treasure-seekers. Those who manage to acquire an Alphatian Artifact always find fame and glory with it.

The people of the Alphatian Sea are mostly free subjects, most belonging to the New Alphatian Confederate Empire (annoyingly called Nayce by most of the commoners [*the Mysteran Almanac now makes use of the spelling popularized by Minrothbaddan merchants. Ed.*]). They are well educated, mainly literate and boast a larger percent of mages than most of the world. Some are also slaves, which is still legal and acceptable in most kingdoms. Slaves are only very rarely able to read or write.

Only a few nations of the area do not belong to Nayce, although ships from around the world sail here. Nayce would prefer to keep the area clear from foreign treasure seekers, but they have far too few ships and *skyships* to patrol everywhere, hence pirates are able to roam freely and do almost anything they please.

Adventurers come to seek fame for defeating some of the most notorious pirates of the world, while others come in search of sunken treasure. Reputation and glory is more important than anything else and insults rarely go unchallenged. All in all, it is a swashbuckling place with endless adventures on the high seas. On the Alphatian Sea, fame and glory mean everything!

The Alphatian Sea has one minor continent known as Bellissaria on its southern-eastern margin. This is where most of Naycese forces are concentrated and one of the few places where the law is effectively maintained. To the west, Norwold and the Isle of Dawn mark the end of the Alphatian Sea, while the continent of Skothar indicates its eastern limits. The north is bordered only by the glaciers marking the north pole and the entrance to the Hollow World. The southern waters eventually turn into the Sea of Dawn and the Bellissarian Sea.

Correspondents for the Alphatian Sea

This year, pending the result of the census, the same reports as you could read last are recopied almost verbatim, with only a few minor modifications where necessary. Next year should prove a good opportunity to offer you brand new correspondences.

Here is our list of correspondents that give us detailed information on the nations, places and events of the Alphatian Sea:

Allstrick

For those not privy to the man that is Allstrick, he is a half-breed. Born to a Shiye mother and Alphatian father, Allstrick has lived a long life as an adventurer both inside and outside of the Alphatian Empire. He outlived the dangers and retired from the profession, ironically enough taking up residence in Glantri. During the war, Allstrick sent his son back to mainland Alphatia where he hoped he would be safe. He himself moved the rest of his household to a residence in Mirros to wait out the war.

With Alphatia's sinking Allstrick naturally assumed his son had perished. With the divulgence of Alphatia's survival in Hollow World, he began planning a venture to visit the Naycese lands. Rumors persist that he wishes to reassert his prestige upon his countrymen to gain access to the Hollow World. We took advantage of this trip and approached Allstrick on reporting what he saw during his travels; he readily agreed and we look forward to his reports.

Thalia “Red Sheaf” Torres di Lopez



Accompanying Allstrick is Thalia “Red Sheaf” Torres di Lopez. Thalia is a half-breed from the Belcadiz Principality in Glantri. Allstrick and her had been adventuring companions for years; rumors persist she was a primary influence in his settling in Glantri before the Great War. She is not the mother of Allstrick’s son, however the two have become romantically involved since his birth and his real mother’s departure. So close are they that Thalia left Glantri to stay with Allstrick in Mirros.

Atlas

AQUAS (*Kingdom of*)

Location: Sea of Dawn, northwest of Bellissaria. AS

Area: 498 sq. mi. (1,290 sq. km.); only 2 sq. mi. are covered by domes.

Population: 41,000 (30,000 in Seashield; 11,000 in outlying domes). Numerous sea peoples present not included in census. [*Population figures are tentative, pending census. Ed.*]

Language: Alphatian (Aquan dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher and an import tax of 1% (Naycese kingdoms and Karamaikos excluded). 10% goes to the imperial treasury.

Government Type: Semiautonomous monarchy, member of Nayce.

Industries: Fish breeding, pearl harvesting, jewelry making (chiefly from local materials), engineering of undersea related items (*submersibles*, diving suits, waters pumps, drilling machines).

Important Figures: Zynnica (Queen, human/mermaid, female, M6).

Flora and Fauna: Aside from its official human (95 percent) and demihuman (5 percent) population, one may find the kingdom frequented by numerous sea creatures. The more intelligent ones are mermen, tritons, sea elves, nixies and storm giants.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Thalia.

I have seen much as we travel the lands of Nayce, however Aquas proved most astounding. Despite Allstrick’s early tales and descriptions of the submerged city, they did little to prepare me for what was to be our visit to Aquas. With its watery nature, getting to Aquas is difficult. Fortunately, Allstrick had arranged for a *submersible* to meet and transfer us down to the kingdom.

The Land

For those not aware, Aquas is a kingdom built upon the very seafloor, off the former Alphatian mainland. Its inhabitants have walled out the surrounding seas with the construction of huge crystal domes. For our arrival, we were fortunate to see the city of Seashield glistening under the penetrating rays of the midday sun. Truly, it was a fascinating sight.

Our first destination was the city of Seashield. Most people assume that Aquas is the capital of the kingdom. I myself was under such impressions. Aquas is the kingdom, Seashield is the capital. Seashield is a densely packed city, confined to the area of its dome. With a population exceeding 30,000 the inhabitants have strived to build as much livable space as the dome will allow. To gain additional living space, they have even excavated well into the bedrock below the city.

Later, we were able to visit Aquas's other four domes: Seapearl, Brightwater, Seacrystal and Wavedasher. These domes are essentially smaller versions of Seashield. Their populations are much smaller and generally less dense inside their domes. However, these domes' buildings were no less impressive than those found in the capital.

Our travels among the domes allowed us to see much of the kingdom. Oh sure, using magic would have been faster and less dangerous. But in doing so, we would have missed much of the sightseeing opportunities. We saw much of the seascape. Coral reefs, pearl fields and kelp beds all took on a new life under the ocean currents and filtered sunlight. We even journeyed to the north, surveying the fringe of the Alphatian Trench.

The People

Those calling Aquas their home are mostly Alphatians. Oh, sure there is a sizable minority of elves, dwarves and gnomes. Also, one really should count the numerous sea creatures that live outside of the domes but visit their interiors quite frequently. For

some reason, the people of Aquas do not consider the sea folk as being part of the population. Myself, I enjoyed interacting with them. Their company was most welcome in our sightseeing visits outside of the domes.

The people of Aquas are a strange lot. That they wish to live in an environment that an air-breathing creature is not designed to live in is difficult enough to comprehend. However, the inhabitants have apparently grown quite use to living in their bubble beneath the sea. Despite the ever-present dangers of the sea, the inhabitants have some rather ingenious precautions against flooding. I am told these preemptive measures preserved Aquas during the sinking of the mainland.

As with elsewhere, there were enough people that knew Allstrick or at least knew his reputation. We even had the privilege to be seen by Queen Zynnica. Allstrick and she spoke for some time. With my limited grasp of the Alphatian language I really have no idea what was said. What I did recognize were references to her father and discussions on the current situation of Karameikos and the kingdoms that we had visited.

Recent History

Aquas is a new kingdom. In AY 1949 [*AC 949. Ed.*], Queen Zynnica's father petitioned Empress Eriadna for permission to establish Aquas. King Zyndryl and the empress had a well-know affair, resulting in two children: Eldrethila and Zandor. Zynnica was the product of another affair with the mermaid, Lynnica.

When Alphatia sank, Aquas was assaulted by seismic tremors. King Zyndryl perished as his people worked to preserve the integrity of the domes against the sea. Zyndryl's death opened the door for Zandor, who made his claim to the Alphatian imperial throne and ruled from Aquas.

In AY 2013 [*AC 1013. Ed.*], Zynnica, Prince Haldemar, Commander Broderick and Queen Gratia ousted Zandor and captured him for a return to Alphatia in the

Hollow World. Zynnica claimed the throne of Aquas and has ruled ever since. Soon after, Aquas became a member of Nayce.

Aquas has since been a central member of Nayce, especially militarily. Aquas has made a lot of efforts to explore and colonize the sunken continent of Alphatia, with projects to build new undersea domes.

Don't Miss

When in Aquas, one must marvel at the domes and the surrounding seascape. This is an environment that one will not normally see. Those lucky enough to visit Aquas will find the items needed for a relatively safe undersea excursion. One will have to visit the pearl bed, where a veritable fortune lays scattered about the seabed in the oyster shells. One should be warned that the locals keep a vigilant watch for unauthorized harvests. A place the visitor must see is the King's Tower and Observatory [*formerly Emperor's Tower under Zandor's rule, now returned to its original name (after King Zyndryl) by the queen. Ed.*]. Though one will not have ready access to the queen, one can go to the observatory and see the entirety of Seashield and much of the surrounding area.

Do Miss

Aquas is a hostile environment. With all its aquatic races, it may be easy to run afoul with some of the locals. Each has its own customs and practices, so keeping up with them all will be difficult. The Alphatian Trench is a beacon, drawing the attentions of many a would-be adventurer. However, the trench is off-limits, at least to those without authorization.

ARKAN (*Kingdom of, a.k.a. Ar*)

Location: New Alphatian Sea, then above the Yannivey Islands. AS

Area: 100 sq. mi. (259 sq. km.), plus the 33,920 sq. mi. (87,853 sq. km.) of the Yanniveys.

Population: 50,000 (25,000 in Skyreach), plus 5,000 of the Yanniveys. [*Population figures are tentative, pending census. Ed.*]

Language: Alphatian (Arkan dialect), Elvish (Shiye-Lawr dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher and an import tax of 1% (Naycese kingdoms and Karameikos excluded). 10% of it goes to the imperial treasury.

Government Type: Semiautonomous monarchy, member of Nayce.

Industries: Military, air magics, ocean harvesting.

Important Figures: Qissling (King, human, male, M19), Qirklin (Prince, human, male, Pr16 of Valerias).

Flora and Fauna: With their aerial nature, the islands of Floating Arkan see an abundance of flying creatures. Dragons, djinn, efreet, air elementals, griffons, hippogriffs, pegasi and pegataurs are but a few of the more spectacular flying creatures. Other, land-bound creatures include bears, big cats, boars, sheep and horses. Down on the Yannivey Islands, one can see additional creatures such as wolves. The surrounding waters see the usual bevy of fishes and aquatic predators. With the islands having to fend for themselves more regarding food, the once lavish gardens, parks and unused lands have found themselves under the plow. It should also be noted that as with any Alphatian domain, the land may be filled with any sort of summoned, created, or captured monsters.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Allstrick.

Originally, we had not planned on visiting Arkan. However, it is a wondrous place and I just had to show Thalia. To speed up our travels, we utilized magic to *teleport* in. In this we had some minor trouble. With its new location we did not materialize exactly where I had expected. Luckily, I had taken

precautions and we were no worse for wear. Of course, it did shake Thalia up a bit. I shall go ahead and say that I am glad we ventured to Arkan.

The Land

How can I begin such a description without mentioning *Palart* Arkan's aerial nature first? For those not aware, the kingdom is comprised of numerous landmasses enchanted with magics, affording them lift. Essentially, the kingdom is a grouping of floating islands. Thalia was full of questions about how and why Arkan was so lofty. I could tell her only what I knew. Still, I think the place did much to overwhelm her about Alphatia's pre-war magical might.

Upper Arkan is now a much different place. Aside from the different location, the isles themselves have changed. Gone are many of the old parks and such. In their place are crop fields, nestled in any free portions of land available. Seems that the old land below had been the key source of food for those living on the floating isles. With the mainland gone and subsequently replaced by the Yannivey Islands, an intermediate source of food is needed.

Below Floating Arkan are the Yannivey Islands. Becoming part of Arkan has changed the islands. Several of the old known villages are gone, their inhabitants scattered and displaced. Several tracts of land have been cleared for cultivation. In general, the Arkans are intent upon molding the islands to fit their needs. They have begun establishing farms among the islands to provide food... and I suspect... to allow the former parks and gardens to be relieved of their burdens of food cultivation.

During our week-long stay, we operated out of Skyreach. The capital has lost very little of its pre-war charm and elegance. The main difference that I can see is the food. Prices for food are rather high and variety is limited. Even I, so familiar with Alphatian magical potential, am impressed by the deed no matter how many times I see it. As such,

I can appreciate Thalia's amazement at the kingdom.

The *skyship* fleet is easily seen operating in and around the islands. This is quite a surprise as portions of the fleet are said to be serving abroad. However, I recognized that several of the *skyships* are, or were, privately owned vessels. Strangely enough a proportion of these *skyships* are not militarily oriented. Some are used to aid in fishing and transport between the floating islands and the Yanniveys below. *Skyship* construction is a priority at the facilities in Skyreach, so I expect this traffic will but increase.

The People

The people of Arkan are predominantly Alphatian. Many elves live there as well, establishing themselves as a powerful minority. Due to the isles' pre-war standing, one will see a far greater ratio of spellcasters living there than in any other kingdoms. Of course, this ratio would be much greater had there not been a sizable return of non-spellcasters from the war and the bulk of the *skyship* fleet surviving the sinking.

The Upper Arkans are still quite the charmers. Enough notables remembered me to make our stay very comfortable. I can think of not a single night that we were not invited to a party or some other social event. Though I had feared for Thalia's safety in other kingdoms, the Arkans seemed quite open to her. Her spellcasting ability, ethnic background and personal charm outweighing the stigma of her dependence upon the Thyatian language.

At one such party, we met with Prince Qirclin. True to form, his great uncle King Qissling was absent, but such are the ways of the devoted mage. Egad how Qirclin had grown. The last time I had seen him, he was but an awkward boy running about the palace giving the servants a devil of a time. Though now a grown man, he was like a boy again as he had me recount tales of my exploits. Of course, I could have done without some of the analysis on his part.

We also met with several pegataurs. Thalia had never seen one and thought them little

more than winged centaurs. I had to explain to her their origins as a magical crossbreed of pegasi and Shiye elves. Previously, pegataurs were given a second-class status, despite their elf-like abilities. However, I did notice them gaining ground socially. There is a stronger pegataur presence within the military. Perhaps the influx of Shiye elves has helped their standing.

One person that I had hoped to see was Haldemar of Haaken. We had previously crossed paths and were acquaintances of sorts. Mainly, I wanted to hear of his travels to this Hollow World and the status of Alphatia. Unfortunately, Haldemar was absent from his family's estate and had not been seen around here in some time. Most spoke of his still being away, serving the empress.

Recent History

Prior to the war, Upper Arkan was part of Arkan, a kingdom on the Alphatian mainland. When the mainland sank, the islands remained in their lofty altitudes. With the mainland gone, the kingdom was moved to its present location above the Yannivey Islands. You see, before the war Upper Arkan had been the residences of the ruling class [*spellcasters. Ed.*], while the lands of Arkan served as the agricultural base. With Arkan gone, new food sources were needed. Such a movement was a major undertaking, taking six months to travel the 350 odd miles to their present location.

The Floating Arkans quickly set about occupying the Yannivey Chain to meld it to its needs. The Yannivey fared little better than their Yanifey forebears. The fate of the Yanifey tribesmen is uncertain and still under debate. The good news is that much of the criminal aspect of the chain was destroyed. All in all, things are on an upswing for Arkan. The coming years should be very interesting.

Don't Miss

Floating Arkan is a wondrous place. Each lofty piece of real estate offers the opportunity to amaze the average visitor.

Just the way that the Floating Arkans have incorporated the aerial nature of the kingdom into everyday life is quite fascinating. One may also want to visit the Yannivey Islands to partake of the natural beauty. This visit could be an interesting conversation piece.

DAWRIM (*Kingdom of*)

Location: Bellissaria, west of southern Skothar, southeast of Aquas. AS

Area: 255,900 sq. mi. (662,781 sq. km.).

Population: 28,000 (5,000 in Alinquin). [*Population figures are tentative, pending census. Ed.*]

Language: Alphatian (Bellissarian dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: 15% on everyone of servant status or higher and an import tax of 1% (Naycese kingdoms and Karameikos excluded). 10% goes to the imperial treasury.

Government Type: Semiautonomous monarchy, member of Nayce.

Industries: Agriculture, fishing and herding.

Important Figures: Teskilion (King and General, human, male, F13).

Flora and Fauna: With few indigenous monsters, Dawnrim benefits as most of its animal life is of the domesticated type. Even the bulk of its wildlife was brought in from elsewhere.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Thalia.

The kingdom of Dawnrim came as a complete surprise to me. Whereas most of the Naycese kingdoms are rather flashy, this one tended to be... well... plain. We really did not stay within the kingdom long. We only stayed in Alinquin for three days, mainly to recover from the sea voyage and to garner supplies and horses for continuing our trip.

Thereafter, we headed in an easterly direction for the kingdom of Lagrius.

The Land

Dawnrim is a rather large kingdom on the western coast of the continent of Bellissaria. Most of the kingdom is little more than open pasturage of various qualities. There is a sizable forest region in the kingdom's center. The southernmost region boasts steadfast mountains. Allstrick had told me of a smaller forest to the north, though we never came within visual range of it.

The whole place is rather poor, reminding me much of Boldavia or some of the more landward communities of Karameikos. The coastal communities we saw were fishermen, while the landward populace focused upon herding livestock. Most communities tend to be little more than villages, hardly worth stopping in. Allstrick told me that this was the general rule for the entire kingdom. Even the kingdom's capital was a disappointment. I had expected much more.

The People

Those living in Dawnrim are little more than peasants, eking out an existence from their nets and herds. Though Alphatian, they lack the flash and theatrics of other Alphatian kingdoms we had seen. I will say this, the people of Dawnrim are fairly nice. I saw firsthand several obviously poor families offering us food and shelter for the night. Many tried to turn down our offers of payment. They seemed quite enamored by our presence, especially after Allstrick and my own spellcasting abilities were discovered.

Even the kingdom's capital paled in comparison to cities and towns we had already seen. I was told that the kingdom has always been poor in regard to spellcasters... that would explain a great deal. There was a large contingent of troops in Alinquin. Allstrick pointed out and named at least [*censored. Ed.*] different kingdoms with troops present. This I can understand as the kingdom would be one of the firsts invaded if Bellissaria was ever threatened.

Recent History

From what I have been told Bellissarian kingdoms have always lived in the shadow of the Alphatian mainland, despite contributing the bulk of the empire's food stocks. From my understanding, this perception was not really objected to by the locals who valued their privacy. With all of the displaced Alphatians settling there now, I have to wonder how these people feel. Of course, kingdoms like Dawnrim may benefit greatly from these new arrivals. In my opinion though, it may be more difficult to get the displaced persons to settle there. However, with Bellissaria assuming the role of the former mainland I do not see them as having much of a choice.

Don't Miss/Do Miss

Despite its poor nature, Dawnrim is well settled (in comparison to other Bellissarian kingdoms anyway). A strong military presence and the low numbers of mages have kept hostile creatures to a minimum. This lack of mages has also had a side effect. Without divination spells, crime is a bit high within Alinquin. Though we experienced none of it, there was mention of a well-organized thieves' guild operating within the capital. In fact, aside from a lack of comfort our travel through Dawnrim was quite uneventful.

HORKEN (Kingdom of)

Location: Bellissaria, west of southern Skothar, southeast of Aquas. AS

Area: 103,258 sq. mi. (267,438 sq. km.).

Population: 31,000 (5,000 in Horken). [*Population figures are tentative, pending census. Ed.*]

Language: Alphatian (Bellissarian dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher and an import tax of 1% (Naycese kingdoms and Karameikos excluded). 10% goes to the imperial treasury.

Government Type: Semiautonomous monarchy, member of Nayce.

Industries: Agriculture, shipbuilding.

Important Figures: Villiun (King, human, male, Pr19 of Alphatia).

Flora and Fauna: As with most Alphatian lands, all manner of conjured and summoned creatures may be found wandering Horken. With few indigenous creatures, most of Horken's normal animal and plant life was brought in from elsewhere.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Allstrick.

Horken is a rather dull place, had I not heard that some old friends had moved there after the war I doubt we would have even gone there. Though the friends were not there, I am glad we went. I had forgotten about some of the peculiarities of the kingdom. Our stay in Horken proved most interesting as we prepared to move on.

The Land

Horken is a circular-shaped kingdom carved out of the Bellissarian continent. With its northern portions being lightly wooded grasslands and its southern parts rolling hills, it is hard to fathom that Horken is a shipbuilding kingdom. Truthfully, most lumber is brought in from neighboring Lagrius. Most shipbuilding is done in the capital city of Horken. Horken boasts several deep harbors, which they use to great effect.

The People

Horken's inhabitants are almost exclusively Alphatian. They are a hard-working people, quite proud of their reputation as shipbuilders. The people of Horken are prosperous, the constant orders for ships contributing greatly to their robust economy. Horken's economy rules the kingdom. The wealthy merchant families have more power than the king does. As far as I can tell, King

Villiun does not mind this. From my understanding he'd rather focus on his clerical duties than his throne.

With its shipbuilding base, it is not surprising that Horken boasts a sizable navy. The Horken navy saw extensive use during the Great War. Afterwards, Zandor and Commander Broderick utilized Horken's ships to assert control over the Bellissarian kingdoms. Forever linked to Zandor's aggressions, Horken has a bit of stigma attached to it. Most do not like to talk about that period and would rather recount the production of ships from the shipyards.

Recent History

Horken is one of the old Bellissarian kingdoms. Long used to living in the shadows of the mainland, Horken was drawn into the limelight after the sinking. First, King Villiun supported Zandor as emperor for the economic boom in rebuilding the Alphatian navy. Second, its navy supplemented Aquas units in asserting Zandor's rule over the scattered Alphatian lands.

With Trikelios in ruins, Horken is the predominant shipbuilder for Nayce. This has done much to improve some of the hard feelings that some Naycese kingdoms have for Horken. Personally, I think this stance is a bit unfounded. While it is a disgrace that Villiun supported Zandor for economic reasons, it must be remembered that Zandor could have been easily stopped if but a few kingdoms united to meet Broderick's forces. So, there is more than enough blame to pass around.

Don't Miss

Horken is quite unremarkable. One may wish to visit the shipyards and see Nayce's best ships being built. One may also want to visit Horken's Temple of Alphatia. Whereas his attentions to government may be lacking, Villiun has done much to maintain a lavish place to venerate Alphatia.

Do Miss

Horken's nature offers few threats to the traveler. During our stay within its borders we put away our armor and in general relaxed a bit. One really must venture to the hills to the south to merit an armed presence. I am told that the hills boast packs of wolves and a few hill giants. Probably the biggest threat in Horken is the human one. Egos run high amid the wealthy families and they are easily put off. Since they essentially run the kingdom, they are not subject to the limitations of the law.

IONACE (a.k.a. the Isle of Nayce)

Location: Sea of Dawn, where western Alphatia used to be. AS

Area: 128,199 sq. mi. (332,035 sq. km.).

Population: 3,000 and many monsters (2,200 in Ionace City). [*Population figures are tentative, pending census. Ed.*]

Language: Alphatian (Vertilian dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher and an import tax of 1% (Naycese kingdoms and Karameikos excluded).

Government Type: Center of the New Alphatian Confederate Empire, member of the Alphatian Empire.

Industries: Bureaucratic hub of Nayce, mining.

Important Figures: Broderick (Commander in Chief, human, male, F19).

Flora and Fauna: Though most of these are content to remain outside of the city, large numbers of wandering monsters beset Ionace.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Allstrick.

I was most interested in seeing Ionace for myself. Truthfully, I had prejudiced myself against the new capital before I even saw it. I knew too well the old capital of Sundsvall

and felt that nothing could live up to it. Upon leaving, I had changed my opinion. Though Ionace cannot live up to Sundsvall it did leave a lasting impression upon me.

The Land

The island of Ionace is the visible remnants of the submerged Kerothar Mountain Range. Since Ionace is essentially the tops of mountains, one can imagine what the terrain is like. Thick patches of woods break its rocky landscape. I was rather surprised at just how large Ionace is; but then again, the Kerothar Range was rather expansive.

Central to Ionace is its being the seat of power of Nayce. Ionace is a growing town based upon the ruins of the former city of Denwarf-Hurgon. The old stout dwarven constructs contrast greatly with the newer buildings erected under the Naycese standard. Still, the symbolism between the old and new is readily apparent. The buildings in Ionace are either newly built or have been remodeled. Ionace lacks the almost mystical flash and theatrics of Sundsvall. In general, Ionace tends to be on the more practical side.

The People

Those living in Ionace are administrators, military, or merchants supporting the two. Examples of the peoples from across Nayce can be seen there. Also, there is a contingent of foreigners, mostly ambassadors from other lands. The military personnel are as equally diverse. Previously, defense of the island fell to the 6th Army of Aquas. However, now units from other Alphatian lands can be seen.

Ionace is a fast-paced place. The populace seems to be forever heading for some appointment or just returning from one. The council hall is the focal point for this pedestrian traffic. Sitting out front, I witnessed a veritable "who's who" of Alphatian elite passing through its portals. I knew many of these faces. Others had to be identified. The sinking has altered the structure of the ruling elite class and opened

the door for a new generation of nobles. A good example of this change is Commander Broderick. When I knew him, he was but a minor officer in Aquas's military machine. However, now he is one of the Nayce's most powerful entities. Truthfully, I am not a fan of Broderick and it's not his being a non-spellcaster. It is his conduct under Zandor's rule that I find atrocious.

Recent History

When Alpathia sank beneath the waves, the tops of the Kerothar Mountains stayed above the waterline forming Monster Island. Until AY 2013 [*AC 1013. Ed.*] this island was not given much attention. It was only with the discovery of the mineral known as *mnemonic mineral* that Monster Island began to draw much interest.

With Zandor's removal as emperor, Monster Island was chosen as the new seat of government for what was to become Nayce. On Amphimir 15, AY 2014 [*Vaterrmont 15, AC 1014. Ed.*], the island was officially renamed Ionace. Ionace is under the direct jurisdiction of the ruling council. It is here where the Nayce Council meets to administer the new empire.

Nayce is beginning to stabilize. As a testament to this Ionace had the honor of sponsoring the first Super-Hard-Ball in Sulamir of AY 2014 [*Flaurmont of 1014. Ed.*]. The month-long tournament was an obvious success, with the Aquas Dolphins prevailing. I observed the tourney from Mirros and all said I came out about even in my bets.

Don't Miss

One really should see the city of Ionace. The new architecture and the remodeled dwarven constructs are something to behold. Likewise, all the notables within the city will draw much attention. Being the ruling class, chances are good that a party or social ball is soon planned. Any hard-ball aficionado will have to see the city's playing field. Matches are frequent, so chances are good that you will be able to see a game played albeit most are of amateur status. We were fortunate enough to watch an

exhibition match between the Mirros Knights and the top ranked amateur team from Ionace.

Do Miss

One really should avoid the rural parts of the island of Ionace. Many an unwary person has perished within sight of the city. Monsters abound out in the wilds and unless you are adept at such things, you need to stay in the safe confines of the city.

LAGRIUS (Kingdom of)

Location: Bellissaria, west of southern Skothar, southeast of Aquas. AS

Area: 244,677 sq. mi. (633,713 sq. km.).

Population: 150,000 (15,000 in Blueside). [*Population figures are tentative, pending census. Ed.*]

Language: Alpathian (Bellissarian dialect).

Coinage: Alpathian Standard: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher and an import tax of 1% (Naycese kingdoms and Karameikos excluded). 10% goes to the imperial treasury.

Government Type: Semiautonomous monarchy, member of Nayce.

Industries: Timber cutting, fishing.

Important Figures: Elenitsa (Queen, human, female, F10/T6), Siaron Lagrius (Former Queen, human, female, M13).

Flora and Fauna: Like most Bellissarian kingdoms, Lagrius boasts few indigenous monsters. Most animal life is of the normal variety and has been brought in from elsewhere.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Thalia.

After being in Dawnrim, Lagrius was a welcome surprise. There I found a kingdom with enough Alpathian flash to meet my expectations, but with enough practicality to be believable. Lagrius is rather

unremarkable. However, our stay there was most pleasant. Perhaps it was even too pleasant and by the week's end I was more than ready to leave.

The Land

Lagrius is a large kingdom situated in the center of the continent. To the extreme south are the hills and mountains bordering Surshield. A bit north of these are miles of open plains. The northern portion of the kingdom revolves around Lake Lagrius. Surrounding this immense freshwater lake are hills and mountains and an expansive forest. The lake is the boon for the kingdom's fishing trade, the forest the source for timber for export.

On the southeastern shore of the lake rests Blueside, the capital of Lagrius. Blueside was nice, its buildings laid out in an orderly fashion and its streets kept clean. The view of the lake is quite enchanting, especially with the presence of sailing vessels out upon its surface. Blueside is a very busy place. The focus seems to be in harvesting lumber for Horken's shipyards and fishing.

The People

The people of Lagrius are Alphatian. In general, they are a pleasant hard-working lot. When not at work, the people are rather laid back. For most, leisure time is spent at home, at the local pub, or basking on the banks of the lake. Those more privileged tend to add yachting to their free time activities.

Queen Elenitsa officially rules Lagrius, since the former queen abdicated during that mess with Zandor. I do get the impression that Siaron is still ruling though. The people of Lagrius are quite endeared to both Elenitsa and Siaron. I also get the impression that they realize the amount of influence Siaron has with Elenitsa. In fact, I got the impression that most see her as still being the real queen. But then again, Siaron's ancestors founded the kingdom so there is bound to be some affection from the locals.

The women of Lagrius seemed quite enthralled by Allstrick. I really had to keep on his heels to keep those jackals away. These attentions did not go unnoticed by several of the locals. There were several instances where suitors took great umbrage at their ladyloves showing affection to my man. Fortunately for them, word of Allstrick's reputation reached them before a challenge to duel was issued. Fortunately for Allstrick he behaved himself.

Recent History

Lagrius is one of the empire's oldest kingdoms. Founded by Siaron Lagrius's ancestors, it came as quite a shock that Zandor ordered her to abdicate her throne. The transition from her rule to that of her friend Elenitsa was quite peaceful. It is well known that Siaron is active in ruling behind the scenes, with both her and Elenitsa effectively being co-rulers. This arrangement seems to work for Siaron for now, for she has left Elenitsa in the position as the official queen and kept the official title of council representative for herself.

Though it was feared that Thyatis would launch its assaults upon Bellissaria, the kingdom has flourished since the war thanks to the need for timber by Horken. With fears of Thyatian aggression gone, work on the kingdom's defenses has long since halted. Unlike other Bellissarian kingdoms, Lagrius seems more open to its growing prominence within Nayce. And with its pleasant demur, displaced Alphatians are attracted to the kingdom. All in all, the future of the kingdom looks rather bright.

Don't Miss

The city of Blueside is a gem. Its pleasantness and access to the lake is an attractant to those wishing to relax. Likewise, there is an underlying tone of gentility within the kingdom. In general, your stay in Blueside will be like visiting a resort, but the locals will not overwhelm you like you are at a resort town.

Do Miss

Life is wonderful for those in and around the city of Blueside. Venturing south things become a bit more difficult. Though dangerous creatures are few, those traveling that far south will be far from any nearby assistance and essentially on their own.

MERIANDER (*Kingdom of*)

Location: Bellissaria, west of southern Skothar, southeast of Aquas. AS

Area: 92,034 sq. mi. (238,368 sq. km.).

Population: 100,000 (15,000 in Alchemos). [*Population figures are tentative, pending census. Ed.*]

Language: Alphatian (Bellissarian dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher and an import tax of 1% (Naycese kingdoms and Karameikos excluded). 10% goes to the imperial treasury.

Government Type: Semiautonomous monarchy, member of Nayce.

Industries: Agriculture, alchemy, education.

Important Figures: Hubertek (King and General, human, male, F20).

Flora and Fauna: As with all Bellissarian kingdoms, there are no indigenous monsters, most animal life being brought in from elsewhere. Of course, the presence of the mages in Alchemos may warrant more unusual creatures due to summoning and creation magics.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Allstrick.

Meriander, long seen as the bastion of magical pursuits upon Bellissaria, is also a pleasant place. Our arrival there was a welcome relief from our travels across the subcontinent. I really wanted Thalia to see the kingdom, as it seemed a more suitable litmus test to show what Alphatia had been.

I also hoped that it would be a first step in preparing her for the more spectacular kingdoms to come.

The Land

The kingdom of Meriander is a peninsula along the eastern coast of Bellissaria, sharing its only land border with Notrion. The remainders of the kingdom's borders are with the surrounding seas. The terrain varies as one travels south. Rolling hills and open pastures gradually become more forested, ultimately giving way to the dense forests at the kingdom's extreme southern regions.

The capital of Meriander is the city of Alchemos, which boasts a sizable university. Most people have the impression that the university is purely devoted to alchemy. This is false. Alchemy is a focal point in Meriander but is not singular to the university. Here one can earn the semblance of an education, far above what can be taught at home. Most of the the city's alchemy trade is borne through a cottage industry. Without its university and alchemy pursuits, Meriander would be hardly distinguishable from its neighbors. As such, Alphatians from other Bellissarian kingdoms can be seen attending its classes.

The People

Unsurprisingly, Meriander is populated by Alphatians. The university is paramount in their eyes. Everyone claims some connection to the institution, whether it is a teacher or a farmer whose crops feed the faculty. With the university an ever-present entity, the people of Meriander tend to present themselves as intellectuals. This persona is well founded as Meriander boasts one of the highest literacy rates within Nayce. The populace either learns directly from the university or that knowledge is passed down at the hearth. This home teaching is mostly seen in the rural areas. Most urban citizens see it only unfashionable to not study at the university.

With a name like Alchemos, it is not surprising that alchemy holds a prominent position in Meriander. The kingdom has a

reputation for its research and production of potions and the like. Such concoctions are easily found at the markets and shops of the capital. Likewise, prices are reasonable despite the aftermath of the Great War. The integrity of potions is secure; one does not have to worry about scam artists selling false or dangerous potions. Public sentiment is hard against such charlatans, seeing their actions as a dishonor to their own local industry.

Recent History

Like its fellow Bellissarian kingdoms, Meriander has long been settled and has lived in the shadows of the Alphatian mainland. With the sinking, Meriander has come into a more prominent role. Following Zandor's demands, Queen Drulivia abdicated her throne in favor of Hubertek, Commander of Meriander's armed forces. Hubertek's reign has continued until this day. His rulership has been fair and well done. If he has drawn any criticism, it is for his abolishment of the age-old law restricting nobility to just spellcasters. So far, this dissatisfaction centers upon Meriander's spellcasting populace and some more traditional commoners. However, most are content to pursue alchemy studies.

Don't Miss

Visitors to Meriander will find themselves focusing their attentions within Alchemos. It truly is a quaint place, by Alphatian standards. The local atmosphere is pleasant enough for one's personal comfort yet boasts enough magical flair to sate the palate of those interested in the manipulation of the magical energies. One should really visit the city's various shops. There, one can find all-manner of potions and magical substances.

Do Miss

There really is not a whole lot to fear while one visits Meriander. Of course, one may want to be on guard for certain mages and alchemists, especially late at night.

Components for potions of the necromantic variety often include corporal ingredients obtainable through fatal means. Being Alchemos, the law would focus more upon the potion working than the ingredients. More than one of these types are known to operate in Meriander, so one should be on guard.

NOTRION (Kingdom of)

Location: Bellissaria, west of southern Skothar, southeast of Aquas. AS

Area: 338,956 sq. mi. (877,896 sq. km.).

Population: 50,000 (10,000 in Aaslin).
[*Population figures are tentative, pending census. Ed.*]

Language: Alphatian (Bellissarian dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher and an import tax of 1% (Karamaikos and Naycese kingdoms excluded). 7% goes to the imperial treasuries (economic aid).

Government Type: Semiautonomous monarchy owing loyalty to Nayce.

Industries: Agriculture, trade.

Important Figures: Corydon (King and General, human, male, F14).

Flora and Fauna: Like its neighboring Bellissarian kingdoms Notrion boasts little indigenous animal life. Most animals and plants were brought in from elsewhere and correspond to the terrain, both domestic and wild.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Allstrick.

Next to Dawnrim, Notrion must be Bellissaria's least impressive kingdom. Magically and economically poor, it was not our most cherished stopover during our travels. The sad thing is that Notrion had not always been this way. The years since the Great War have drastically altered Notrion,

for the worse. The road to recovery is bound to be a long one.

The Land

Located on the northeastern section of Bellissaria, Notrion is a large kingdom with large expanses of fertile farmland. The bulk of this farmland is yet to be capitalized, as most of the populace is centered upon the coastal lands. In fact, the kingdom's interior regions are veritable wild lands, rarely seen by the people that lay claim to them. Old surveys tell of the western border being the eastern bank of Lake Lagrius.

Along the coast one will find Notrion's capital, Aaslin. The city is quite large and boasts a sizable waterfront. Nowadays these docks are mostly empty, the kingdom's chief trade market sunken beneath the waves. Along the docks, warehouses are in abundance. However, these storage buildings now house surplus grains harvested from the local fields. Without Alphatia's markets this grain is but taking up space and rotting faster than the rats can consume it.

The People

Those calling Notrion home are of Alphatian stock. Being quite magic poor, Notrion's populace is not known for its mages. These are a hardworking folk, used to living their customary lives with a degree of cohesiveness. Circumstances have been hard on most of them. Food, in the form of grain, is quite abundant and composes the bulk of one's meal. Only the rich can afford the trickles of imported foodstuffs that arrive at the kingdom's docks. This monotony of grain-based foods and the poor economic situation has divided the populace upon economic lines. Tempers run high at times, evident by a previous civil war. We experienced this a few times. Luckily, a strong military presence within the city keeps things orderly.

Recent History

Before the Great War, Notrion cherished its trade relationship with the Alphatian mainland. Its economy had been based upon its cultivation of grain and its transportation through Randel, into the imperial granaries. With Alphatia gone, Notrion's grain market was absent. The assassination of the kingdom's monarch and the subsequent civil war did little to cement new trade markets or enact economic changes.

Commander Broderick ended the internal power struggle and civil unrest, when he intervened militarily and placed General Corydon upon the throne. King Corydon has tried several economic reforms. He has even garnered a relaxation of taxes to Nayce. However, he has yet to find a new market for his kingdom's grain surplus. Likewise, the people seem ill prepared and motivated to adopt other crop types, or even move away from agriculture.

So far Corydon's reign has been uncontested. The domestic situation and former rivals to the throne still weighs heavily upon his future. Talk in the taverns is typically gripes, most problems being falsely blamed upon Corydon. Despite no real opposition, Corydon has remained vigilant. To keep the peace, he maintains as strong a military as his budget will allow. Being strangers in town, we were constantly challenged by patrols, Thalia's dependence upon the Thyatian language drawing much attention.

Part of Notrion was ceded to the new Kingdom of Veroth in AC 1016, a kingdom populated mainly by Alphatians of Randel decent.

Don't Miss

For the average visitor, there is little to see in Notrion. The kingdom's economic situation can be a boon for a sly merchant. However, costs will be the merchant's enemy and buyers will be limited to just the kingdom's wealthy.

Do Miss

With its interior a virtual mystery, one should be wary of venturing too far inland. Rumor persists of humanoids living deep within the kingdom. Some say that the humanoids are mercenaries, hired by Lodrig III before his death to bolster his rule. Others say they were hired by one or more of the individuals bidding for the throne during the civil war. Either way, it is widely believed that the humanoid mercenaries now rule the interior and are probably waiting to strike the rest of the kingdom, either on their own or at the behest of their employer. Rumor or no rumor, several parties of adventurers have journeyed into the interior and have not returned.

QEODHAR (*Kingdom of*)

Location: Northern Alphatian Sea, northeast of Norwold and west of the Yannivey Islands. AS

Area: 88,791 sq. mi. (229,969 sq. km.), including Icehop Island 5,487 sq. mi. (14,212 sq. km.), Qeodhar Island 82,307 sq. mi. (213,175 sq. km.), Whaler's Island 997 sq. mi. (2,582 sq. km.).

Population: 20,000, including Farend (pop. 5,000). [*Population figures are tentative, pending census. Ed.*]

Languages: Alphatian (Frisian dialect), Heldannic.

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher and an import tax of 1% (Naycese kingdoms and Karameikos excluded). 10% goes to the imperial treasury. The "baron" has been known to levy additional surtaxes on occasion, which are used to support his unusually large fleet.

Government Type: Monarchy, member of Nayce.

Industries: Fishing, trade, raiding, whaling, seal-trapping.

Important Figures: Norlan (King, human, male, F15).

Flora and Fauna: Seal herds, boars, giant crabs, dolphins, white dragons, dragon turtles, giant fish, frost giants, mermen, sharks, whales and wolves (including some of the two-legged variety).

Further Reading: M1 *Into the Maelstrom*, *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Allstrick.

Yanifey and disreputable types that were no longer welcomed on Alphatia proper settled this cold, barren island. Despite several attempts to achieve respectability, Baron Norlan is more known for continuing these traditions than for stamping them out. An island of rugged seamen, the people of Qeodhar are known for their whaling and sealing, but also for less respectable occupations. Farend, the capital, is known for shipyards that build stout vessels, well able to survive the severe weather of this area. The people themselves are largely of typical northern stock, taciturn and suspicious. They were long a thorn in the side of the empress and I don't doubt that Norlan, his protestations of loyalty notwithstanding, will end up causing the Naycese Council no end of trouble.

SURSHIELD (*Kingdom of*)

Location: Bellissaria, west of southern Skothar, southeast of Aquas. AS

Area: 260,390 sq. mi. (674,410 sq. km.).

Population: 100,000 (30,000 in Spearpoint). [*Population figures are tentative, pending census. Ed.*]

Language: Alphatian (Bellissarian dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone and an import tax of 1% (Karameikos and Naycese kingdoms excluded). 8% goes to the imperial treasury (for economic aid).

Government type: Semiautonomous monarchy, member of Nayce.

Industries: Military, agriculture, craftsmanship, art.

Important Figures: Gratia (Queen and General, human, female, M14).

Flora and Fauna: Like most Bellissarian kingdoms, Surshield's animal and plant life was brought in from elsewhere. However, the more chaotic western portions of the kingdom boast some hostile creatures. Wolves of all types are a problem and packs of them can frequently be seen running the land. Also, bands of creatures such as tasloi and hill giants have been reported amid the forests and hills. How they came to Bellissaria is unknown.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Thalia.

Our travel through Surshield was interesting. The first thing to come to mind is the sheer size of the kingdom. It seemed as if we would never see the walls of the capital. The trip was rough and we took the precaution of being armed, armored and alert. Luckily, we had the luxury of horses and pack mules to carry our supplies and ourselves.

The Land

Surshield is a large snaking kingdom, encompassing the majority of Bellissaria's southern coast. Along its interior, the terrain is composed of hills and mountains, periodically giving way to expanses of open pastures or dense forests. Numerous rivers cross the kingdom. Travel is difficult. There are few roads across this rough terrain. Those present are in bad shape, being little more than footpaths kept clear by the sporadic traffic of the locals.

To the furthestmost eastern portion of the kingdom lays the capital city of Spearpoint. As we approached the capital, I noticed that the condition of the roadways improved and there seemed to be a bit more order. Spearpoint was a sight for sore eyes. Well laid out and with the creature comforts, it was a worthy destination from our previous

weeks' travel. With its daunting battlements and harbor defenses, I find it difficult to fathom that the Minaean reavers posed as big of a threat as they do. But then again, all those defenses are all for naught once a vessel is but a few hours' sail out of the city. I guess that that is what the Surshield navy is for.

The People

The people living in Surshield are Alphatian, of course. I noticed that those living away from the capital are a rather unruly bunch. Allstrick told me of the kingdom's tradition of being an anarchy. In many ways, it reminded me of some of the more remote areas of Karameikos. I am unsure why it is like that, but there is much about these Alphatians that I do not understand. Despite their chaotic attitude, we had little trouble from the locals.

The closer one travels to Spearpoint, the more organized the locals tend to be. Spearpoint's populace is normal, even by Alphatian terms. There is a heavy military presence, mostly in naval personnel. We spent a great deal of time in the city's taverns. For me, it was a bit difficult to follow the gossip, however through my broken Alphatian and Allstrick's help I did manage. I got the impression that the people in Surshield are not too happy with Nayce, particularly several of their Bellissarian neighbors. I guess the pains of the post-war years and Zandor's aggressions are still a sore spot for the people of Surshield. It may take years for the kingdom to rebuild its trust in its neighbors.

Recent History

Following the Great War Zandor demanded the abdication of certain rulers within his new Alphatian Empire. Most obliged for various reasons. Only Queen Gratia resisted. Zandor dispatched Commander Broderick to assert authority over the queen and the kingdom. Broderick, supported by several Bellissarian navies, began the aggression against the city of Spearpoint. Gratia attempted to organize the

kingdom's defense through conscription. The more chaotic western populace revolted at this display of central authority. This revolt only subsided when she rescinded the declarations.

With the city and its immediate surroundings acting alone, Gratia fled the city to save it from total war. Gratia later was involved with Broderick, Haldemar and Zynnia's overthrowing of Zandor. Afterwards, Gratia resumed her rule of Surshield and committed to Nayce. The relationship with Nayce has been fair. Surshield has been given relaxation on its taxes due to its prominent role in keeping the Minaean pirates in check.

Surshield has been divided into three kingdoms last year: Eirundrynn to the west (ruled by Military Governor Jhedryll), Turmoil in the south (an anarchy) and Surshield proper in the east.

Don't Miss

Despite its sheer size, there is surprisingly little to see. Spearpoint boasts a few interesting details based on its military. Outside of Spearpoint there are several displays of natural beauty to dazzle the spectator. Rektar Falls is a spectacle of nature to behold. Likewise, the rock formations of the Zligda Caverns are interesting, especially with the magical lighting. However, one should acquire the services of a competent guide. These sights are in remote areas and are often referred to by different names.

Do Miss

With its size and lack of organized patrols, the wild western lands are home to numerous vile creatures. Wolves are a nuisance. More organized creatures also abound. Tasloi are rampant in certain portions of forests. There are also reports of hill giants, cyclops and a few types of dragons running about.

Atlas of The Sea Of Dawn

Introduction to the Sea of Dawn

To the east of the Old World, where the sun rises every morning, lies the Sea of Dawn. It is a place rumored to be mystical in nature by many tavern tales and perhaps it is. Three exotic cultures can be found in this area, notably the Thothians, the Ochaleans and the Pearl Islanders.

The rest of the nations, however, are either Thyatian or Alphatian in origin and many bears the numerous scars of war between the two empires. For the Sea of Dawn is the border between the Old World and the Alphatian Sea and it is where the two cultures clash, more often violently than not.

The Isle of Dawn, a continent-size island in the north of the Sea of Dawn, is a militaristic land where armies march constantly and battles take place almost daily. Such constant warfare has spread to the nearby Alatian Islands as well and glory can easily be found by brilliant tacticians and expert mercenaries. The battles between the empires have died down since the signing of the Treaty of Dawn (or Isle of Dawn Treaty), yet it only takes a spark to start the war all over again.

Still, another threat seems to be looming over the area and many of the nations are fearful of an attack by strange spiders found on the Thothian Plateau. The nature of these araneas is unknown and whether there will be a war or not is also unclear. But if there is, the people of the Isle of Dawn will be used to it.

The southern islands, however, are peaceful in nature and no trip is more relaxing than one to Ochalea or the Pearl Islands. It is from these nations that the Sea of Dawn receives a mystical description when talked about, for surely no one talks with pride about the constant wars on the Isle of Dawn.

The people of the Sea of Dawn are educated and except for the Pearl Islanders, a majority can read and write. Both the Thyatian and Alphatian tongues are well

known and it is rare to find someone who cannot speak both languages.

The Sea of Dawn is officially the sea along the eastern coast of the Old World, ending upon reaching the continents of Bellissaria and Alphatia. Since the sinking of Alphatia, the former Eastern Sea of Dawn has now become part of the New Alphatian Sea. The Sea of Dawn ends northward when it reaches the coast of Norwold and its southern end borders the Jungle Coast on Davania. West of the southern Sea of Dawn is the Sea of Dread, while to the east is the Bellissarian Sea.

Correspondents for the Sea of Dawn

This year, pending the result of the census, the same reports as you could read last are recopied almost verbatim for the Naycese kingdoms, with only a few minor modifications where necessary. Next year should prove a good opportunity to offer you brand new correspondences.

Here is our list of correspondents that give us detailed information on the nations, places and events of the Sea of Dawn:

Allstrick

For those not privy to the man that is Allstrick, he is a half-breed. Born to a Shiye mother and Alphatian father, Allstrick has lived a long life as an adventurer both inside and outside of the Alphatian Empire. He outlived the dangers and retired from the profession, ironically enough taking up residence in Glantri. During the war, Allstrick sent his son back to mainland Alphatia where he hoped he would be safe. He himself moved the rest of his household to a residence in Mirros to wait out the war.

With Alphatia's sinking Allstrick naturally assumed his son had perished. With the divulgence of Alphatia's survival in Hollow World, he began planning a venture to visit the Naycese lands. Rumors persist that he wishes to reassert his prestige upon his countrymen to gain access to the Hollow World. We took advantage of this trip and

approached Allstrick on reporting what he saw during his travels; he readily agreed and we look forward to his reports.

Demetius Vannopolus

A career officer in the Thyatian Army, General Vannopolus has been stationed on the Isle of Dawn off and on for over a decade, first fighting against the Alphatian invasion and later as military administrator in the central highlands of Dunadale. His interests go beyond the military and he has a reputation for showing concern for the welfare of the common people of Dunadale. His insights into the land and people of Dunadale proved to be extremely helpful during this past year. For Thyatis, we are proud to have several close-to-power correspondents, including Stefania Torion herself!

Kalitoru Nuar

Kalitoru is a wandering priest of Asterius from the Pearl Islands, specifically the island of Nuar. He views the entire world as an interesting place to visit and desires to see the whole world before he dies. He views the study of different cultures as enlightening and the one true way to understand human nature. He also loves collecting items from each nation and claims to have at least one of every coin of the entire known world.

Kalitoru shares his experiences on various nations of the Isle of Dawn with the readers. We unfortunately had to edit his sections on the cultures and people since he submitted enough to write an entire book on each of them. Hopefully we've managed to keep the important information.

Shaun the Elfin

Shaun of clan Grunalf is one of the most renowned artists and adventurers of the Old World. A well-traveled and knowledgeable elf, she has long retired from her adventuring career and now lives in Ierendi acting as *kia'i* (guardian) of the crown and member the Adventurers' Club. She is a

formidable storyteller and has a deep passion for heroic tales. After hearing of our editorial pursue, she has volunteered to tell us what she knows about the most exotic lands she visited in her life.

Stefania Torion

The second child of Emperor Thincol, Stefania is known not only for her strong will but her keen intellect. She killed her first husband on their wedding night and even ran away from home, causing much gossip in Thyatis City. During the Great War she fought alongside her husband Anaxibius Torion, a former Thyatian gladiator and general and with him she rules as Countess of Redstone. She is currently working on a history of her father's life but took time out of her writing to provide us with a description of Redstone and some of the surrounding communities, for which we are extremely grateful.

Thalia "Red Sheaf" Torres di Lopez

Accompanying Allstrick is Thalia "Red Sheaf" Torres di Lopez. Thalia is a half-breed from the Belcadiz Principality in Glantri. Allstrick and her had been adventuring companions for years; rumors persist she was a primary influence in his settling in Glantri before the Great War. She is not the mother of Allstrick's son, however the two have become romantically involved since his birth and his real mother's departure. So close are they that Thalia left Glantri to stay with Allstrick in Mirros.

Vivianna Romanones

An advisor and supporter of Eusebius, Lady Romanones is one of the empire's special envoys. Her duties demand a considerable amount of travel throughout the region under Thyatian influence and she has been kind enough to provide us with some unclassified reports of these areas. A strikingly beautiful but headstrong woman, Lady Romanones is a skilled negotiator known for her dedication to Thyatis and its interests. She is a strong proponent of

reform in Thyatis and of doing the right thing. Some of her detractors claim she is willing to use any means to achieve what she believes is right, but we can only say she deserves praise for the insightful reports she has graciously sent us. We know our readers will find her unique insight into the Thyatian mindset interesting.

Atlas

AEGOS (Dominion of)

Location: Sea of Dawn, southeast of the Isle of Dawn, west of Ochalea. AS

Area: 65,846 sq. mi. (170,541 sq. km.).

Population: 25,000, including Aegopoli (pop. 5,000) and Pittston (pop. 2,000). *[Population figures are tentative, pending census. Ed.]*

Languages: Alphatian (Alatian dialect), Thyatian (Thyatian dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp). Thyatian coins are also very common: *emperor* (5 gp), *lucin* (gp), *asterius* (sp), *denarius* (cp).

Taxes: 10% income tax and an import/export tax of 2% on magical items and components and 1% on all other goods (Naycese kingdoms and Karameikos excluded). 10% of tax revenue goes to the imperial treasury.

Government Type: Military dictatorship, member of Nayce.

Industries: Agriculture, fishing, trade.

Important Figures: Francesca Egidio (Thyatian Consulate, human, female, F18), Delsel Oaktree (Assistant Consulate, elf, male, F10/M10).

Flora and Fauna: The province has normal animals and plants found for lands of tropical plains, hills and forest (which are too numerous to all list here). Most of Aegos is wilderness and almost any type of monster can be found here due to the failure of Aegos's zoo long ago and the more recent escape of monsters from Gaity.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Vivianna Romanones.

The largest island of the Alatians, Aegos was until recently home to a sleepy community of farmers. Aegos is known for its farmland and pasturage. It occupies a strategic location in the Sea of Dawn,

covering access both west into the Sea of Dread and east towards Bellissaria. Aside from some piratical raids back and forth between Furmenglaive and Ne'er-do-well, Aegos was mostly uninvolved in the Great War. Since then it has become the focus of some attention though, due to the tunnel leading to the so-called "Hollow World" which existed in the island's interior. Both Minrothad and Thyatis dedicated themselves to exploiting the potential of this shaft but have been unable to reopen it following damage it suffered during the war. Repeated attempts have been made to repair it, but after promising starts it always collapses again—it seems the Alphatians made a mistake in building it in an area that is prone to earthquakes. Thyatian engineers have advised giving up on the project but have been overruled for political reasons by the governments of Minrothad and Thyatis; neither nation wants to fall further behind Nayce and Karameikos in reaping the benefits of exploration and discoveries in the Hollow World. Some say starting a new tunnel elsewhere, in an area less geologically unpredictable, would be wiser in the long run, but so far these proposals have gone nowhere. The people of Aegos are largely of Alphatian decent, but immigrants from Minrothad and Thyatis form a growing segment of the population, drawn here to work on The Pit. So far there has been little conflict between the new settlers and the natives, as the natives are scattered in farms while the immigrants mainly work in Aegopoli and Pittston.

Recent agreements have handed control over Aegos back to the Alphatians, though the Thyatian Empire retains a so-called Thyatian Quarter. In AC 1016 a fiendish creature wreaked havoc on Aegos soon after the Thyatian withdrawal; the beast was eventually dispatched while it was on Gaity by the former King of Aegos, Dromedon. Since the former king and likely candidate for kingship, was killed as well, the island has thus far remained under military rule; it is expected that a new king will be dispatched sometime this year.

AERIA (Kingdom of)

Location: Alatian Islands, the Sea of Dawn, southeast of the Isle of Dawn. AS

Area: 49,384 sq. mi. (127,905 sq. km.).

Population: 17,000 (10,000 in Feather Fall, including university staff, faculty and 5,000 students). [*Population figures are tentative, pending census. Ed.*]

Language: Alphatian (Alatian dialect, various dialects among the students and faculty).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: 10% income tax, a tax of 5% on the wages of Aerian wizards and an import/export tax of 2% on magical items and components and 1% on all other goods (Naycese kingdoms and Karameikos excluded). 10% of tax revenue goes to the imperial treasury.

Government Type: Semiautonomous monarchy, member of Nayce.

Industries: Agriculture and teaching of magic.

Important Figures: Aiklin (King, General and Headmaster of the University, human, male, M20).

Flora and Fauna: With its proximity to Aegos and Gaity, there are numerous escaped creatures from those kingdoms found on Aeria.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Allstrick.

Aeria has long cherished its pursuits and studies of the aerial magics. Those fluent with Alphatian history should be aware of the ties between air magic and the Alphatian migration to this planet. In many ways, I have always viewed Aeria as being highly symbolic of the old empire. For this reason, I have recently lost much respect for the kingdom for its actions following the Great War, not to mention the invaluable information that the Thyatians gained from the university for its own *skyship* pursuits. This proves most troublesome to me, as

Aeria had been one of my most cherished stopover points... back when I was much younger and much more prone to wandering the lands.

The Land

Aeria is an island kingdom, part of the Alatian Islands. Within its confines one will find forests to the west and south. To the north is the capital of Feather Fall, firmly nestled among a large range of high hills. The eastern portion of the island is mostly low rolling plains. These plains are heavily cultivated, making Aeria a rather prosperous agricultural base. This is quite a feat as over half of the kingdom's populace lives in the capital city of Feather Fall.

The keystone for Aeria's magical trade and reputation derives from the University of Air Magics. The university has always been a focal point to the spellcaster. That trait has luckily been preserved despite the war and the subsequent Thyatian occupation. Any spellcaster worth his salt will have to visit the university. There, one may be privileged to bear witness some of the amassed volumes of arcane knowledge. Luckily, the bulk of this collection remains intact even after the occupation. I do have to wonder how much of this priceless knowledge is now in Thyatian hands and being incorporated into the Thyatians' own *skyship* designs.

Those privileged enough... well spellcasters... may be allowed to see some of the air magics put to work. Though small by pre-war Alphatian standards, the university still dwarfs the Karameikan school regarding size and number of attending students. Among other venues, the university has some facilities to create, maintain and study airships. With the fleet depleted, work in the *skyshipyards* is rather robust. Though the facilities are limited in size, visitors should be able to witness various stages of enchantments being carried out by the university staff and students.

The People

The majority of the Aerian populace is Alphatian. There is also a noticeable Karameikan minority, mostly students in attendance at the university as part of the exchange program with the Karameikan school. With quiet Aeria now thrust into the new heart of Nayce, one would expect to see a heavy military presence. Already one can see a certain influx of Naycese military personnel. Since some of the troops I saw wore the insignia of the forces of [censored. Ed.] one can expect Nayce's military might on the island will increase.

The people of Aeria are still feeling the effects of the war. Though they suffered no real war damage, their less-than-concerted resistance to the Thyatians has scarred their personal pride and prestige within Nayce. They are highly sensitive to most references to their kingdom's conduct following the war. As such one may wish to avoid bringing the matter before them, especially since one third of the island is affiliated with the university and therefore a spellcaster.

Recent History

The island kingdom of Aeria is part of the Alatian Islands. As with the other Alatians, Aeria never managed to manifest itself into the grandiose mold that its artisan patrons desired. Even the vaunted University of Air Magics was not a major academic facility back in pre-war times. Of course, much of that has changed. Following the war, Aeria swore fealty to the Thyatian Empire as the legions gobbled up Alphatian lands. In my opinion this was a bit premature as the Thyatian expansion was soon after halted by Thothian and Alphatian forces. However, during its brief occupation Thyatis gained much invaluable insight into centuries of Alphatian airship techniques.

After the Treaty of Dawn, Aeria regained its independence and became a member of Nayce. Under the Naycese banner, Aeria's air magics have found a steady market in the rebuilding and maintenance of the depleted airship fleet. Personally, I think that this dependence has done much to have Nayce

and its kingdoms forgive Aeria for its behavior after the war. Of course, time will be the true factor.

Don't Miss

As mentioned, visitors should wangle a tour of the university. Those not inclined to do so... or that do not meet the criteria... can spend a few leisurely days in Feather Fall, enjoying the local flavor. The capital boasts numerous businesses that support and entertain the mages studying at the school. So, a certain degree of comfort can be expected. Also, one may find the rural landscape of the island inviting. If you are on the island during a stopover on a seagoing voyage, spending a few days in the country may be the best remedy for a case of the "sea legs."

Do Miss

There really is not a great deal to worry about on the island. It's an old imperial possession and it has been settled for some time. Of course, there are the possibilities of encountering several types of dangerous creatures. One must remember that with so many mages, there is great opportunity for summoned and created creatures. It should be remembered that many of these pets escaped their bonds and may be running amuck. However, anyone familiar with Alphatia should be aware of this and any surprise encounters should be expected.

CAERDWICCA (*Barony of*)

Location: Southern coast of the Isle of Dawn, southwest of the Great Escarpment, north of Aegos. SD

Area: 17,459 sq. mi. (45,220 sq. km.).

Population: 5,000, including 1,500 in the town of Caerdwick; about twice that if you count the numerous pirates that answered the baron's call last year and are anchored at the town of Caerdwick or elsewhere in the barony.

Languages: Thyatian (Thyatian and Redstone dialects both common), Alphatian (Hillvale dialect), Klantyre (among the McRhomaag clan members).

Coinage: Thyatian Standard: *emperor* (pp), *lucin* (gp), *asterius* (sp), *denarius* (cp). Alphatian coins are also very common: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: 25% income tax collected quarterly on the aristocracy, nobility and wealthy; 20% income tax collected quarterly on everyone else (Va. 1, Ya. 1, Fy. 3 and Ei. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. Expensive and magical items are also taxed 25% of their worth. 10% imperial *commencia* sales tax on all goods except food, clothing and fixed assets; levied on imports, rebated on exports. Tax on slave owning equal to 50% of the slave's value annually. Property tax levied based on quality of land, roughly 6% of its value annually.

Government Type: Dominion, part of the Province of Meridia, member of the Thyatian Empire.

Industries: Agriculture, trade, piracy.

Important Figures: Uthgaard McRhomaag (Baron, human, male, F12/T4).

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Demetius Vannopolus.

Caerdwicca is a large and prominent Thyatian barony on the southern shores of the Isle of Dawn, often believed to be part of the Province of Meridia (Furmenglaive still claims part of that province as land it legitimately owns, a mapper's nightmare). The inhabitants of Caerdwicca are noted for their rakishness.

The Land

Caerdwicca lies along the eastern rim of the Province of Meridia, where the Afon Du River empties into the Alatian Sea. The territories of the barony also run along the northeastern shores of the Straits of Barbarossa. These coastal areas are the most settled and developed portions of Caerdwicca, though there is one village,

Lindum, located inland near the forests of Meridia.

The coastal lands of Caerdwicca consist of bluffs overlooking beaches along the Alatian Sea, with many treacherous offshore reefs. These bluffs are often broken by caves and lagoons, which are too frequently the hideouts and lairs for the buccaneers and corsairs that infest the Straits of Barbarossa.

The town of Caerdwick itself, as well as nearby McRhomaag Castle, is built on one of these bluffs, a port in this region and one of the few havens for fishing and trading vessels. [*Many say that most ships here actually do more piracy than honest trade and fishing. Ed.*]. Approximately a dozen miles north of Caerdwick Town, amidst the gulf, lays a rocky isle of seagulls and pelicans, about a hundred square miles in area. A lighthouse on the isle is operated by a small leper colony, which does some light farming and has some sheep, goats, chickens and cows to provide for their own needs.

Inland Caerdwicca consists of rolling plains, with true hills around the Carreg Brynniau region. In those hills there are a series of dolmen—mysterious stone monuments—which are believed to have been constructed by fairies. Nearby, around the village of Lindum, is the best agricultural land, though it is mainly used as pasturage for sheep and other herd animals.

The treacherous Straits of Barbarossa, off the barony's eastern coast, have precious few narrow sea lanes that are safe for shipping. The rest of the straits are festooned with coral reefs and shallows, which only fast, shallow-draft vessels that know the region well can navigate safely. These prey on the slower trading vessels that must sail straight through the narrow trade lanes. The pirates dart in like sharks and only well-protected vessels with good captains, or those who can buy off the pirates with protection money, pass through here safely. Many corsairs of the region, it is said, once had a concord with the knaves and pirates of Ne'er-do-well, but this league between them seems to have fractured during the Great War and the two groups are now antagonistic rivals.

I should mention one other danger for those traveling the Straits of Barbarossa: sudden massive whirlpools can open up and swallow an unwary and unprepared vessel, never to be seen again. The merchant-princes of Minrothad and others with knowledge of water-related magics can help guide one through these dangers, but less able vessels are advised to dock at Furmenglaive or sail south through the Sea of Pearls rather than the straits.

The People

Caerdwicca was founded by the McRhomaag Clan, men of Klantyrrian descent who left Glantri after that nation's Light of Rad declaration and emigrated to Thyatis. This family, known for its brave and worthy fighters, served the empire as military officers. When Emperor Gabrionus I began a series of colonization efforts, the clan managed to secure a fief for itself on the Isle of Dawn. Caerdwick Village was subsequently founded in AC 912.

During the Alphatian Spike Assault of 959, Darragh McRhomaag, a naval officer and the clan's patriarch at the time, led a daring assault against the Alphatian ships around the city of Thyatis as part of Thincol's counter-strikes against them. Though Darragh died during the battle, his quick wit and valor led to the capture or destruction of several Alphatian vessels, crippling their fleet and making subsequent counterattacks to recover Thyatian portions of the Isle of Dawn possible. As a result of Darragh's bravery, Thincol, the new emperor, posthumously upgraded Darragh's fief into a barony. Thus, his son and heir, Malachy McRhomaag, inherited his title and became the first living Baron of Caerdwicca.

The McRhomaags are a fiery, hot-tempered bunch, known for their combativeness but also for their gregarious nature. They will brawl with you one moment, then pick you up off the floor, slap you on the back and share a beer with you. The settlers they have attracted to the barony are much the same, though hardened sea dogs are increasingly common, finding a

kindred spirit in the current baron, Uthgaard McRhomaag.

Recent History

Uthgaard spent the recent war raiding Alphatian shipping in the Alatian Sea, having good success doing so, a bright spot in an otherwise disappointing war for Thyatis. As a result of this, the Alphatians tried to take Caerdwicca during the war, besieging Castle McRhomaag for a time, but they were eventually forced to withdraw after having suffered considerable losses. Some say Uthgaard continues to sponsor piracy and is a buccaneer himself and there are even rumors that he has a hidden grotto used as a base for pirates somewhere in Caerdwicca, but imperial officials have never been able to confirm any of these rumors. In any case, the population of Caerdwicca has grown significantly since the end of the wars, as a result of the increased colonization program, as well as the special efforts of the baron to attract settlers he finds suitable. Caerdwicca's main settlement has grown so much, indeed, that it is now classified as a small town rather than a village. Uthgaard has also expanded by absorbing some of the nearby villages that had been in the hands of petty lords, whom had often behaved more like bandits than nobles.

EKTO (Kingdom of)

Location: Isle of Dawn, east of Brun, southwest of the New Alphatian Sea. SD

Area: 38,160 sq. mi. (98,834 sq. km.).

Population: 28,000 (1,000 in the city of Ekto). [*Population figures are tentative, pending census. Ed.*]

Language: Alphatian (Hillvale and Thothian dialects), Thyatian (Redstone dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp). Thyatian coins are also very common: *emperor* (5 gp), *lucin* (gp), *asterius* (sp), *denarius* (cp).

Taxes: 20% on everyone of servant status or higher and an import tax of 1% (Naycese kingdoms and Karameikos excluded). 10%

obligation to the imperial treasuries deferred due to rebuilding. Ekto also benefits from imperial funding to aid in its rebuilding.

Government Type: Semiautonomous monarchy, member of Nayce.

Industries: Agriculture, mining, metallurgy and reconstruction.

Important Figures: Tristan (King and General, human, male, F17).

Flora and Fauna: The sieges and razing of Ekto had left the kingdom little more than a wasteland, destroying most plant life and pushing animal life abroad. With rebuilding underway and a return of some of the crops, animal life has begun to return. As with any Alphatian kingdom, almost any creature can be expected.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Thalia.

I had heard of the troubles Ekto had experienced after the war. Truthfully, I had dreaded our journey there. I did not think that I could take seeing a city that had taken so much abuse. Allstrick was adamant in our venturing there. So, after some convincing, not to mention promises of sites to come, I gave in and we headed for Ekto.

The Land

Ekto sits along the eastern coast of the Isle of Dawn, just up the coast from Trikelios. The kingdom boasts ample lands suitable for farming. To the north and west the land turns more broken and gives way to hills and mountains, which see several mining operations. To the south one begins experiencing the fringes of the Great Escarpment. Naturally, the east sees the waters of the Sea of Dawn.

Ekto's capital and namesake, sits along the coast. Before its destruction, the capital had excelled as the collection point of the kingdom's harvests. The city was also the site of the College of Metals, a school renowned for the pursuits of metals and metallurgy. Allstrick had told me that this college had served him well in identifying

and finding buyers for items retrieved in his journeys. Unofficially, the city also serves as the last stop for would-be adventurers heading off to the Thothian Plateau.

Now, Ekto is under a state of rebuilding. I was pleasantly surprised to find that a good deal of the rubble had been cleared and new construction proceeding well. There are even crops being cultivated in once scorched fields. Considering all its rebuilding, Allstrick had a good degree of difficulty in showing me the city. We did find the former site of the College of Metals, which was just being framed up. Most of the former staff was to be seen contributing to other building projects. He was able to find some old acquaintances among these people, who were happy to show us around.

The People

The people of Ekto are primarily of Alphatian stock. Intermingled within their numbers, one can find a sizable minority of Thothians and a small number of dwarves and gnomes. Ekto's populace has not completely returned. I was told that some remain in Trikelios or have found new homes elsewhere. Also, a certain amount perished, either during the war, holding back the Thyatians, or in retaking the city. Allstrick himself expressed the pain of loss as several old friends proved themselves as casualties. There are numerous foreign Alphatians in Ekto working to rebuild the city.

Located where it is, Ekto is placed in a highly strategic position. Nayce has recognized this and there is a sizable military presence within the kingdom. King Tristan rules Ekto and commands the kingdom's armed forces. He is a pleasant man, with a deep conviction to his position. Personally, I think that he would prefer military command to his kingship. Allstrick knows him from somewhere and we found ourselves his guests for most of our week-long stay in the city. How they knew each other is still a mystery to me, as they would often begin speaking in the Alphatian tongue, when discussing the "old days."

Since I have but a fleeting grasp of the language, I can only wonder.

Recent History

Ekto is a strange place. It is said that it was once Thothian until the Alphatians conquered those people and accepted them into the empire. Since then the two have forged a deep pact of mutual respect... at least as mutual as can be expected by the Alphatians and their views of other peoples. Following the Great War, Thyatis took advantage of Alphatia's demise and began a systematic effort to assimilate the scattered Alphatian lands. However, Alphatian resolve proved greater. Though Thyatian pushes reclaimed much of their pre-war holdings and a few Alphatian ones, the Alphatians of Ekto chose to abandon their kingdom, putting it to the torch along the way. Surely the Alphatians must thoroughly despise the Thyatians to raze their own lands.

Eventually the Thyatian advances were checked and pushed back by Thothian and Alphatian forces. A true peace was gained by the Treaty of Dawn. Soon after Ekto was given independence and its own king. Following Thothia's example, Ekto joined Nayce. Under the banner of Nayce, Ekto has begun the reconstruction process. For the time being, Ekto is aided by imperial grants and deferral of its taxes to the imperial treasuries. Many of its displaced population have returned. Likewise, many Alphatian commoners living outside of Ekto journeyed there to hire out their labor to the rebuilding effort. From what I have seen reconstruction is moving smoothly and should be completed within a year or two

Don't Miss

If in Ekto, one will have to witness the rebuilding process. More precisely, one should witness the Alphatian way of building. The use of magic to perform tasks such as framing and masonry work is interesting. I spent an entire day watching a group of mages conjure up the frames of several houses, while non-magical workers began the finishing work. Ekto's rebuilding

also is a sign of recovery from tremendous devastation. Though not completed yet, the new College of Metals is supposed to be an interesting edifice. However, once completed it should be included as a must-see.

Do Miss

Ekto is still under reconstruction and is therefore a bit disorganized. In and around the capital things are quiet, well except for the pounding of hammers. As one moves away from the capital, things become a bit more hectic. Hostile creatures from the Thothian Plateau are said to raid and harass outlying areas. Likewise, the more mountainous regions should also be given forethought before trespassing.

FURMENGLAIVE (County of)

Location: Southwestern coast of Isle of Dawn. SD

Area: 9,875 sq. mi. (25,575 sq. km.).

Population: 5,000, including 2,000 in the community of Furmenglaive.

Languages: Thyatian (Thyatian dialect), Alphatian (Hillvale dialect).

Coinage: Thyatian Standard: *emperor* (pp), *lucin* (gp), *asterius* (sp), *denarius* (cp). Alphatian coins are also very common: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: 25% income tax collected quarterly on the aristocracy, nobility and wealthy; 20% income tax collected quarterly on everyone else (Va. 1, Ya. 1, Fy. 3 and Ei. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. Expensive and magical items are also taxed 25% of their worth. 10% imperial *commercia* sales tax on all goods except food, clothing and fixed assets; levied on imports, rebated on exports. Tax on slave owning equal to 50% of the slave's value annually. Property tax levied based on quality of land, roughly 6% of its value annually.

Government Type: Dominion, member of the Thyatian Empire.

Industries: Agriculture, fishing (both rather sparse and unrewarding).

Important Figures: Phileus Furmenglaive (Count, human, male/werewolf, F20), Lyra Furmenglaive (Countess, human, female/werewolf, Pr20 of Protius).

Flora and Fauna: Furmenglaive consists mostly of moors and rolling hills with shrubs and a few scattered woods of ashes, yews and the occasional pine tree. Small ponds also dot the countryside, where sheep and goats are the most common sight. Wild goats and boars and packs of wolves are also common for the shepherds and farmers of the region, who use brave shepherd dogs to protect their cattle and farms. Many unpleasant creatures can be found in Furmenglaive due to the presence of the Thothian Plateau, which is a veritable nest of monsters. Lycanthropes are feared in the region (especially werewolves and wereboars), as well as undead and the so-called night demons, a term the Furmenglaivians use to define any unpleasant creature that stalks the land by night (including goblins).

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Shaun the Elfin.

Shadows stretch across this tiny province in the south of the Isle of Dawn, shadows that belong to the night and to the other side of life, what is commonly called “fear” or “mystery” by most men. And truly Furmenglaive is “the Gateway to the Darkworld,” as many of its inhabitants call it.

The Land

Rolling hills and great expanses of moors dominate the County of Furmenglaive. Some patches of scrub trees and gaunt isolated birches and ashes may be encountered up and down the hills of the region, but to call those real woods would be an insult to Mother Nature (especially for me). Moors are the common terrain here and many people dedicate their lives to

raising goats and sheep that produce a fine quality of wool (like that produced in Klantyre). Others prefer to work the soil and so some cultivated fields can also be spotted in the area (especially near the capital), though not as often as shepherds tending cattle. A few fishermen also try to earn their living in the southern part of the dominion, but theirs is not a wealthy profession here. Many small ponds and a few bogs (especially in the southern tip of the dominion) can be encountered by the inexperienced traveler and wild animals usually gather here to drink and rest during the day, while they take refuge in their lairs at night, like every other sane being would do here. The sky is an impressive sight in Furmenglaive, so near to the ground that sometimes it seems you could touch it with your own hands. Clouds roll by at incredible speeds during night and day due to the wind currents from the nearby Sea of Dawn, making the landscape a kaleidoscope of colors, especially during daylight. Furmenglaive coasts are jagged and full of reefs in the northern part, while the southern ones are windswept and shallower.

The only good natural harbor here lies below Castle Furmenglaive, where the count and countess have built the only existing port of the entire domain. A four-yard-wide street of cobblestones leads from the port 200 yards up to the fortified town of Furmenglaive, built around the imposing building known as Castle Furmenglaive, a gloomy old fortress erected on the cliffs above the harbor. The town consists mostly of wooden barracks and a few stone dwellings for the richer artisans and the town mayor (who also happens to be the seneschal and the chief constable). The countryside of Furmenglaive is dotted with a handful of tiny hamlets and isolated huts of lone rangers and herders who don't trust wanderers, especially if they're strangers and come by night-time... as I've witnessed myself firsthand.

The People

The people of Furmenglaive are a superstitious lot... or a wise one, I've not

understood it yet. They believe in Things That Go Bump in the Night, in Witches' Covens, in the Beasts Within and in the Longfang Devils, to use the terms of those natives. They are of Kerendan stock, but strangely they are more like the Traladarans of the last century than to the common Thyatian: I can only assume they changed their vision of the world when they came to live in Furmenglaive. And honestly, I cannot blame them for their fears, for this is a land where even your own shadow seems to be alive... and out to harm you. The Furmenglaivians believe in the dark side of men and nature and are ready to defend themselves using wards and old traditional countermeasures that range from the simple cantrip and garlic necklace to the most complicated *formulae magicae* (ceremonies) to drive out devils and impure spirits from places and human beings. Normally, special people (*auguri*—sing.: *augurus*) who are held in high respect by all the villagers perform these rituals; they have the same importance as priests in the nations of the Old World (and some of them are indeed clerics), though their powers are not always real (but they do believe in them!).

Recent History

Furmenglaive is ruled by Count Phileus Furmenglaive and his wife Lyra, who managed to reclaim their dominion after the Alphatians captured it during the war in AC 1006. The province itself is quite old and was founded in AC 500 by the great grandfather of the current ruler, Magnus Furmenglaive, a powerful Thyatian wizard. It was upgraded from a barony to its current status as a county following the war with Alphatia in AC 959. At that time, also, it ceased to fall under the jurisdiction of the *Provincia Meridia* and its lands have been administered independently of other dominions of the Shadow Coast. As such, the County of Furmenglaive manages to avoid most of the petty politicking and feuding that plagues the barons and lords of the southern Isle of Dawn. Which is just as well, considering all the horrors they've got to deal with.

GAITY (*Dominion of*)

Location: Alatian Islands, the Sea of Dawn, southeast of the Isle of Dawn. SD

Area: 16,960 sq. mi. (43,926 sq. km.).

Population: 13,000.

Language: Alphatian (Alatian dialect, official though almost nobody speaks Alphatian on Gaity), Thyatian (Thyatian dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp). Thyatian coins are also very common: *emperor* (5 gp), *lucin* (gp), *asterius* (sp), *denarius* (cp).

Taxes: So far Nayce has been unable to impose taxation on the warring barons; each baron imposes different taxes within his dominion.

Government Type: Officially, military dictatorship, member of Nayce. In reality, there is no central government; petty barons compete for the ruling of small dominions.

Industries: None.

Important Figures: None.

Flora and Fauna: As with most Alphatian lands, just about any type of creature can be found. However, with its previous amusement and zoological natures there tends to be an even greater abundance of exotic creatures.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Allstrick.

In all our visits, our journey to Gaity must have been the best planned. With its anarchist state and presence of warring Thyatian barons, we had hired several Alphatian mercenaries to fill out our ranks. Of course, we also had to secure the services of a sea vessel willing to venture there and to meet us to take us off island. I'll also note that our arrival on Gaity was more akin to sneaking in. We landed at night and at a remote section of beach. In fact, our time spent upon the island was almost game-like as we ran the gamut of dodging patrols and hostile creatures.

The Land

Gaity is an island kingdom, part of the Alatians. The island is rather unimpressive. Its terrain is mostly rocky hills. This hindered our progress but aided us in providing cover in our travels. Our progression was slow; many times, we had to double back to avoid the various strongholds and patrols of the barons that war for dominance of the island. We were not always successful in our vigilance and twice we were forced to seek refuge amid caves and wait out a nearby patrol. All in all, the cat and mouse game proved most exhilarating, reminding me much of the olden days.

We visited the ruins of Rainbow Park. It was quite sad to bear witness to the resort in such disrepair. Many a time had I journeyed to its confines, to spend a few days reveling at its attractions. Though now in shambles and its buildings picked of any valuables, I could still imagine what these constructions had been in their prime. We even visited the area of the resort that had served as the internment camp for the Alphatian citizens. I dread to think of the hardships that these people had to endure under their occupiers. It was in Rainbow Park that we ran into some trouble. Several previous spectacles decided to try our mettle. However, a flurry of spells and good steel struck down these beasts and we were no worse for the wear.

We also visited Paganica, the Thyatian-built ex-capital of Gaity. Abandoned after the Treaty of Dawn, Paganica was a veritable ghost town. We spent the day searching its vacant buildings. We found very little though as the buildings had long since been picked clean of any valuables, had there been any there in the first place. We did camp there for several nights, before embarking for our rendezvous with our sailing vessel to remove us from the island.

The People

We had little contact with those calling Gaity home. We were quite content to observe from a distance. Most are Thyatians, allied to one of the island's barons. I had

neither the time nor the patience to get involved in their frivolous warring. There are few Alphatians still on the island. Though most were interned and subsequently transported to Esterhold or some other Naycese lands, some Alphatians have returned to Gaity or managed to avoid deportation. Those Alphatians that we saw appeared to be little more than mercenaries, serving in the forces of one of the barons. We also saw signs of smugglers, probably working out of Ne'er-do-well.

From our encounters with the patrols, we got a good sense of the warring between the barons. Each baron seems to be seeking an edge, no matter the cost. I also got the impression that the inhabitants have little respect for their Naycese neighbors. I cannot really blame them, as Nayce has done very little to remedy the situation or even assert any control over the barons. Which is a shame as interdiction could easily put a rest to this power struggle and reclaim the island. From what I saw, it would not be too difficult for Nayce to assert its authority upon the barons. Perhaps Nayce would rather save themselves the trouble and let these amateurs kill each other off before moving in.

Recent History

Gaity had once been part of the artistry movement to develop the Alatians. For Gaity this effort manifested itself in the resort town of Rainbow Park. The resort was destroyed by the effects of the sinking and the Week without Magic. The subsequent Thyatian occupation and colonization efforts saw the Alphatian populace interned in a concentration camp at the ruins of Rainbow Park. There their treatment was less than hospitable with some 500 perishing from maltreatment. Later, through the efforts of Tristilia and several Alphatian officers serving in the Thyatian military, these interned Alphatians were freed and transported to Esterhold.

The Treaty of Dawn essentially freed the island. All Thyatian officials and military were removed from the island. However, the

Thyatians sent as colonists remained and have fallen into an anarchist society of petty barons warring for ultimate control of the island. Though Nayce finally retook Gaity, the confederacy has otherwise ignored the island completely—no king has even been named yet and the military command let do.

Don't Miss

Strangely enough, Rainbow Park is still the bright spot upon Gaity. Despite its current state of ruin, there is still much there to draw the interests of the casual observer. We could have literally spent days rummaging through its ruins.

Do Miss

The island is full of danger. One will have to be careful lest they be drawn into the warring of the barons. Likewise, the island boasts numerous creatures running amuck. With the barons focusing on each other, there has been little done to quell these marauding monsters. Adventurer types may find opportunity in doing some monster hunting. Of course, they cannot expect the barons to reward them and they may find themselves caught up in the political mess that is Gaity.

HELDUN (Confederated Kingdom of)

Location: Northeastern head of the Isle of Dawn. SD

Area: 175,465 sq. mi. (454,455 sq. km.).

Population: 120,000, including cities of Helskir (pop. 15,000) and Dunadale (pop. 20,000) and the towns of Deirdren (pop. 5,000) and Norkinn (pop. 1,000).

Languages: Alphatian (Hillvale dialect), Thyatian (Redstone dialect).

Coinage: Thyatian Standard: *emperor* (pp), *lucin* (gp), *asterius* (sp), *denarius* (cp); Alphatian Standard: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: 25% income tax collected quarterly on the aristocracy, nobility and wealthy; 20% income tax collected quarterly on everyone

else (Va. 1, Ya. 1, Fy. 3 and Ei. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. Expensive and magical items are also taxed 25% of their worth. 10% imperial *commercia* sales tax on all goods except food, clothing and fixed assets; levied on imports, rebated on exports. Tax on slave owning equal to 50% of the slave's value annually. Property tax levied based on quality of land, roughly 6% of its value annually.

Government Type: Constitutional monarchy with many elected representatives advising the ruler. Member of both the Thyatian Empire and Nayce.

Industries: Agriculture, fishing, cutting of peat moss, sheep-herding, trade, some raiding.

Important Figures: Asteriela Torion (Queen, human, female, M13).

Flora and Fauna: Standard for its climate, notably herds of sheep and goats. Dangerous monsters include goblinoids and bandits that are common throughout the Isle of Dawn.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Demetius Vannopolus, with commentary from Vivianna Romanones.

Heldun as a kingdom is a bridge. A bridge between a past shrouded in antagonism and war and a future of prosperity and enlightenment. It was formed from the union of two nations, the Kingdom of Helskir and the Confederacy of Dunadale through the peaceful efforts of Thyatian and Alphatian alike. Heldun is a bridge between cultures, Thyatian, Alphatian and increasingly Antalian as Ostlander immigrants establish their settlements. But already the promise of a new future is threatened, as the Knights of Heldann occupy Helskir itself.

The Land

Heldun is a large nation, with all types of terrain and climate. From the northern tip of the Isle of Dawn where Helskir lies and the

land is cold but where the fish abound, sweeping down the coast in a wide arc to the temperate coastal communities of Dunadale and Deirdren. The fertile coastal lowlands are the most settled parts of this land. As you move inland from the coast the terrain becomes a patchwork of hills, bogs and forests, a dangerous place, but a place where the people are hardy and freedom-loving. *[The area around Demeran's Moor, at the head of the island, once considered part of Helskir, was ceded to Westrouрке following the signing of the Treaty of Helskir. Vivianna.]*

The People

Heldun's cities are thriving communities, with burgeoning trade. The people are beginning to mix freely in these towns. By and large, the cities of Dunadale and Helskir have become communities where Alphatian and Thyatian customs are blending into a new culture, uniquely Heldunian. Even before the recent Thyatian conquest, Dunadale stood out among Alphatian domains as the only place to adopt anything resembling the Thyatian concept of citizenship and even went a step farther. The inhabitants of the confederacy had rights, could vote and popularly elected officials limited even the powers of the monarch. Coastal Heldun is a cosmopolitan land and only the Heldannic invaders stand between these people and a bright future.

But while the coasts with their brash tradesmen are what people most think of when they consider Heldun, it is the people in the countryside which form its heart. These people are the salt of the earth, prizing their self-reliance and yet ever ready to lend their neighbors a helping hand. For centuries they have lived, wedged between two empires, their lives and livelihoods endangered by war and monster incursions and yet they thrive. *[Until recently Asteriela Torion and Eruul Zaar jointly governed this land, with the capital at Helskir. The assassination of Zaar while on Ionace and the invasion of the Heldannic Knights have left the government in turmoil and forced Asteriela to move the capital temporarily to Dunadale. While neither Thyatis nor*

Nayce have yet sent aid to the fledgling nation, each for their own reasons, I have no doubt that the Asteriela I came to know while negotiating the Treaty of Helskir will prove herself up to the challenge of forging a strong nation. Vivianna.]

History

Heldun is a new land with more ahead of it than behind it. It was forged from the crucible of war and tempered by diplomatic wrangling between the Thyatians and the Alphatians. Heldunians have put the past behind them. New arrivals from Ostland and Thyatis, as well as Alphatians returning from abroad, prefer to think of the future. *[The arrival of the Knights of Heldann is a painful reminder of the region's strife-filled past, proving that it is not so easy to forget harsh reality, as Vannopolus would like to believe. The wars, especially the recent Final Alphatian War and Thincol's subsequent absorption of the region, still shape attitudes among the people. Vivianna.]*

Don't Miss

The lighthouse in Helskir, while not (as previously reported) the largest in the world (several along Vanya's Girdle are its equal or greater), is quite a sight nonetheless, with a brilliant beacon light. The Heldannic Knights have taken to using it as a lookout tower and it is fairly heavily guarded, so you might want to reconsider getting too close. *[Helskir's once-thriving markets are said to be a bit bare these days, with the knights imposing strict control on entry and exit from the city, lest others duplicate their feat of sneaking in a band of infiltrators. The markets of Dunadale are much more impressive. Vivianna.]*

The Herdane Escarpment does provide a glorious view of the sunrise for those who have the fortitude to scale its cliffs. The hard-working people of the interior aren't a sight, but for those who are tired of interactions with cynical swindlers, spending time with this folk will restore your faith in humanity.

HILLVALE (Kingdom of)

Location: Isle of Dawn. SD

Area: 79,690 sq. mi. (206, 397 sq. km.).

Population: 10,000 (3,000 in town of East Portage). [*Population figures are tentative, pending census. Ed.*]

Language: Alphatian (Hillvale dialect), Thyatian (Redstone dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp). Thyatian coins are also very common: *emperor* (5 gp), *lucin* (gp), *asterius* (sp), *denarius* (cp).

Taxes: 10% income tax and an import/export tax of 2% on magical items and components and 1% on all other goods (Naycese kingdoms and Karameikos excluded). 10% of tax revenue goes to the imperial treasury.

Government type: Semiautonomous monarchy, member of Nayce.

Industries: Trade, portage of goods between East and West Portage.

Important Figures: Quicklimn (King and General, human, male, M9).

Flora and Fauna: Due to its proximity to the Great Escarpment, all manner of creature types may be found wandering into the kingdom.

Description by Allstrick.

I will not lie and say that I had looked forward to our arrival in East Portage. In truth, I faced the prospect of returning there with mixed feelings. It was not fear that manifests these feelings, it was disappointment and downright anger. I made it a point that our stay in East Portage would be brief and we adhered to that plan.

The Land

East Portage is a hilly kingdom, thus dubbing its other name the Kingdom of Hillvale. From its position on the eastern side of the Isle of Dawn isthmus, East Portage has carved its place and future in portaging goods across the isthmus to West Portage. This effort saves many days in any sea voyage around the northern or southern

tips of the island. If it were not for this role, East Portage would probably be no more than a simple agricultural kingdom.

The capital of East Portage is the town of East Portage. Architecture is of a predominantly Alphatian design, however Thyatian designs are also prevalent. As one would imagine, the town has ample harbor and shipyard facilities to load and offload cargoes for the overland journey west. Facilities for this cargo ferrying are also in abundance. The streets are usually congested with wagons. Likewise, the cobbled streets are littered with the waste products of the beasts of burden. And one cannot go down a street without seeing a stable, blacksmith shop, or wainwright. During the summer months the smell is quite bad.

The People

East Portage has traditionally been an Alphatian holding. As such, the populace is mostly Alphatian. The populace's interaction with its Thyatian neighbors has seen the rise of a noticeable Thyatian minority and some adoption of Thyatian ways. As one would expect, the bulk of the populace deals with the transport of goods across the isthmus. The people of East Portage did not carry themselves well after the Great War. Their behavior is not exactly a shining point in their history and they know it. They tend to ignore that period. Many become aggressive if pressed on the matter.

Recent History

East Portage had long ago been under the auspices of the old border wars that had so prevailed between the two empires. In times of war, it had flip-flopped between empires as a possession. In times of peace, it has served as one of the trade junctions between Alphatian lands and those of the Old World. After the Great War, East Portage put up a very limited defense against Thyatian expansionism on the Isle of Dawn. In exchange for a Thyatian ducal title, King Lornce M'Jozee surrendered the kingdom to the Thyatians. The Thothian stand and counteroffensives allowed the return of East

Portage to Alphatian hands. With Thothia's entrance into Nayce, East Portage soon followed.

Don't Miss / Do Miss

Within East Portage, there is little to see. The kingdom is quite unremarkable. The locals are too business oriented to offer too much interest. Likewise, East Portage lacks the usual magical flair that Alphatian kingdoms usually bear witness to. The most exciting and hazardous aspect of East Portage is dodging the animal wastes that line the streets. Outside its borders is another story. The Great Escarpment is close enough to offer an unexplored region filled with many unknowns.

KENDACH (County of)

Location: Center of the neck of the Isle of Dawn, between East and West Portage. SD

Area: 20,810 sq. mi. (53,900 sq. km.).

Population: 40,000, including 5,000 in the capital of Kendach.

Languages: Thyatian (Thyatian and Redstone dialects both common), Alphatian (Hillvale dialect).

Coinage: Thyatian Standard: *emperor* (pp), *lucin* (gp), *asterius* (sp), *denarius* (cp). Alphatian coins are also very common: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: 25% income tax collected quarterly on the aristocracy, nobility and wealthy; 20% income tax collected quarterly on everyone else (Va. 1, Ya. 1, Fy. 3 and Ei. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. Expensive and magical items are also taxed 25% of their worth. 10% imperial *commercia* sales tax on all goods except food, clothing and fixed assets; levied on imports, rebated on exports. Tax on slave owning equal to 50% of the slave's value annually. Property tax levied based on quality of land, roughly 6% of its value annually.

Government Type: Dominion, member of the Thyatian Empire.

Industries: Agriculture, trade (especially portage of goods from West Portage to East Portage), iron ore.

Important Figures: Marie Kendach (Countess, human, female, F9).

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Demetius Vannopolus.

This small county is located at the neck of the Isle of Dawn, roughly southeast of West Portage. The settled part of Kendach is mainly fertile farmlands. The southern edge of the county is dominated by grassland where goblinoids and bandits are known to dwell. Kendach has always been heavily defended—generally against the Alphatians but lately patrols have increased in the south, to deter raids by the creatures of the Great Escarpment. The fortifications are in top condition and the town has centered its industry on entertaining the military and provisioning tradesmen and travelers on the Crossdawn Road. The citadel of Kendach itself is a large, imposing structure, second on the isle only to Redstone in size and strength. The Kendach Plateau to the south falls under the jurisdiction of the countess but is unsettled. Before the war, the previous countess, Julia Kendasius, built a fortified observation tower on this plateau, but it was destroyed during the war. There is some thought being given to rebuilding it, as it would make a good communications link on the way to the Tower of Lucinius in the Province of Septentriona. Some in town think there might be minerals worth developing in the plateau as well, but no one has done a full survey yet. The larger plateau to the east falls within Naycese jurisdiction, though that plateau too is unsettled and unexplored.

The People

As a frontier county, Kendach suffered heavily during the Great War and was one of the first places attacked by the Alphatians. The arrival of thousands of colonists from the mainland has replaced these losses and more. The town bustles with new life and

enterprise. They trade, mine (mostly iron) and have farms and ranches in the area. The lands around Kendach are especially good for ranching, with herds of cattle and sheep common.

The people of Kendach have a rough, frontier spirit and are always alert. The *Kastra* (castle) of Kendach itself is smaller than the citadel of Redstone, but no less well made and constructed with artillery and other air defenses. Kendach doesn't have the same distinction of Redstone, having fallen not only in the Final Alphantian War but also having succumbed to assault in the Spike Assault War in AC 959 as the Alphantians pushed to West Portage. Yet Kendach remains a stout barrier against all but the most major assaults, having withstood many a siege in its long history. Kendach's defenders are more valiant and dedicated as they know the important role they play as the *imperium's* first line of defense. Therefore, the local militiamen and reservists are ever ready to spring to the defense of the empire. Their now notorious lax and unready state during the last war is a source of great shame to them and they have redoubled their resolve, promising to never allow such to happen again.

MERIDIA (Province of)

Location: Southwestern coast of Isle of Dawn. SD

Area: 82,160 sq. mi. (212,795 sq. km.), plus Caerdwicca, which is technically considered part of the province.

Population: 3,000, plus Caerdwicca, which is technically considered part of the province.

Languages: Thyatian (Thyatian dialect), Alphantian (Hillvale dialect). An ancient dialect of Ochalean is spoken in some areas of the province.

Coinage: Thyatian Standard: *emperor* (pp), *lucin* (gp), *asterius* (sp), *denarius* (cp). Alphantian coins are also very common: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: 25% income tax collected quarterly on the aristocracy, nobility and wealthy; 20% income tax collected quarterly on everyone else (Va. 1, Ya. 1, Fy. 3 and Ei. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. Expensive and magical items are also taxed 25% of their worth. 10% imperial *commercia* sales tax on all goods except food, clothing and fixed assets; levied on imports, rebated on exports. Tax on slave owning equal to 50% of the slave's value annually. Property tax levied based on quality of land, roughly 6% of its value annually.

Government Type: Dominion, member of the Thyatian Empire.

Industries: Agriculture, fishing, trade (in general; each dominion of the province might have a few extra industries as will be noted in their description).

Important Figures: Valerion Recebarius (Provincial Legate/Governor, human, male, T6).

Flora and Fauna: The *Provincia Meridia* consists largely of sparsely inhabited grasslands in the west and unsettled forests in the north. The hilly regions to the south of the province are rich with mineral ores and are a hotly contested area between the settlers in Meridia and those of the County of Furmenglaive to the south. Wild horses roam the grasslands, as well as the usual chickens, goats, pigs and other sorts of animals. The dark forests are rife with monsters and evil fairy creatures.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Stefania Torion.

This southern province is most well known for the petty warlords who feud between themselves for mineral and land rights and for the dark fairy creatures that lurk in the forests (as opposed to the more benevolent fairies who live in my own County of Redstone). The dangers found here have limited colonization in Meridia, as most colonists prefer more stable areas.

The Province of Meridia is almost entirely untamed wilderness. Only the sparsely

settled Barony of Caerdwicca has seen any real development. This area was largely left to its own devices until recently, with imperial colonization centered upon developing the northern and central sections of the Isle of Dawn. During the war the Alphatians almost completely bypassed this area, though the privateers of Caerdwicca and the pirates of Ne'er-do-well clashed fiercely at sea.

The Land

The Menhir Wood dominates the southeastern portion of the *Provincia Meridia*. It is around this forest, along the eastern coast and the southern hills north of Furmenglaive, that most settlers reside. The woods are named for the numerous strange rock formations that lay within their depths. Sages have pondered over their nature for decades and most agree that they are somehow magical and related to similar formations in the fairy-haunted Unseelie Forest in the northern part of the province. Their true secrets defy all investigation, however.

Those woods have yet to be settled by man. The evil creatures that roam the depths of the northern forest are formidable and aggressive and few who venture into their depths return. It is rumored that the dark fairies have a kingdom of their own hidden there and that even the trees themselves are alive and hateful of mankind.

A few small villages may be found in the central grasslands of the *Provincia Meridia*, along rivers leading to the Western Sea of Dawn. Nomadic herders, descendants of the original settlers of this portion of the isle, also make their homes here.

The People

The original inhabitants of the *Provincia Meridia* were a slight, yellow-skinned race of people like the Ethengars. They once had numerous small villages in the grasslands and along the western portion of the Shadow Coast, but over the centuries they were enslaved and shipped off the island or conquered by outsiders. Their legacy

remains among the nomads who still roam the grasses and in the legends and lore of the Shadow Coast. Some still speak their ancient language, a language that has surprising similarities to modern Ochalean.

The native inhabitants have since mostly blended with the Thyatian and Klantyrian colonists over the intervening centuries. The more recent settlers' physical traits—red hair among the Klantyrians, for instance—tend to dominate, but aspects of the original stock may still be found—slight epicanthic folds to the eyes, a yellowish tint to the skin.

For the most part, there doesn't seem to be a physical type that can be assigned to residents of the *Provincia Meridia*, but as for cultural outlook... Well, let's just say that the Meridians tend to be close-mouthed, but that doesn't mean they're pushovers. They've been beaten down so much by their overlords that they've learned to keep quiet. At the same time, though, they're plotting their revenge on their oppressors.

Recent History

The lords have taken advantage of the chaos of the last several years and most recently the Crown War, when imperial attention has been distracted. They have not rebelled openly, but they used the disorders for their own interests, while the empire's officials were not paying attention, to scheme against each other and encroach on each other's territories. Some of these lords even are not true lords recognized as such by the empire, but just people who have seized control of an area and set themselves up as warlords or bandit-lords. Due to the crises that have wracked Thyatis in recent years, these lordships have, if anything, multiplied and gotten even more unruly.

Because of this, most recent colonists have settled either around Caerdwicca or Furmenglaive, or in the northern coastal areas away from the disorders of the lordships. However, the lords recruit new adherents and mercenaries from these areas when they can. They especially seek out the colonists who were sent as a result of colonial conscription, the criminals and

other hardened sorts, who make good thugs in the opinion of the lords. These lords also hire mercenaries in small numbers (none of the lords are able to afford large forces), hardened men willing to do anything for a few gold pieces a month and employ them in their feuds and wars.

The Provincial Governor of Meridia tries to keep a lid on the strife of the lords, or at least keep the taxes flowing to the city of Thyatis. Until recently it had been Catullus Florus, who employed a group of thugs, most former soldiers—the *Rorphyri*—to enforce his will. However, Catullus was recalled to Thyatis shortly after the end of the Great War, on suspicion of corruption and treason. His replacement, Valerion Recebarius, tried to reign in the lords and bring order to the region, but he has disappeared and foul play is suspected.

Don't Miss

Grosmouth Castle in the southwest is one of the oldest fortifications on the Shadow Coast. It reportedly dates to around the crowning of the first Emperor of Thyatis. It was built by a Traladaran mercenary named Estragon, who had joined with Thyatian raiders in attacking Alphatian settlements on the Isle of Dawn. He was so intrigued by the place, that he remained and became known as one of the most brutal warlords to rule in the history of the isle. His castle was long rumored to be haunted, but Catullus Florus made his home there during his tenure as provincial governor.

NE'ER-DO-WELL (Kingdom of)

Location: Sea of Dawn, southwest of the Isle of Dawn, north of the Pearl Islands. SD

Area: 21,699 sq. mi. (56,200 sq. km.), including Greater Ne'er-do-well 17,958 sq. mi. (46,511 sq. km.) and lesser Ne'er-do-well 3,741 sq. mi. (9,689 sq. km.).

Population: 25,000, including Crossroads (pop. 5,000). [*Population figures are tentative, pending census. Ed.*]

Languages: Alphatian (Alatian dialect), many other languages.

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: Kleptocracy; officially no taxes are levied, the nation's income is derived from the proceeds of thievery. 10% goes to the imperial treasury.

Government Type: Monarchy heavily influenced by the thieves' guild, member of Nayce.

Industries: Fishing, smuggling, piracy, light agriculture (consisting mainly of people buying the farm), extortion, prostitution, gambling.

Important Figures: Koryn the Harpist (King, human, male, T20).

Flora and Fauna: Because of the failure of the Zoo on Aegos long ago and the recent release of monsters from Gaity, creatures of any sort can be found here.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Vivianna Romanones.

This pair of none-too-fertile islands has what can only be described as a unique form of government, perhaps possible only within Alphatia's "anything goes" tradition. Here is a naked kleptocracy, a haven for pickpockets, smugglers, pirates, extortionists and "normal honest criminals," governing the island through the institutions of organized crime. Here is individualism at its most extreme, where people openly use others to their own ends without regard for a common interest. It is said that the people of Ne'er-do-well have yet to find a culture they cannot corrupt or profit from. Ne'er-do-well is alternately "friendly to the world" and akin to a disease, needing the normal nations of the region to do the real work of providing order and civilization but feeding off them. Lately pirates based in Ne'er-do-well have had a field day; the breakdown of central authority allowed them to raid at will and only recently with the rise of the Thyatian and Naycese influence have their appetites been curbed. Still, they prey on

shipping in the region, especially near the Pearl Islands and even Ochalea.

OCHALEA (*Exarchate of*)

Location: Island south of the Isle of Dawn, north of the Jungle Coast, west of the Pearl Islands and southwest of the Alatian Islands. SD

Area: 190,054 sq. mi. (492,240 sq. mi.).

Population: 125,000, including 50,000 in the capital Beitung.

Languages: Ochalean (related to Alphatian but considered its own language), Thyatian (Thyatian dialect).

Coinage: *Teng* (5 gp), *one* (gp), *tenth* (sp), *hundredth* (cp). Ochalean coins are octagonal with square holes in the middle. Thyatian standard also freely accepted here without having to exchange it: *emperor* (pp), *lucin* (gp), *asterius* (sp), *denarius* (cp).

Taxes: 25% income tax collected quarterly on the aristocracy, nobility and wealthy; 20% income tax collected quarterly on everyone else (Va. 1, Ya. 1, Fy. 3 and Ei. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. Expensive and magical items are also taxed 25% of their worth. 10% imperial *commertia* sales tax on all goods except food, clothing and fixed assets; levied on imports, rebated on exports. Tax on slave owning equal to 50% of the slave's value annually. Property tax levied based on quality of land, roughly 6% of its value annually.

Government Type: *Exarchate*, semi-autonomous dominion member of the Thyatian Empire.

Industries: Agriculture (wheat and rice), textiles (silk).

Important Figures: Teng Lin-Dieu (*Exarch*, human, male, Pr20 of Koryis).

Flora and Fauna: Ochalea is mostly free of monsters. Dangerous creatures encountered include ghouls, weretigers, tigers, panthers and the rare purple worm. Also common are sheep, goats and snakes.

Intelligent monsters would include ogres (many that know magic and are often called

ogre-magi), while lupins and rakasta often roam the Grasslands of Chi.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Vivianna Romanones.

Ochalea is a large island in the southern Sea of Dread, slanting between the southwestern corner of the Isle of Dawn and the continent of Davania. Ochaleans, though largely of Alphatian heritage, have a culture unique unto themselves and think of themselves as Ochaleans and Thyatian citizens, not as Alphatians. One might speculate that Ochaleans derive their culture from that of the original inhabitants prior to the Alphatian invasion, but more on these theories later. Ochalea had a brief flirtation with independence during the War of the Wrath and the immediate post-war period but have since returned to the Thyatian fold.

The Land

Ochalea is a large island kingdom, consisting mainly of volcanic rock and hills. Most of this land is suitable only for grazing, with only patches of agricultural land. These patches can be quite productive due to the rich volcanic soil but cover only a portion of the island. The largest of these fertile stretches is the Shino-Gawa River valley. This river crosses through the island, starting from the hills around the town of Wongzhao Tsushao, then down to the lake around the town of Chungkiang Li. From this lake, the largest one in Ochalea, the Shino-Gawa empties into the Sea of Dread. Various areas along the shores of this river are forested and very productive for agriculture; productive enough to feed the entire population as well as leave some for export. Also grown here are fields of flax and cotton, which are exported to the city of Thyatis and then made into fine linen and cotton cloth. Mulberry trees grow in groves near Beitung and the village of Wu Li and other settlements. Silkworms are cultivated here, with the raw silk being sent to Beitung where it is spun into silken cloth of all varieties.

The bulk of Ochalea is covered with hill and forest wilderness, left undisturbed by the Ochaleans who with their small population have neither the desire nor the need to interfere with the wilds. The hills were volcanoes in the distant past but are now completely inactive and have been so for all recorded history.

There are two large savannas on the island. One is around the city of Beitung (where most Ochaleans live) and another, the Grasslands of Chi, lay along the southern shore of Ochalea. These grasslands gradually change into jungle in the southwest due to southerly ocean currents that warm Ochalean shores.

The People

Ochaleans are of common Alphatian ethnic origin, with coppery skin and fine facial features. They are a scholarly and religious people who place great importance on learning and proper behavior. The large number of priests, whom are held in high regard here, has helped turn this nation into one of the most educated on the Known World. The long-standing following of the traditions of the Immortal Koryis (known as Koryu-Si in the native tongue) has also made them very quiet, polite and peaceful. Normal recreational activities in the rest of the Known World, such as drinking and gambling, are illegal here. Ochaleans do not like violence and prefer to solve all their problems through negotiation.

Because of their peaceful ways, Ochaleans believe in the equality of all men, standing them even further in stark contrast from their Alphatian forebears. There is no distinction between the respect shown to members of different social classes. But as mentioned above, theirs is a belief in the equality of men—and men only.

By Ochalean tradition, women have a lesser role in society. As Thyatian citizens, they can no longer be bound by ancient laws, but most still feel the trappings of custom. Females are expected to stay at home and perform family duties and household chores. There are more arranged

marriages in Ochalea than elsewhere in the empire. A woman normally has very little choice regarding anything. This attitude made my negotiations with Ochaleans somewhat difficult, but luckily their rulers are used to dealing with other Thyatians and adapted quickly. They place such an emphasis on politeness that they never made an overt point of my femininity. My male assistants did end up being more busy than usual, however.

Ochalean architecture differs from both that of Alphatia and Thyatis—and indeed any other known civilization—having a tiered style with peaked, slanted roofs. Sliding door walls are often made out of a paper-like substance formed out of rice, though this light construction may in part be due to the hot climate of the region. Ochaleans are fine gardeners, designing them to produce a sense of serenity. One of the greatest mysteries of the Ochaleans, however, is their very own traditions, which as you may have surmised from the above differ quite a bit from the Alphatian and even the Thyatian norm.

Recent History

Ochalea has little recent history of note. They avoided involving themselves in the Final Alphatian War, seceding in AC 1007 from Thyatis along with the Pearl Islands. The Ochaleans spent the brief period between their secession from and re-admittance into the *imperium* (just this year) in isolation from the world around them. Most recently they have changed this policy, dispatching a small but significant force to Eusebius's aid in the War of the Crown rebellion. Their involvement and that of the other dominions like the Pearl Islands and the Hinterlands, may be key in determining the future fate of Thyatis.

Don't Miss

Ochalea's capital, Beitung, is a unique beauty, with every structure built in harmony with the others to produce a cohesive whole that is almost a work of art. The entire architecture of the kingdom is exotic

compared to the standard Thyatian and Alphatian traditions. The most beautiful of these buildings are of course the temples and shrines dedicated to Koryu-Si.

Of interest to any readers who might also be scholars, it seems that the historians of Ochalea have found some interesting scrolls that have sparked debate over the origin of Ochalean society. Up until now, it was believed that Alphatians without any magical talents colonized the island and developed the theocratic culture now present. Recent evidence seems to indicate that the Empire of Alphatia used the island to drop off undesirables, including non-mage Alphatians as well as another group of colonists that the Alphatian ruling elites had no use for. Both the Alphatians and proto-Ochaleans were victims of Alphatia's governing classes' disregard for anyone's welfare save their own, an ironic miniaturization of Alphatian history. These two groups lived together peacefully on Ochalea, both repressed and enslaved by the Alphatian despotate until the successful rebellion of BC 2. The Alphatian coppery skin coloration soon dominated over that of the second culture, whose appearance is yet unknown, but it would seem that the architecture and many of the traditions of Ochalea come from this other mysterious culture, which is apparently a colony from the distant continent of Skothar. Whether these newly uncovered scrolls are accurate or not remains to be seen and is sure to be the cause for debate for the next decade.

PEARL ISLANDS (Exarchate of the)

Location: South and east of Ochalea, south of the Alatian Islands, north of the Jungle Coast of Davania. SD

Area: 119,719 sq. mi. (310,070 sq. km.).

Population: 100,000, including Seagirt (pop. 5,000).

Languages: Nuari (believed to be a dialect of Tanagoro), Thyatian (Nuari dialect).

Coinage: Thyatian Standard: *emperor* (pp), *lucin* (gp), *asterius* (sp), *denarius* (cp). Barter is common among the islanders themselves.

Taxes: 10% imperial *commercia* sales tax on all goods save food, clothing and fixed assets. Corvée labor on behalf of the nation as needed.

Government Type: Dominion, member of the Thyatian Empire with self-rule.

Industries: Pearl-diving, jewelry-making, export of tropical fruits.

Important Figures: Nurokidu Nuar (*Exarch*, human, male, T20).

Flora and Fauna: Mainly dominated by fruit-bearing tropical trees and hardy grasses. Animals include cattle and horse imported from Thyatis. Giant lizards (*draco*) are also common, as are many sea creatures in the surrounding waters.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Vivianna Romanones.

This is a long tropical island chain, which runs east to west for over twelve hundred miles. It consists of many hundreds of small islands and five large ones.

The Land

The Pearl Islands, named such by Alphatian invader of long ago and commonly called that ever since, are a series of islands north of Davania, in the South Ochalea Sea and the Sea of Pearls. More properly called the Nuar Archipelago, the islands are of volcanic origin (though a few of the smaller ones are coral atolls) and though most of the volcanoes are dormant a few are not. One, the largest, on Nuar Island itself, has been erupting continuously, if mildly, since AC 1009 when Alphatia sank.

There are often reefs offshore, but not dangerous ones as are found in the Straits of Barbarossa between Aegos Island and the Isle of Dawn. The Pearl Islands indeed have wide, sandy beaches in many areas, as well as bluffs looking out over the sparkling azure

seas. Most islanders live near the beach whenever possible.

Inland from the shores to the mountain slopes are tropical forests, though on the leeward side of the islands, which the mountains prevent from receiving as much rainwater, there are usually grasslands instead. The windward sides of the islands get most of the rain and indeed it often showers once a day in this area. From the tropical jungles come wonderful fruits that are a staple, along with fish and pig, of island fare. Many streams run off the mountainsides down through the jungles to the sea and some of this water is used to irrigate plants grown in the uncommon island agricultural plantations. There are few dangerous animals in the islands, though there are draco lizards, leeches and sometimes poisonous serpents. Streams collect the runoff waters from the mountains and bring them back down to the ocean.

Of the five major islands, only Nuar is large enough to have rivers larger than streams and it even has a large lake in the north central portion of the island. The waters around the islands themselves are known not only for the fish that abound in them, but for their famous pearls, which are harvested and exported by the islanders.

The People

The islanders have dark skin, hair and eyes and are a robust, muscular people. Their last name is derived from their isle of origin, with most being from Nuar and thus called Nuari. They traditionally live in small settlements rather than towns or cities. They are an energetic people who enjoy relaxation and sport but are dedicated to excellence and self-improvement. They are fierce fighters yet also great philosophers and their double-hulled ships, while small, can be quite effective in war and trade. Nowhere can one find better sailors or scouts than here on the Pearl Islands.

It is said that the islanders are descendants of Tanagoro colonists from long ago. Ancient scrolls claim that they were once a

matriarchal society, but now men and women are equally regarded. Upon meeting someone for the first time, islanders present them with a small gift, usually a pretty colored shell or stone. The stranger is then expected to return a similar gift before the day is over and if this custom is not followed the islanders consider it a slight.

One thing that can shock visitors is the islanders' lack of concern for wearing clothing. They normally wear no more than a simple kilt or skirt, along with necklaces, garlands of flowers and the like, but think little of going entirely nude, especially when swimming. The islanders also enjoy riding the waves on specially crafted boards, a sport that requires some dexterity and skill to master fully and which can be dangerous to the unwary and inexperienced.

Don't Miss

There is so much to see and do here, the islands are a potential tourist mecca if only a convenient means of regular, rapid transportation could be initiated. There is the town of Seagirt, built around the Harbor of Pearls, the imperial naval base, where most Thyatians and traders live and work. In the town also is the palace of the *exarch*, as well as a coliseum built by Thyatian conquerors back in the first century AC. Down the shore from the town is Diamond Head, a towering rock formation overlooking the sea, which many climb to get a panoramic view of the ocean and the island. Inland from Seagirt is the long dead volcano called the Mount of Sacrifices, which is a graveyard of men and women slain serving in battle, especially against the Alphatians (though few of those killed in the Final Alphatian War are buried here). Many important rituals of the islanders' religion are carried out at the Mount of Sacrifices as well.

And this only mentions those sites nearest Seagirt. Each island is beautiful in its own unique fashion and it might take a lifetime to visit them all and explore them thoroughly.

REDSTONE (*County of*)

Location: Western spur in the center of the Isle of Dawn, adjacent to Westrouрке and West Portage. SD

Area: 57,864 sq. mi. (149,670 sq. km.).

Population: 60,000 including 25,000 in and around Redstone Castle.

Languages: Thyatian (Thyatian dialect and Redstone dialect are both common), Alphatian (Hillvale dialect).

Coinage: Thyatian Standard: *emperor* (pp), *lucin* (gp), *asterius* (sp), *denarius* (cp). Alphatian coins are also very common: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: 25% income tax collected quarterly on the aristocracy, nobility and wealthy; 20% income tax collected quarterly on everyone else (Va. 1, Ya. 1, Fy. 3 and Ei. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. Expensive and magical items are also taxed 25% of their worth. 10% imperial *commertia* sales tax on all goods except food, clothing and fixed assets; levied on imports, rebated on exports. Tax on slave owning equal to 50% of the slave's value annually. Property tax levied based on quality of land, roughly 6% of its value annually.

Government Type: Dominion, member of the Thyatian Empire.

Industries: Agriculture (grains, vegetables), trade, military concerns, sheep, pigs.

Important Figures: Anaxibius Torion (Count, human, male, F20), Stefania Torion (Countess, human, female, F5/T15).

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Stefania Torion.

Redstone was made into a dominion at the end of the Final Alphatian War in AC 1009. Emperor Thincol granted the castle and the surrounding land to my husband Anaxibius and myself, changing Redstone's status from a region of Westrouрке to a county.

The Land

This Thyatian dominion is a tempestuous land filled with a wide variety of landscapes. In the northwestern part of the county a huge plateau parallels the coastline. This plateau is covered with grasslands known as the Sutherlands. Herdsmen make their living atop the plateau, trading with the main settlements of the area: Lar and Vildis. The cliffs of the plateau drop almost vertically into the Western Sea of Dawn. The shore is riddled with caves, many of which can only be seen when the tide is low. This area is a haven for pirates and other outlaws, which raid the shipping of Ylaruam and Vestland for the most part, avoiding that of Thyatis and of Ostland (the nation many of the pirates' hail from and generally return to when their freebooting days are over).

To the northeast lies lush agricultural land, producing food for the county and for the city of Newkirk. The largest village in the area is Lodar, at a fork in the Lod River near the Carryduff Hills. We are currently considering turning Lodar into a barony to help better administer the area.

The central area of Redstone County is more sparsely inhabited. To the east are the dense forests of Ashton Woods and Lurben Forest, which are inhabited by giant wolves that sometimes attack travelers. Local lore claims that evil fairies control the packs of dire wolves. The only safe passage in the area is on the patrolled Westrouрке Road, which goes from Dungannon all the way to Newkirk. At the eastern border of Redstone County along this road is the fortified village of Crosston. Crosston was battered during the Alphatian invasion, but has largely recovered and already plans are in the works to improve the village's defenses and construct a true castle there, to ward against future invasion.

The west central region is dominated by marshlands, with the two largest swamps being the Fengallen Marshes and the Kilyleagh Curragh. The area is infested with bugbears and Count Anaxibius often leads patrols into the region for training and to cull the bugbears. So far, the bugbears have

maintained their hold on the region thanks to the special lizard mounts they use which allow them to cross the swamps quickly. The marshlands are split in two by the rise of the Carryduff Hills that run between the headwaters of the Lod River in the north south to the Redstone Lough.

To the south are the Neagh Flats and various hills and ridges [*Hills of Doogh, Ballydonegan Hills and the Bastion Ridge. Ed.*]. This area is mostly cleared of dangerous monsters and many fishing villages as well as farms are scattered all along the coast. Here grain and vegetables are grown and sheep and cattle are raised.

Out to the west of Redstone Lough, beyond the Balbriggan Reefs, is the Isle of Westhold. This is a hilly island slightly over a hundred square miles in area, with a village and lighthouse perched upon it. The inhabitants live by fishing and gardening and managed to avoid occupation by the Alphatians during the recent war mostly because they were ignored as insignificant.

The People

Redstone is the main training base for the great legions of Thyatis on the Isle of Dawn, resulting in a large military population. Almost everyone in the military has performed at least one tour of duty at Redstone Castle. They speak only Thyatian as part of their military discipline. This section of the population is generally young, confident and brave. During the nights and off-duty, they often become the rowdiest bunch in town. The local inhabitants are a mixture of Thyatian and Alphatian ethnic origin, though all are Thyatian citizens and defended their country valiantly against Alphatian aggression during the recent Final Alphatian War. The city of Redstone itself is heavily fortified and dominated by the great citadel, hewn out of red stone. The nearby Port Donaghadee serves as Redstone's harbor and is itself fortified, with a pair of long walls running down from the city of Redstone to the port of Donaghadee itself, allowing access to the sea even in times of siege.

It seems that everywhere you go, each village has its own share of ghosts and fairies hidden among the villagers. Almost everyone can swear on their grandmother's grave that they've seen a ghost or have been helped or cursed by a fairy. Just look at the names of some of the places. Forest of Sidhe: anyone care to guess what was seen there? Let us not forget the leprechauns and their pots of gold. Did I mention that there is also a Redstone's Lough monster? Suffice to say that no authentic Thyatian explorer, sage, expert or official has ever seen it.

Don't Miss

The greatest sight in Redstone is Redstone Castle itself, built out of rosy red stone that seems to glow in the dawn light and in twilight. Construction on this enormous fortress began in AC 2 and was completed at the end of AC 5, though there have been several improvements and renovations since. It has stood ever since, for over 1000 years, a marvel of Thyatian engineering. The walls to the castle itself top 50 feet in height and various towers reach over 100 feet. The tallest spire in the castle, where the court of Redstone resides, peaks just below 450 feet. This magnificent Thyatian citadel is replete with artillery, including superb air defenses and can easily accommodate up to 15,000 soldiers and staff, as well as the mounts for half of them and hold provisions (stored in underground vaults) for several years.

Throughout its entire history, Redstone Castle was only conquered once, in the year AC 1007, by the invading Alphatians. To say Redstone was defeated, however, would be an exaggeration. The commanders surrendered when the rest of the surrounding territories fell to the Alphatian attackers. It took the combined Alphatian armies of General Benthazim, General Joshtintan and General Martigan to obtain that result. Redstone Castle has therefore never been taken by force since its creation. Even during the Spike Assault war, Redstone Castle was isolated and bypassed, screened off by an Alphatian army rather than assaulted. It then served as the locus

for Thincol's counter-offensive, with troops landed at Port Donaghadee marching up to Redstone Castle's relief and out from here the Thyatian legions spread, pushing back the Alphatians once again until Eriadna sued for peace to end that war in AC 962.

Visitors to the County of Redstone should patronize its taverns, which the locals call pubs. There, they serve their ale and whisky and all tell tall tales of the Wee Folk and the magic of the fairies.

SEPTENTRIONA (Province of)

Location: Northern half of the Shadow Coast, west of the great escarpment on the Isle of Dawn. SD

Area: 95,775 sq. mi. (248,055 sq. km.).

Population: 25,000 including the capital of Rialtos (pop. 2,500) and the town of Laticea (pop. 2,000).

Languages: Thyatian (Thyatian dialect, Redstone dialect also common), Alphatian (Hillvale dialect).

Coinage: Thyatian Standard: *emperor* (pp), *lucin* (gp), *asterius* (sp), *denarius* (cp). Alphatian coins are also very common: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: 25% income tax collected quarterly on the aristocracy, nobility and wealthy; 20% income tax collected quarterly on everyone else (Va. 1, Ya. 1, Fy. 3 and Ei. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. Expensive and magical items are also taxed 25% of their worth. 10% imperial *commercia* sales tax on all goods except food, clothing and fixed assets; levied on imports, rebated on exports. Tax on slave owning equal to 50% of the slave's value annually. Property tax levied based on quality of land, roughly 6% of its value annually.

Government Type: Dominion, member of the Thyatian Empire.

Industries: Agriculture, logging, mining.

Important Figures: Deitica Baralius (Governor-General, human, female, F13).

Flora and Fauna: Septentriona has the usual sorts of the normal animals and plants

found for lands of its climate and weather. The black dust desert is known to be the home of several sorts of dragons and evil fairies plague the dark forests along the southern coasts.

Further Reading: M5 *Talons of Night, Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Stefania Torion.

Septentriona is a large but mostly undeveloped province, with a few settlements but vast areas of wilderness. Septentriona has the distinction of not having been occupied by the Alphatians during the Final Alphatian War, mainly because they didn't bother to invade it, bypassing it instead.

The Land

Septentriona covers the western coast of the Isle of Dawn from the sea inland to where the Great Escarpment rises up over the land. It has a widely varied terrain, from the northern prairies south of the County of Kendach, to the vast, deep forests of the Shadow Coast, with towering mountains north of the Great Escarpment. The northwestern region, fronting Seawolf Bay, is probably the most developed. There is an active volcano, inland from Cape Gabrionus, the mount known as Nova Gabriona, that showers ash over the Black Dust Desert. South of Nova Gabriona lay the ruins of Fjellstue, a place of unknown age, whose origins are lost in the mists of time. Dragons are known to inhabit the Black Dust Desert and the Retebius Air Fleet has attempted to glean recruits from among them from time to time. Curving around the desert in a semicircle, roughly parallel to the coast, is the range of hills known as the Culaesar Bulge, which keeps the dust of the desert contained. The outer rim of these hills is forested, giving way to lush country around Cape Gabrionus and the Liminaris and Salicia Bays. This is the main region of settlement within the province, with a trail (the Linius) running along the coast from

the Tower of Lucinius in the north to the village of Perdidis in the south.

Northeast of the Culaesar Bulge are the Tigris Plains, good pastoral country but as yet sparsely utilized. Inland from the Black Dust Desert and running down the coast is the Beocean Forest, a dark wood that remains wild and untamed.

Septentriona is bifurcated in its middle by the Skull River, which runs down out of the Great Escarpment to empty into the Western Sea of Dawn. Indeed, the Skull River valley becomes a gorge at the Great Escarpment and is one of the few ways to ascend it easily. Here along the river itself is where the most recent colonization efforts are underway, centered on the recently founded town of Rialtos. Many colonists have been directed to this region, as the banks of the river have good soil, the nearby timber can be culled for export, used to build ships in Thyatis and the region is suspected of having valuable minerals.

Outside of these zones most of the province is covered in a thick tangle of dark forests, though there are some coastal plains that might make good land for settlement. The forests themselves are known to be the haven for many fell creatures and fey things happen here more often than even in my own Redstone County, though they are far more often malicious and malevolent. At the point where the Great Escarpment rises up over the lands below, the cliffs are riddled with caves and caverns leading out into the forests. These likewise are very dangerous and only the most brave and skilled explorers dare enter them or reach that far into the province's depths. Even so, many of these adventurers are never seen alive again.

The People

As mentioned above, there are two main centers of Thyatian habitation in the province. The first is the northern coastal region, running from Cape Gabrionus to the Bareus Cliffs. There are four main settlements here. In the north is the Tower of Lucinius, a fortified watch post, wizard's tower and lighthouse. South of the tower, at

the mouth of the Cavia River, is Laticea, which has grown from a large village to become a small town in recent years. Below this, at the mouth of the Doloma River, is Latveii, while considerably further to the southeast along the coast, at Salicia Bay, is the community of Perdidis. These are all communities of farmers and fishermen, living along the coasts and rarely venturing more than twenty miles inland on hunts and the like, for the lands further inland are known to still be home to dangerous monsters. But this coastal strip is relatively safe and life here has gone on with little change for several centuries. The people of the region consider themselves lucky as they have rarely been directly impacted by any of the wars fought on the Isle of Dawn, having to deal with only the occasional monster raids. This was true for the most part during the Final Alphantian War, though for a time during the later stages of the fighting this area became the center of Thyatian resistance on the island, coordinating Thyatian partisan groups fighting the Alphantians elsewhere on the island. The impact of these efforts on the course of the war was small at best, but those involved in them take deserved pride in the part they played in it.

To the south of this zone and separated from it by a long stretch of coast and thick forests, are the newer colonial settlements along the Skull River. Here is the town of Rialtos, a port near the mouth of the river, sheltered from storms rolling in off the Western Sea of Dawn by a lagoon. The town itself is built on several small islands, with pylons driven into the ground around them to keep them stable. The site was chosen, despite the mild inconvenience of it, because the islands are more secure from monstrous incursions. The townspeople can easily reach the banks of the river using barges, which are also used to transport goods up and downstream. Along the river's banks upstream are burgeoning farmsteads and logging camps, as well as some encampments of prospectors hoping to find mineral deposits and strike it rich. Dangers are known to lurk in the nearby forests,

however, so colonists are well equipped not only with tools but with weapons.

THOTHIA (Kingdom of)

Location: Southeastern end of the Isle of Dawn, north of Caerdwicca and east of *Provincia* Septentriona. SD

Area: 458,157 sq. mi. (1,186,627 sq. km.), 95,277 sq. mi. (246,767 sq. km.) for Thothia proper and another 362,880 sq. mi. (939,839 sq. km.) for the Thothian Plateau.

Population: 80,000.

Languages: Nithian (Thothian dialect), Alphatian (Thothian dialect, official language).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: 15% income tax, collected yearly.

Government Type: Semiautonomous monarchy, member of Nayce.

Industries: Agriculture, fishing and trade.

Important Figures: Ramenhotep XXIV (*Pharaoh*, human, male, Pr10 of Rathanos).

Flora and Fauna: In mainland Thothia, standard desert wildlife can be found. Also, various undead and golems/statues protect the numerous ruins and tombs lost beneath the sands. On the Thothian Plateau, the exact wildlife is still relatively unknown, but there is a known presence of phanatons, centaurs, treants and araneas.

Further Reading: M5 *Talons of Night*, *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Kalitoru Nuar.

Thothia be a place worth visitin' if ye be havin' de time an' de money. Sure, mohn, dey be treatin' non-Alphatians like uncivilized barbarians, but at least dey don't complain when ye show dem yer gold. Wid de proper money, ye be enjoyin' yer stay, no matter how barbaric dey think ye are, mohn.

The Land

Thothia be mainly one large desert, noding like our home island of Nuar. Yet dere be farmin' land as well. Most of dem be along de Aurora River, especially in de fertile delta at de river moud. De desert be very inhospitable, mohn and I be advising ye not to go unless ye be well trained in surviving in such dry place, our dat ye have a good guide. De desert is filled with large, triangular buildings dey call pyramids, which serve to house der dead. It be an expensive way to bury dem, but it comes in real handy when dey be needin' to raise dem all to fight in deir army, as dey did against Thyatis a few years ago. It be a scary sight to see skeletons and zombies charging against ye, mohn.

The soudeastern most edge of de kingdom be a dry grassland where a few herders dwell, but dey be mostly scarce. Instead, de grassland be de home of de cat-people called rakasta [*of the msongo or fast runner race. Ed.*] who run around an' hunt for food. De rakasta be not considered to be citizens of Thothia, yet de nobles often use dem in der armies or as pets. I don't be thinkin' dat de rakasta like dis deal, but it seems dat dere be too few of dem to do anydin' about it.

Not much be known about de Thothian Plateau. Most who go dere don't come back and dose dat do claim dey be attacked by giant spiders call araneas by de locals. De plateau seems to be heavily forested, a sharp contrast to de desert and grassland of Thothia down below.

The People

Thothians be a strange bunch, mohn. Dey call themselves civilized yet refuse to deal with other cultures. I be thinkin' that talkin' to others be what make ye civilized, mohn. Dey be small people, wid a brownish skin and red hair, although mainy Alphatians have fled here since de war and have now mingled wid dem.

De Thothians have a deep respect for de dead, an' any form of grave robbin' be a capital offense here. I have always believed in lettin' de dead go, so I can agree wid dis law. Dis respect comes from der religion

toward de Immortal Rathanos. In fact, der king, called a *pharaoh*, must be a priest of Rathanos. I guess dis be makin' Thothia a deocracy of sorts. Who really knows, mohn.

Dere be anoder religion in Thothia, although dis one be widout any Immortal. A game called de Spider's Web be holy to dem, but de *pharaoh* not be likin' dis game. He be tryin' to get his people to abandon it and de mysticism dat be goin' wid it. Dis has someding to do wid de *pharaoh's* fader, Ramenhotep XXIII, who was bein' controlled by a spider demon. It seems dat he be overthrown by adventurers, mohn, just before the turn of de century [*we believe it was circa AC 1000, but this is yet unconfirmed. Ed.*] and de new *pharaoh* doesn't want dem spiders back. Could dey be related to dem araneas on the plateau? Who knows, mohn, but I wouldn't take a chance either.

Recent History

Thothia prefers to be left alone, mohn, so dey not be influencin' de world much. Of course, when Thyatis invaded dem after Alphatia sank, de *pharaoh* showed dem Thyatians just how much dey be wantin' to be alone. Dey animated most of der dead and sent dem off to defeat de invaders. I be thinkin' dat de sight of de undead alone was enough to rout de Thyatians. Add magical statues and golems into de group and ye be seein' dat Thothia be powerful indeed mohn.

Dey conquered lands dat were originally Alphatian until dere be a peace treaty between Thothia and Thyatis. Dis Treaty of Dawn, as some call it, defined what territories belonged to Alphatia and which would be given to Thyatis. In it, Thothia was granted control of the Great Escarpment, now called de Thothian Plateau. Soon after, Thothia be joinin' de New Alphatian Confederate Empire, re-establishin' its loyalties to de empress.

Since den, not much has happened. Except for on de plateau. De Thyatian colonists dere have been fleein' into mainland Thothia, askin' for help against the araneas that live dere. Thothia does not care

much about dem Thyatians left on der land, but now de spider monsters actually be raidin' into Thothia proper. Many believe dat Ramenhotep XXIV will be doin' somethin' about it soon, mohn.

Don't Miss

For a Nuari, dere be nothin' here to miss. Come and see it all, mohn. De pyramids are examples of spectacular engineerin', mohn, an' de statues of sphinxes an' oder such monuments are larger dan ye would dink possible to create. De culture be different too, an' word learning about. I must say, I be enjoyin' that Spider's Web game, too.

TRIKELIOS (*Kingdom of*)

Location: Isle of Dawn, east of Brun, southwest of the New Alphatian Sea. SD

Area: 17,960 sq. mi. (46,516 sq. km.).

Population: 70,000 (25,000 in the city of Trikelios). [*Population figures are tentative, pending census. Ed.*]

Language: Alphatian (Hillvale and Thothian dialects), Thyatian (Redstone dialect), Nithian (Thothian dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp). Thyatian coins are also very common: *emperor* (5 gp), *lucin* (gp), *asterius* (sp), *denarius* (cp).

Taxes: 20% on everyone of servant status or higher and an import tax of 1% (Naycese kingdoms and Karamaikos excluded). 10% obligation to the imperial treasuries deferred due to rebuilding. Trikelios also benefits from imperial funding to aid in its rebuilding.

Government Type: Semi-autonomous monarchy, member of Nayce.

Industries: Shipbuilding, reconstruction, agriculture.

Important Figures: Stillian (Queen, human, female, M19).

Flora and Fauna: With the Great Escarpment so close and the destruction brought about by war, there are numerous creatures running about the kingdom.

Likewise, numerous undead formerly under Thothian control are running loose.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Allstrick.

Admittedly, we almost did not venture to Trikelios. We had planned to board ship at Ekto to travel to the Alatians. However, circumstances made this unlikely and we were forced to venture down the coast to Trikelios to secure passage. I had a definite sense of dread at going to the kingdom as it held some old bad feelings for me. But those events occurred decades ago, perhaps matters had been forgotten.

The Land

Trikelios is located on the eastern coast of the central portion of the Isle of Dawn. The kingdom boasts an abundance of fertile farmland. Paramount to the kingdom is the capital city of Trikelios. Nestled upon the bank of the isle's larger rivers, it has free access to the Sea of Dawn. Not surprisingly, Trikelios has strong connections to the sea. Before the Great War it was known as one of the empire's shipbuilding giants.

The kingdom still bears the scars of the battles that followed the Great War. Like its neighbor Ekto, the locals are rebuilding. Their progress seems to be quite steady. In particular the city's shipyards are being given great attention. They are even building ships, though at a reduced capacity because of the still unfinished shipyards. That's the general status of the whole rebuilding process. Things are functional, but not quite finished. At least they have recognized their priorities. Time will allow for the finer things to be added later.

The People

Trikelios has traditionally been Alphatian and its populace is predominantly Alphatian. There is also a sizable Thothian minority present. Also, one will notice a minor Thyatian presence. I was surprised that any Thyatians remained there. Intermarriages

between Alphatians and Thyatians are not uncommon on the isle, so I guess some would remain due to such family ties.

The people of Trikelios have always been a hard-working lot. This is even more so today as they strive to regain their city's former glory. The sounds of construction can be heard from dawn till dusk, halting during the midday for a meal. It is a bit annoying, but one does get use to it after a few days. Most of the locals swear that they do not even notice it. In fact, they do not notice much. Most seem completely focused upon their present work.

Recent History

Trikelios had been one of the Thothians' settlements until coming into the Alphatian fold. Under Alphatian rule the city had prospered with its shipbuilding. After the Great War Trikelios was occupied for a time by the Thyatians. Thothian intervention wrested the city from its occupiers, nearly destroying the city in the process. With the signing of the Treaty of Dawn, Trikelios became an independent kingdom with its former ruler, Stillian, as its queen. Not too long afterwards, Trikelios became a member of Nayce.

Don't Miss

Despite the steady rebuilding, Trikelios is still in rough shape. Amenities are few, so those seeking luxury may want to postpone any trips to the city. This effort is worthy of a look over. Alphatian building practices are interesting. With a depleted mage pool, magic and manual labor must be integrated a bit more.

Do Miss

Trikelios has a definite problem with monsters roaming about the land. Most come down from the Great Escarpment, others are remnants of the battles with the Thyatians. These latter creatures are mostly summoned creatures, or examples of the undead utilized by the Thothians. Many have broken free of the magical control and

wander about wreaking havoc. Likewise, the sewers that lay beneath the city are a haven for nasty creatures. With their attentions fully devoted to rebuilding, little effort has been given to dealing with these problems. Of course, notable adventurers may find employment in such duties, though I expect payment would be minimal.

WEST PORTAGE (*Barony of*)

Location: Western half of the neck of the Isle of Dawn. SD

Area: 9,977 sq. mi. (25,840 sq. km.).

Population: 10,000, including 5,000 at the capital of West Portage.

Languages: Thyatian (Thyatian dialect official, Redstone dialect also common), Alphatian (Hillvale dialect), Thothian.

Coinage: Thyatian Standard: *emperor* (pp), *lucin* (gp), *asterius* (sp), *denarius* (cp). Alphatian coins are also very common: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: 25% income tax collected quarterly on the aristocracy, nobility and wealthy; 20% income tax collected quarterly on everyone else (Va. 1, Ya. 1, Fy. 3 and Ei. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. Expensive and magical items are also taxed 25% of their worth. 10% imperial *commercia* sales tax on all goods except food, clothing and fixed assets; levied on imports, rebated on exports. Tax on slave owning equal to 50% of the slave's value annually. Property tax levied based on quality of land, roughly 6% of its value annually.

Government Type: Dominion, member of the Thyatian Empire.

Industries: Trade, especially portage of goods from West Portage to East Portage.

Important Figures: Jules Docerius (Captain of the Garrison, human, male, F12), Periandra Docerius (Baroness, human, female, F12).

Flora and Fauna: Due to its proximity to the Great Escarpment, all manner of creature types may be found wandering into the barony.

Further Reading: M5 *Talons of Night*, *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Stefania Torion.

The community of West Portage, capital of the province with the same name, is a small but bustling town of barely 5,000 people, mostly human. Though previous reports described West Portage as poor, this was mainly due to the results of the recent war and the sack of the town by the Alphatians, who thoroughly ravaged it during their occupation. West Portage is a trading town and has largely recovered and is prospering from the general increase in trade and prosperity in the region. Many new buildings are under construction and old ones have been repaired. This year the baroness started construction on a series of fortifications intended to defend the port town.

The Land

West Portage thrives because of its position at the neck of the Isle of Dawn. Located on the northern shores of calm Seawolf Bay, West Portage is situated on the shortest overland pass to the eastern half of the Isle of Dawn. Those merchants who prefer not to sail all the way around the whole Isle of Dawn can put in at West Portage and cart their cargoes across to East Portage. Those using the overland route are charged a fee in exchange for the service, but it saves time for many traders and time is money. Whole ships can be lifted onto huge wagons and brought across the island. Some wild-eyed dreamers propose the construction of a canal from time to time, ignoring the difficulty of carving one through the hills and linking two very different nations. Recently a dwarven visitor proposed that such a canal be constructed as a tunnel under the hills, rather than over them, but what do dwarves know of seamanship?

The portage route, known as the Crossdawn Road, was one of the most dangerous places on the isle in recent years.

Increased patrols and the general post-war recovery have lessened this danger considerably, however. This was the first year in recent memory without a successful raid on a caravan [*though there were still numerous unsuccessful attempts. Ed.*].

Off the coast of the town itself is a long island running parallel to the shore in the shallows. A lighthouse known as O'Connor's Light is built at its northern end, guiding ships to the harbor of West Portage. This island helps protect the land from the worst effects of storms blowing in off Seawolf Bay.

The People

The inhabitants of West Portage are open, cosmopolitan people, busily employed in the resurgent trade. Right now, there are few idle hands and more people are needed simply to keep up with the growing traffic. Thus, West Portage welcomes new colonists.

Because of the presence of rich traders, thievery is high in the town, mainly confidence games. Up until AC 1009, when Emperor Thincol I made Docerius baroness of the region, the Province of West Portage was unofficially known as the city of thieves. Docerius replaced the former ruler, Lareth Kubek, when he was executed by Alphatian invaders during the Great War. At that point, the thieves came out of the woodwork. It took the baroness almost two years to get things back under control.

Most people work either at the docks, or as guards and caravan drovers along the Crossdawn Road. Most residents can speak both Thyatian and Alphatian but are firmly devoted to the former empire. Recently Baroness Docerius was involved in the plot to join the rebel faction in the War of the Crown rebellion. The baroness was arrested in Redstone Castle. Loyalist forces moved into West Portage and most tellingly no one raised a sword to defend their treasonous ruler. Captain Jules Docerius, the baroness's nephew, now administers the city as temporary ruler. Previous reports of his drinking and corruption seem to have been exaggerated, for he has governed ably in the

short time he has been in charge, or so we are led to believe.

Don't Miss

The main sites worth seeing in West Portage are the marvelous docks. There is a mechanism at the docks which allows entire sailing ships to be raised onto large wagons. The device, constructed by the gnome Dresel Ratchethook, is a large tower at least 10 stories high. Dresel calls his machine a krane.

The top floor of the krane consists of solid beams extending out into the air for about 40 feet. Large counterweights and magic help make sure these beams remain balanced. Attached to the beams are several pulleys and ropes, which are lowered down onto the ship and tied to the hull in various places. Over a hundred horses then pull on the ropes, lifting the ship out of the water and into the air. It is quite the sight to see a large sailing ship swinging in the air over the water.

The top of the krane swivels around, powered by steam-driven mechanisms and various cranks and wheels, until the ship is resting over these large barge-like wagons, also designed by Dresel. The horses then move back, lowering the ship onto the wagon. Most of the horses are then attached to the berth-wagons and pull it across the Isle of Dawn.

WESTROURKE (Exarchate of)

Location: Northern section of the Isle of Dawn, south of Helskir, east of the province of Dunadale and north of the province of Redstone. SD

Area: 119,344 sq. mi. (309,100 sq. mi.).

Population: 75,000, including 25,000 in the capital of Newkirk.

Languages: Thyatian (Thyatian and Redstone dialect both common), Alphatian (Hillvale dialect).

Coinage: Thyatian Standard: *emperor* (pp), *lucin* (gp), *asterius* (sp), *denarius* (cp). Alphatian

coins are also very common: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: 25% income tax collected quarterly on the aristocracy, nobility and wealthy; 20% income tax collected quarterly on everyone else (Va. 1, Ya. 1, Fy. 3 and Ei. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. Expensive and magical items are also taxed 25% of their worth. 10% imperial *commercia* sales tax on all goods except food, clothing and fixed assets; levied on imports, rebated on exports. Tax on slave owning equal to 50% of the slave's value annually. Property tax levied based on quality of land, roughly 6% of its value annually.

Government Type: Dominion, member of the Thyatian Empire with home-rule.

Industries: Military, salt mining, agriculture (truck vegetables).

Important Figures: Thrainkell Firestorm (*Exarch*, human, male, Pr(cr)12 of Vanya), Holva Firestorm (*Exarcha*, human, female, T13).

Flora and Fauna: Standard for its climate, notably herds of sheep and goats. Dangerous monsters include goblinoids and bandits that are common throughout the Isle of Dawn.

Further Reading: M5 *Talons of Night*, *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Vivianna Romanones.

Once the largest dominion on the Isle of Dawn, Westrouрке suffered some territorial losses since the Wrath of the Immortals war. However, it is still one of the largest territories and one of the most stable and prosperous.

After a period of experimentation Westrouрке seems to have settled into its position as part of the Empire of Thyatis. As an *exarchate* it is a dominion with considerable home rule that follows imperial foreign policy. Imperial agents collect trade taxes on behalf of the empire and Thrainkell Firestorm, with the new title *exarch*, contributes funds and soldiers to the imperial legions. 20% of the total

governmental income (inclusive of any sub-domains Firestorm may permit) goes to the central government in Thyatis City, this in addition to the *commercia* mentioned above. Westrouрке has seats in the senate and can defend its borders with its own forces (classified as *auxillia* by the *imperium*), as well as calling on Thyatian legions in time of need.

The Land

Westrouрке is blessed with a wide variety of terrain types and towns. The *exarchate* is divided into several dominions.

The Duchy of Newkirk is the duke's own seat of power. Here lies the city of Newkirk, capital of the *exarchate* and by far the largest settlement in the dominion. The borders of the duchy are bounded by the Southern Kauth Hills, a light forest to the east and the grasslands to the north. The Bay of Newkirk is the western border. In fact, the entire coastline is one large cliff dropping into the waters below, giving the duchy an excellent means of defense from sea reavers of Ostland. The city of Newkirk is renowned for its excellent chain and plate mail and the legion often orders in bulk from their armorers. This is the best-settled and most developed region of Westrouрке and is protected by a series of fortifications (Gund's Tower, Battleford, South Creek and Tromblekeep) warding it from invaders from the east.

The Dust Reaches is a large plateau located about 30 kilometers (20 miles) off the shores north of the Duchy of Newkirk. This wasteland is overflowing with goblinoids, particularly kobolds and orcs. Many military excursions have been sent to clear them out, but so far with no success. Between the plateau and the Bay of Newkirk are the Sveikassli Woods. This region is lightly inhabited, with the main settlements being at the lighthouse of Lag and the fortified settlements of Axelkeep and Eriksen Tower.

North of the Dust Reaches you enter the County of Viksdalen. Contained within its borders are Glotta Forests and the Fyresvatn

Bogs. Viksdalen is a major trade town as all overland caravans from the north must pass through the town to get to Newkirk or beyond. Viksdalen also has a strong military presence, mainly due to frequent raids by orcs from the Dust Reaches or lizard men from the Fyresvatn Bogs.

Spreading out toward the north and west, around the Bay of Westrouke, are the Baronies of Blido, Guddal, Tromsheim and Ytre Ystrebo. In fact, each barony is centered on a village and each baron controls land within about 24 miles of their capital. The area is well-forested and home to many lumberers and woodsmen. The plains are also fertile and produce enough food to keep Westrouke self-sufficient, with some surplus for export to the mainland.

The County of Nordvik is the largest dominion of Westrouke. This county encompasses all the land around the Erdals Fjellet River as well as the Geittinden Mountains. A small gold mine within the mountains provides some income for the dominion, but in fact its main industry is the production of dyes and pigments. Nordvik was formerly the northernmost dominion of the *exarchate*, near the border with Helskir.

The newest addition to Westrouke, the Helskir Reaches, lies beyond that. It consists in a large section near the northern tip of the Isle of Dawn formerly disputed between Helskir and Westrouke. Firestorm's new land grant policy has spurred settlement in this region. The policy has been successful so far and Firestorm is considering applying it to other areas of Westrouke as well.

The People

Thyatians and Ostlanders make up most of the population, though it is not uncommon to notice Westroukites of Alphatian descent. The people are rough and ready, not uncultured but also used to the hardships of frontier life and skilled with a weapon. Most also always have one at hand, due to the dangers found in the area.

Most Westroukites are proud of their growing strength and civilization and believe that they are entering an era of renewed

prosperity, having fully recovered from the devastation of the Final Alphatian War. In fact, Westrouke's prosperity is dependent upon Thyatis's own recovery. Should the Crown War undo that, the hard-won gains of Westrouke may disappear as well and many of the more insightful inhabitants of the *exarchate* realize this.

Recent History

The *Exarchate* of Westrouke was conquered in AC 1007 during the Final Alphatian War, a fact that took Thyatis by surprise. Helskir treacherously switched sides, allowing Alphatians to invade the duchy from the north while General Martigan of the Alphatians spearheaded an assault onto Newkirk itself. The battle was long and bloody, but the Alphatians outnumbered the Thyatians and eventually overwhelmed the defenders. Duke Donegal Firestorm gave his life defending his people, allowing many defenders to escape the doomed city and sail to Thyatis.

His son, Thrainkell was one of those who escaped and he was named Duke of Westrouke when Thyatis recovered the land in late AC 1009. But the emperor did not return full control to Thrainkell Firestorm. First, the entire southern peninsula between the Gulf of Westrouke and Seawolf Bay was turned into the County of Redstone and given to the emperor's daughter Stefania and her husband Anaxibius. Second, a large part of the northern territory was disputed between Westrouke and the Kingdom of Helskir until the recent treaty. Still, Thrainkell held Emperor Thincol in high regard and accepted the decision—but he was ambitious and when Thincol died, he let his ambitions get the best of him.

He was ready to make a bid for independence for his dominion but sided with the other rulers of the Isle of Dawn nations in remaining loyal to the empire during the signing of the treaty of 1012. Since then, the ambitious Firestorm seems to have settled down, outgrowing the impetuosity of his youth. He has diverted his dreams to building Westrouke into a

strong and prosperous member of the Thyatian family of nations.

Don't Miss

Westrourke has a magnificent signaling system all along its coast, starting from Finnegar's Watch in the Geittinden Mountains all the way down to the city of Newkirk. Several towers dot the coast every 100 miles (150 kilometers) or so. Within each of these towers are large, magical chimneys that can send a pillar of smoke into the sky. The smoke signal is easily visible by the occupant of the next tower, who can pass it on down the chain. Thanks to this method, a message can quickly reach the capital about an invading fleet. Just as importantly, all the local inhabitants can also see the immense smoke clouds and will rush to safety. This saves the bother of sending out messengers to each village to warn of an impending attack.

Atlas of Davania

Introduction to Davania

Across the Sea of Dread lies the mighty, mysterious continent of Davania. Its northern shores are covered with a lush, vibrant jungle teeming with life, both benign and deadly. Within these jungles are several clans of savages and barbarians, some humans, others not.

The Jungle Coast is a stretch of several hundred miles on the northern shores of Davania. Its exact size is still unknown as it is mostly unexplored. A rough estimate of its borders would be the coast facing the Bellissarian Sea to the east, the Meghala Kimata Plains in the south and the Garganin Grasslands to the west.

Most of the Jungle Coast is unexplored and no one is exactly sure what can be found in the vast new territory. Rumors abound of strange primitive cultures with wondrous monuments, such as crystal pyramids or deep sacrificial pits. The lands of the Jungle Coast are currently undergoing a mass colonization by the Empire of Thyatis. The natives, however, are none too pleased and many battles arise from the competition for territory and defending of homeland. Still, the advance of civilization is steady and there is much progress in the proper education of the locals.

West of the Jungle Coast is the region known to those of the Old World as the Serpent Coast. It is bounded to the north by the Sea of Dread, to the east by the Jungle Coast, to the west by the Serpent Strait and Yavdlom and to the south by the Adakkian Mounts. It is here where the city-states or Kastelios and Garganin are located, perhaps the only true examples of civilization outside the Thyatian colonies. The Serpent Coast region is a land of rolling hills, pleasant grasslands, mighty rivers and rugged coasts. Though it lacks the raw brutality of many of the Jungle Coast's native inhabitants, the more sophisticated cities here can pose dangers well known in Brun, including those unheard of. Outside the fastness of the

cities' walls, nature holds sway and few know who dwells there.

South of the Jungle Coast is the little-known Meghala Kimata Plains. In the north, its grasses are so tall and thick that one may easily get lost, never seeing the sun or civilization again. Towards the south, many hundreds of miles away, the grasses wither away, being subsumed by the deadly Meghales Amosses Desert, which no one yet has crossed and, it is said, holds many dangers beyond description. It is also said that a great river winds its way through the plains and along its banks many mighty cities and nations rear their walls. Rumors abound of imposing ruins scattered amongst the grasses, telling of a time when civilization held northern Davania under its sway. Whether this is true or not, the plains beckon to all who have the courage to plunge into the interior and behold what lies within.

Davania is a place where one can brave a new world, carve out territory to settle and defend brave colonists from savage natives. If you enjoy exploration and the new frontier, Davania is open to you.

Correspondents for Davania

Here is our list of correspondents that give us detailed information on the nations, places and events of Davania:

Friedrich von Eisendorf

Friedrich von Eisendorf brings us news from the Heldannic Territory of Vanya's Rest, on the southern continent of Davania.

Every inch of him a professional military officer, Friedrich is Adjutant to His Most Exalted Templar and Humble Servant to Glorious Vanya, Heinz Kronenburg, who is castellan of the fortress of Vanya's Rest itself and by extension governor of all Heldannic territories in Davania. Friedrich is extremely proud of his duties, but he is also more than happy to share with us what he describes as "the fearless exploits of the greatest military

force Mystara has ever known" [*somehow, I doubt this. Ed.*].

So, if you see a tall, fair-haired Heldannic Knight in his late 20s, wearing a crimson tabard and a golden sash across his chest, say hello to Friedrich for the rest of us and prepare yourself for fascinating tales.

Marina Takanitas

At 23, Marina Takanitas is one of the youngest on our team and she brings us news from the newly discovered Milenian city-states located on the Meghala Kimata Plains. Marina is a trader who hails from Kastelios, one of the biggest and fastest-growing, port cities in the region.

A cheerful person, her laughing brown eyes and bouncing golden curls are hard to miss in a crowd, but this exterior also serves to shield a very capable correspondent who will stop at nothing to get you, the reader, the ground-breaking stories of northwestern Davania as they happen. No danger is too much for her and, believe me, she knows how to use that short sword she carries!

Shaun the Elf

Shaun of clan Grunalf is one of the most renowned artists and adventurers of the Old World. A well-traveled and knowledgeable elf, she has long retired from her adventuring career and now lives in Ierendi acting as *kia'i* (guardian) of the crown and member the Adventurers' Club. She is a formidable storyteller and has a deep passion for heroic tales. After hearing of our editorial pursue, she has volunteered to tell us what she knows about the most exotic lands she visited in her life.

Atlas

EMEROND (Kingdom of)

Location: Jungle Coast, continent of Davania, southwest of the Thyatian Hinterlands. DV

Area: 67,500 sq. mi. (174,825 sq. km.).

Population: 125,000.

Languages: Emerondian (a language not related to any other spoken on Mystara).

Coinage: None.

Taxes: None. Emerondians have a vague notion of private property and share freely with one another.

Government Type: Dynastic monarchy (loosely organized city-states under one monarch).

Industries: Farming, gathering.

Important Figures: Jerem Rhody (King, Emerondian, male, D16), Pikkolu (Forest Protector, Emerondian, male, D20), Dendeh (Sun Protector, Emerondian, male, C20), Kamesama (Earth Protector, Emerondian, female, D18)

Flora and Fauna: Emerond is a forested land west of the Thyatian Hinterlands. The kingdom has literally been “grown” into the jungle for there are few clearings and no serious attempt at large-scale clearing has ever been made. Many types of plants grow in the region, from sub-tropical species native to the region to more alien versions of common trees and bushes, directly imported from the ancestral home planet of the Emerondians. Some of these plants can modify their external structure and possess a rough form of intelligence and instincts. The common fauna encountered in the region include jungle creatures such as panthers, jaguars and other great felines, all varieties of tropical snakes, displacer beasts and some lizards and amphibious creatures. Near the Emerondian settlements, insect-like creatures descended from pets brought to Mystara by the Emerondians (use statistics for giant insects but alter the creatures’ appearance). Treants and gakaraks can also

be found here and they are on friendly terms with the Emerondians. Other plant-like beings can be found here too, both dangerous and benign ones.

Further Reading: Previous almanacs.

Description by Shaun the Elfin.

Oh yes, I remember the land of Emerond very well. A fascinating place, very similar in its untamed beauty to my beloved Forest of Canolbarth, though a thousand times more enthralling and mysterious, especially for the uniqueness of its flora. I had the opportunity to visit it and meet some of its inhabitants many years ago, while adventuring in that region with a group of friends looking for a lost treasure. On our trip back to the Hinterlands we met none other than Pikkolu, who shared with us his knowledge of the Kingdom of Emerond and of the Forbidden City (which we had just explored). I stayed there for over one month, talking with Pikkolu and witnessing the marvels of the jungle and now it’s time to share this knowledge with you.

The Land

Emerond is a living kingdom, this is what really differentiates it from other countries. Its land is a living entity and it’s one with its inhabitants: there could be no Emerond without the Emerondians and vice versa. This might seem an obvious statement, but it is not, believe me. If the ecosystem is in good condition and the forest thrives, the Emerondians too share their land’s health and happiness as if it radiated from the soil and the leaves of the plants. Everywhere you go in Emerond you will only see green lush plants and sparkling streams, healthy animals and tasty fruits, weird creatures and cozy hidden glades. It’s a veritable paradise for us sylvan creatures, but I must say that it could seem a bit too wild from the human point of view. Any dwarf would surely get sick about the landscape after a couple of days (as I’ve witnessed myself). But do not get me wrong, Emerond is not a savage natural park. Emerondians have got settlements that can be compared to those of humans and elves,

even though they don't build them using the tools and knowledge of the common peoples of Mystara. Their cities are living: all is made of wood, which grows leaves and flowers and even fruits in spring and summertime. They grow special trees and plants that continue to live even after they chop them to create their houses; this way they can practically change the aspect of their homes yearly, during the period of the Change, when the house reacts to the mental commands of its inhabitants. Their cities are built on different levels, both on solid ground and on higher levels inside and outside these special trees. Each district of the city is connected via bridges and elevators or even using special animals that come and go from specific places in the city, each one controlled by a rider as if it was a caravan or a flying ship.

Every Emerondian city however (no matter how small it is) has three basic features: The Temple of the Holy Protectors, the Common Well and the Light Dome. The temple is simply the place where the Emerondians perform their weekly religious ceremonies to praise the Land, the Forest and the Sun. They are what makes them live on every day and so they feel the need to pay tribute to these elements (which are considered intelligent entities) through worship. The Common Well is held as sacred as the temple, for it provides the water so essential to the Emerondians' survival. The well is always normally guarded by a group of soldiers and only Emerondians can use it. Normally the common water is then mixed with some aromatic substances or other spices to obtain different flavors. Finally, the Light Dome is a complicated net of glasses placed in the branches of the tree that reflect the sun rays inside and below the trees, so that the Emerondians can get access to them without problems. The sun is vital to them, so they must be sure to bathe in the sun rays daily if they want to regenerate their strength.

Emerondians use giant insects as vehicles: giant bugs as horses (but they can even climb vertical walls), hornets and butterflies

for faster movement and worms for digging holes underground. These insects comprise both the normal species commonly found on Mystara, which the Emerondians tame and train and unique insect-like creatures originally imported from their lost world. These creatures come in different shapes and have different abilities, but all share an emphatic link with their rider and are more intelligent than common insects. They have also a more menacing appearance, with spikes and thorns protruding from their carapace. These creatures are created and tended in special enclaves administered by druids, where the Emerondians' cattle also live.

From the political point of view, Emerond is formally a kingdom ruled by a dynasty (a single family that holds political power). The kingdom is based on a loose alliance of city-states that are normally independent from one another and even from the king. The king himself has absolute power only in case of war or of natural calamity (situations where the ecology of the kingdom is threatened). Otherwise he limits his influence to coordinating among the various cities for purposes of trade and cultivating the jungle. Each city-state has its own rules and political bodies, but all must obey to the first and foremost rule: Never Harm the Forest.

There are three other important figures besides the king and each city-state governor: the holy protectors. These three individuals are the high priests of the three deities commonly worshipped in Emerond: The Forest (Ordana), the Sun (Ixion) and the Earth (Terra). All Emerondians, regardless of their status or occupation, recognize the authority of the holy protectors, who act as heralds of the deities' will. Each one is chosen during a ritual that is celebrated after the death of the old protector and they are always considered blessed by the deity they represent. Nobody questions their judgments or advice, but they don't often meddle with political issues, except when they are so asked by other important figures or when the deity orders it. When somebody becomes a holy

protector, his real identity is (symbolically) erased from the memory of the community during a ritual and he becomes known only by his title; this way, he becomes one with the other precedent protectors. The forest protector is called Pikkolu (pron.: pEEk-kou), the sun protector is called Dendeh (pron.: den-deh) and the earth protector is called Kamesama (pron.: kah-me-sAH-mah).

The People

Emerond is a kingdom ruled by creatures who look like elves, but are slightly taller, green-skinned and silver-haired. Emerondians are plant-like creatures. They have a chlorophyll-like substance that acts as their blood and has many properties of other bodily fluids. They have a few internal organs used to produce their blood by altering other fluids they ingest (primarily water), to digest the foods and to reproduce. Their skin and muscles have a special feature: they're extremely elastic. Emerondians can extend their limbs for many feet long using them normally without loss of sensitivity. They normally drink water (in taverns it's served with some salt or aromatic substances) to replenish their inner fluids and they need much greater quantities than humans do (three times more). The Emerondians use the energy of the sun to produce the inner chemical reaction that transforms outer fluids into blood, much like plants and only the mature and sane individuals can operate this process even at night. Normally the babies and weak old people are totally inactive at night, resting in a cataleptic state to avoid consuming precious energies. Others guard those people to protect them, helped by beasts bred from special plants. Emerondians eat only vegetables, roots and fruits and cannot tolerate meat of any kind: their metabolism cannot digest it.

The Emerondians reproduce much as humans do: the male impregnates the female, who then act as a host and nurtures the baby inside her womb. The female normally keeps the baby inside her body for a season (4 months), then during a special

ceremony the male opens the belly of his partner by cutting the skin and extracts a small seed-like organism the size of a fist. He then attaches the tentacle the seed-organism has to his nipple and places the seed inside a special "marsupial pouch" he has formed on his belly during the four months. For the next season (another four months) he will nurture the creature through his nipple and at the end of the period the couple will open the seed by breaking its shell, finally revealing the baby.

Emerondians have always tended the forest and protected it from the first time they settled in the Jungle Coast. They are so deeply linked with their ecosystem that they couldn't bear losing it or seeing it damaged. They love their land more than anyone else on this planet, I believe and their sense of duty towards the land exceeds even that of the elves. In fact, they have much in common with the elven race, as much as with the other sylvan races: they live in the jungle gathering the fruits it produces and cultivating small orchards where they grow special vegetables derived from their homeland. Theirs is a society of farmers and gatherers: they don't normally hunt for food.

The Emerondians have basically only a small set of ethical common laws, since each city-state settles local rules on its own, but every Emerondian obeys the First Law: Never Harm the Forest. Whoever is found guilty of this crime is immediately expelled from the Emerondian society (if he belongs to it) and abandoned alone in the jungle to face the Forest's Judgment, for it is the forest that is the highest power in Emerond. Foreigners who commit sins against the forest are sentenced to the Forbidden Territories instead of being delivered to the forest, because they are considered filthy and would poison it. The Forbidden Territories are, according to the legend, the land where the first generation of Emerondians (Pyrrhians) lived when they arrived in Davania. But after some mysterious incident, they were forced to abandon those lands and re-settled west of them. The foreigners are brought to the Hills of Desolation or to the

Forbidden City where they will face their punishment, apparently delivered by some ancient evil. So far, none of the foreigners who have been brought there ever returned to Emerond.

Recent History

Emerond was founded many centuries ago by descendants of the first Pyrithians who came to Mystara after leaving their world, which was on the verge of destruction. The first settlers founded the city of Pyris east of the current kingdom of Emerond and they lived in that part of the forest for several decades, until disaster struck. Legend has it that the last ruler of Pyris sinned against Nature and the Land, for she wanted to use the Land for her own goals instead of serving Nature and so she was cursed by the holy protectors. The protectors then, foreseeing the impending doom over the city, led the population eastwards, where they crowned the new king, one of the nephews of the former ruler and founded Emerond, cutting all ties with the other Pyrithians. As to what befell those who remained in Pyris, this is a mystery. Apparently, some weeks after the great majority of the people had moved, the jungle around Pyris died and the land turned into a barren rocky desert, while the city itself was found empty and abandoned, without any signs of struggle or fight having occurred inside.

Emerond has always been a peaceful nation that never got any problems from the nearby tribes of Hinterlanders, nor from other humanoids that live in the region. This is mainly since they are masters of combat in the jungle and their neighbors have learned their lesson already. Also, the Emerondians rely on their powerful mounts and other war-insects that have proven far superior to any other standard mount so far, so they are safe inside their territory. Thyatis hasn't discovered its existence before mainly because it never ventured so far to the south or west (they still have problems keeping their Hinterlanders in line), but one never knows what the future will bring. One thing

is for sure: if the Thyatians start a war to conquer Emerond, I don't think they will have an easy war like that waged on the Hinterlanders this time.

Don't Miss

Well, I haven't visited the capital city of Izmira, but Pikkolu told me that it's a model of Emerondian architecture and perfection, so I think it should be worth a visit if any of you ever manage to get that far. I myself have seen only one specific site that really deserves a visit (besides the whole region, of course): The Tree of Knowledge. This is one of the holy places of Emerond and it's directly guarded by Pikkolu (each holy protector guards similar holy places as a duty). It consists of a big tree created by the magic of Pikkolu (I suspect the first Pikkolu) which contains all the tomes and parchments pertaining the history of Emerond and of their Pyrithian ancestors, including the methods for creating their insect-like beasts and the living plants, plus other obscure spells and unknown farming techniques. The tree is just a normal one from the outside, but Pikkolu has the power to open it using a magical key, revealing its wondrous contents which occupy a greater volume than that of the tree (so magic is obviously at work here). We were lucky to have the honor of visiting it and reading some of its books, though I frankly admit I wouldn't be able to discover its location now. Some of the other holy places Pikkolu mentioned included the Cave of Magic, the Lake of Time and the Field of Dreams.

Do Miss

I speak firsthand here: never ever venture in the Forbidden City if you don't want to risk your soul. The city has a name, but it's known only by the holy protectors and not spoken out of fear of attracting the attention of evil forces. We discovered it by reading an ancient parchment and some inscriptions found inside the city: Pyris. It is basically a deserted city made of a strange resilient stone-like material (petrified wood according to Pikkolu), with buildings made of one to

even five stories, many of them collapsed and in bad condition. The city covers a two-mile radius and is surrounded by high walls that have collapsed with time at more than one point. At its center stands the Temple of the Holy Protectors, a pyramid about fifty feet high. The strange fact is that this city lies in the middle of a rocky desert and the feeling you get when you roam around its streets is one of utter loneliness and aridity, dryness. Nothing like the sensation of decay and rotting flesh you get while exploring a lost graveyard or the slums of Thyatis City, quite the contrary. Everything here is so sterile and clean in its abandon: there are not even the remains of its former inhabitants, those who weren't so lucky or so wise to leave it before it was too late. And then there is the sensation that somebody's watching you all the time, trying to bring you towards the pyramid. This way we entered it: chasing a shadow that was seemingly spying on us. The map and the inscriptions told us that a great treasure was hidden inside the pyramid, so we explored it and we encountered many traps and strange forces that wanted to stop us from going on. And not all of them were evil. What lies in the pyramid must not be disturbed, this is what I learned from our experience, or we risk unleashing in the world that which has caused the fall of a city like Pyris.

The Hills of Desolation are the second place I'd avoid if I were you. Indeed, we were able to avoid travelling in that region and after hearing Pikkolu's tales I can only thank our guide for choosing another path. Dragons, evil and ferocious humanoids (orcs and trolls in particular) and other serpent-like abominations ply these lands, apparently guarding some mysterious lair or secret that has been forgotten by all except dragonkind. Even Pikkolu couldn't tell us much more for he himself hadn't ventured so far in his voyages, but I think that if a man so powerful as him has never found the time to explore that region, then I am sure I won't have the time to do it even in a thousand years...

GARGANIN (City-State of)

Location: Continent of Davania, on coast of Sea of Dread. DV

Area: Approx. 550 sq. mi. (1,425 sq. km.).

Population: 21,000 (around 2,300 live in scattered farms outside the city).

Languages: Hulean (Garganin dialect).

Coinage: *Lira* (gp), *kurat* (sp), *piastre* (cp).

Taxes: Citizens have their total worth assessed every year and are taxed 20% of that amount.

Government Type: Monarchy.

Industries: Agriculture (wheat and vegetables), crafts, fishing, sheep.

Important Figures: Mehmet II (Baron, human, male, F7), Kemal (Dock Warden, human, male, normal man).

Flora and Fauna: The city of Garganin sits upon the fertile Garganin Grasslands, whose rich black soils yield bountiful crops year after year. Along with the typical crops found on the numerous farms scattered about the city, passersby will notice many varieties of wildflowers and shrubs dotting the great expanses of flatlands. One can also find the occasional stand of oak trees as well, though these are scarce in the immediate area of Garganin. The frequent rainfalls year-round ensure that the flora is almost always luscious.

The animals one is likely to encounter here include all manner of grassland wildlife, such as falcons, field mice, gazelles, gophers, hawks, leopards, salamanders, snakes and wild horses. Also present in this region are scattered tribes of gnolls, goblins and orcs and the occasional griffon, though these tend to be found in the hills farther south, where the terrain is more suitable for nest-building.

Further Reading: Previous almanacs.

Description by Marina Takanitas.

I had the opportunity to venture to Garganin not long after accepting an offer from Joshuan to cover affairs as they transpire on Davania. I am a Kastelian and Garganin is the closest large settlement to

my home. My family routinely does business with the traders of Garganin, so the trade road to this city is not strange to me.

The Land

Garganin is blessed with beautiful terrain and rich soils, where there are no sharp angles; every terrain feature seems to gently mix into the next, until the land gradually slopes down to the Sea of Dread. The weather is always fair here, with breezes from the sea constantly blowing in from the north, literally blanketing the city with the salty tang of sea air. The city itself is fairly large considering its population; it is the same size as Kastelios, yet my city has 5,000 more people. Of course, the answer is clear once you enter any of Garganin's three gates—the buildings are low and expansive, with many having tiny vegetable gardens running along their sides and back. Once inside, though, it becomes clear that much of this city is taken up not by residential quarters; there are countless temples, shrines and public buildings scattered within the city walls. Another thing you will notice is that Garganin is clean; it is forbidden, by order of Baron Mehmet, to leave garbage in the streets in public view. People will regularly come by and sweep the streets themselves with wide brooms and every piece of litter is gathered up and carted away to be burned.

The People

Never have I met a single people so close-mouthed as those of Garganin! I have been to the city many times and I have done business with the same people, but they still insist on going through a ritual of coffee-drinking, during which no one may speak. It seems that Garganinese, as the residents call themselves, strongly believe in formality and established traditions. Nothing is acceptable unless it has an established way of being done and even then the prescribed ways of doing things must be followed. Even the way in which people socialize in the streets has a series of informal rules. Always use your right hand when touching others or eating. Never turn your back to another

person. If offered a gift, politely decline and later offer a gift to the giver, when both of you can then exchange gifts properly. It is a good idea for any venturing to this city to learn the customs quickly—otherwise they will risk offending their hosts! Perhaps what is most bizarre about these people is that in many cases, they have long forgotten the original reasons for their customs and traditions; they follow them regardless.

The Garganinese prefer not to deal with outsiders. This is not because they despise foreigners; the people of Garganin simply do not wish to mix with others. Theirs is a history of freedom and relative isolation and they are content with this. Visitors to the city will be directed to the Foreign Quarter, a collection of tiny buildings along the docks where all non-Garganinese can sleep and eat. Foreigners are forbidden from leaving the Foreign Quarter after sundown. Those that do so are immediately expelled from the city and forbidden from returning for 10 years.

The people of Garganin are related to those of far-off Hule, though one would not know this by looking at them! I have been told by sailors from Yavdlom that the Huleans worship an Immortal named Bozdogan, who preaches deceit and conquest. Though I have seen some temples to this Immortal, many more are devoted to Halav, Petra, Zirchev, Protius and Asterius. I have always found the Garganinese to be scrupulously honest and interested only in what goes on in their own city.

Recent History

Garganin was founded circa AC 750 by Hule, in a bid to expand its holdings on Davania, which had been discovered only a century before by this nation. The settlement of Garganin slowly grew from a ramshackle collection of docks into a bustling town and then into a city. Before this transformation was complete, Hule had lost interest in this colony, as the hoped-for mineral deposits and exotic animals were not present. Also, the colony was costing more to maintain than it paid in taxes and Hule's rivalries with its neighbors were taxing its

navy. Around AC 850, ships stopped sailing to Garganin and the locals soon forgot about their homeland and concentrated on surviving frequent humanoid raids and building a livelihood for themselves.

Over time, the Garganinese began interacting with the Milenian city-states, especially Kastelios. The Immortals worshipped in Kastelios began to attract adherents in Garganin, who were beginning to see that Bozdogan was not looking after them. Today, there are more worshippers of these other Immortals than of Bozdogan, whose following continues to shrink.

By AC 950, Garganin was much like it is today, a city filled with people of Hulean descent, but sharing next to nothing in terms of culture and religion. Many of their customs, such as coffee-sharing, have their origin in Hule, though the reasons for them are long-forgotten.

Don't Miss

If you find yourself in Garganin, make your way to Solitude Square, which lies near the Great Market. Tastefully decorated with fountains and mosaics, this square is where musicians play every day for spare coins. The quality of the music is excellent, though it is almost always of a subdued nature. Occasionally people will sing ancient ballads, as well. These are almost always of an introspective nature and are very thought-provoking if you know the local language well.

Another place to visit is the Great Market, where merchants from Kastelios, Kalavronti, Yavdlom and occasionally Sind and Minrothad hawk their wares to passersby. Though the locals do not wish to have extended contact with foreigners, they are not reluctant in the least to obtain foreign goods such as spices, precious and common metals and wood.

Another place of interest in the baron's palace. In form it greatly resembles the palaces described by travelers who have ventured to Hule, with its graceful towers, domes and curves. Baron Mehmet himself has opened part of his palace to the public,

so that they may gaze upon and admire the rich carpets and adornments found throughout. For those interested in Hulean architecture, Garganin presents a much safer alternative than going to Hule itself.

Do Miss

The one section of Garganin that should be missed at all costs is called the Dark Quarter. This is where the poorest people live and where murder and theft is rampant. Even Baron Mehmet cannot bring this part of the city under his control fully. Many of the people here think that foreigners are stealing Garganin's wealth and its livelihood and outsiders who wander the Dark Quarter's narrow alleyways and shadowy squares for too long have been known to disappear. There are rumors that a thieves' guild runs this section of the city.

ILIOLOOSTI (City-State of)

Location: Continent of Davania, western Meghala Kimata Plains. DV

Area: Approx. 1,100 sq. mi. (2,850 sq. km.).

Population: 32,500 (19,000 in Ilioloosti, 13,500 living in scattered villages and towns).

Languages: Milenian (Ilioloostian dialect).

Coinage: *Danorii* (gp), *vesta* (sp), *pirnii* (cp).

Taxation: All citizens are taxed at 20% of their assessed worth once per year (Kaldmont 28).

Government Type: Oligarchy, some democratic elements.

Industries: Agriculture (primarily wheat, fruits and corn), sheep, crafts.

Important Figures: None known.

Flora and Fauna: The plant life present around Ilioloosti is what one would normally expect for a riverside region, being largely of such water plants as lily pads, papyrus and reeds, plus a midget variety of what is known to some people as the Cestian gobbler. On land one can see many species of grass, including large patches of grab grass, as well as the occasional piece of

shrubbery. Among the trees present here are oak, olive and pine. Not far from the city there is a large oak grove, which serves as the home for a very old treant.

The more exotic animals that may be encountered around Ilioloosti include blink dogs, displacer beasts, griffons, hippogriffs and any type of giant insect. Among the more organized humanoids, tribes of bugbears, hobgoblins and orcs have been spotted in the region numerous times in the past. Also, a large group of over one hundred minotaurs is known to inhabit a large group of hills west of the city. Little contact has been established with them, but the city's leadership is aware of their existence. Further southeast, several tribes of rakasta are known to exist. Contact with them is sporadic, but peaceful.

Further reading: None.

Description by Marina Takanitas.

If there is any other city-state in northern Davania that I could call home—a place where I would not mind living—then that place would be Ilioloosti. For many traders, especially those from Kastelios, Ilioloosti represents the proverbial end of the road; it is the last outpost of civilization before one enters the great vastness of the Meghala Kimata Plains. It is also the last “friendly” city-state towards the southeast. Beyond Ilioloosti lies the city-state of Mivosia, which does not welcome foreigners and beyond that lies far-off Polakatsikes, which is now under the sway of the Heldannic Knights, whose true disposition no one knows. Aside from these other large settlements, there is nothing but the occasional town or village and empty lands filled with danger. Ilioloosti is also not without its own pleasures, which I will endeavor to show you now.

The Land

Ilioloosti is built at the confluence of the Meghalo Fithi and the Milenia rivers, where the latter river meets the Meghalo as a sort of tributary as it heads northwards towards the Sea of Dread. The city itself is built upon a small plateau that overlooks the rivers and

is connected with its satellite communities through a system of tunnels leading down to ground level. The various towns and villages that make up the rest of this city-state line the river banks and in many ways serve as ports for Ilioloosti proper. The most important satellite communities within the city-state's borders are Thyrae, Ellipidemos and Kamenius, all of which lie to the east. From the riverbanks, the land slowly rises in altitude until Ilioloosti's central plateau is reached.

The land itself is quite rich, as it is well-watered by the rivers and enriched by their deposits of silt from upstream. Because it is not too far inland and there are no significant obstacles to the breezes that blow in from the northwest, Ilioloosti's climate is quite pleasant. It is too far from the desert to be subjected to its drying winds and it is too far inland to be hit by the worst of the humid weather patterns that hit much of the northwestern coast of Davania. As a result, Ilioloosti's climate is quite like that of the region around Kastelios, though noticeably warmer and slightly drier.

The People

The people of Ilioloosti are very much a people in search of their past. From the lowliest artisan to the most revered philosopher, almost everyone within the city proper strives to some degree to rediscover what was lost after the collapse of the Milenian Empire. Whenever anyone uncovers a long-forgotten fashion style, an archaic Milenian word, or a piece of art or a tool thought long lost, many others will try to mimic it as soon as possible and otherwise add it to the slowly growing list of what the Ilioloostian philosophers call “recovered history.” Because of this ever-present search for knowledge, many educated Ilioloostian travelers seldom travel without a writing implement and some paper, just in case they run across something worth recording. When an Ilioloostian rediscovers something thought lost, or discovers something new, he or she is honored as a hero.

In many ways, the people of this city-state view the time of the Milenian Empire as a golden age, one in which they say their city was a great center of knowledge. As a result, many people in this city-state are trying to reinstate many of the old customs and traditions, with varying degrees of success. The result of this is fascinating: on any given day, an observer in Ilioloosti can see centuries' worth of history walk by them, as fashions and customs throughout Milenian history parade by them. Truly, the Ilioloostians, with their olive complexions and motley assortments of clothing, are an unforgettable sight. There are some in this city who are following the more successful route taken by my people in Kastelios—adapting those traditions that are desirable to modern situations.

I found it odd that this one city-state should have such a drive to rebuild what was destroyed a thousand years ago, but then I saw the answer in the faces of the people: hope. Unlike Kastelios, with its growing connections to the outside world, Ilioloosti exists on the very periphery of existence in many ways. Nothing of mention lies beyond this city, according to most people and even then, what does exist should not be encountered. As a result, the people of this fair city-state feel rather alone. All that protects Ilioloosti is its orderly nature in a rather chaotic region and its knowledge base. As more lost lore is rediscovered, the people feel more emboldened, better armored, if you will. With every piece of lore, their philosophers say, the world becomes more comprehensible, more predictable and more controllable. Although I personally doubt that this is true, the accomplishments of the people of Ilioloosti are nothing short of miraculous.

As I have implied thus far, the Ilioloostians revere both their history and their orderliness. They have taken great pains to preserve many of the ancient tales of old and, in fact, without their work, the other enlightened city-states, such as Kastelios, would be worse off. These people indeed love their tales—whenever an accomplished storyteller sits down to recite

an epic, you can be sure a crowd will coalesce in this city. Anything featuring Milenian history is of special interest to them and many of them treat these ancient tales as parables for modern living. For the average Ilioloostian, it seems, history defines the core of a person's being, without which one has no direction.

Likewise, the people of Ilioloosti value order. To them, everything in existence has its own specific place, its own role to fulfill. This extends even to people: some people are meant to lead, while others are created to follow. While this way of thinking might lead one to think of the Ilioloostians as oppressive, it seems they are not. They seem to think that a person is free to move among the social strata if they wish, but that they must be prepared to defer to their superiors in society, whoever they might be. I cannot understand this doctrine myself—I am not a philosopher, nor am I a politician. Kastelios, for all its uncertainty and free-flowing nature, is much preferable to me.

Recent History

Ilioloosti was founded circa BC 600 as the capital of the Milenian province of Aesaloniki and during its heyday only two centuries later, it had a population of 90,000 people. So large was the original city that its suburbs stretched over the Meghalo Fithi and Milenia rivers, which were spanned by no fewer than eighteen bridges. During this time Ilioloosti was known as a center of philosophical discourse and as the home of the Great Library, the largest single repository of knowledge in the empire.

This time of prosperity ended in BC 67, when the city was looted and burned by humanoid raiders descending from the Adakkian Mounts to the west. All of the bridges were destroyed, the suburbs were razed and the Great Library was plundered. Only the Old City survived the attacks and even then, it was over three-quarters destroyed. Of a city that once had 90,000 inhabitants, only 7,000 remained. Here the history of Ilioloosti would have ended, were

it not for the determination of the people to fight back and reclaim what was once theirs.

Led by competent generals, the survivors fought the invaders and managed, after four months, to free their home from their presence. While the able-bodied protected the city, the surviving mathematicians, scientists, wizards, clerics and philosophers set themselves to the task of preserving what remained and rebuilding Ilioloosti. The charred ruins of the Great Library were scoured for scrolls and the elderly were encouraged to share what they had learned. In this way, Ilioloosti managed to avoid a regression into barbarism and, within twenty years, was clearly on the way to a recovery. During this time, a ruling council was formed, composed of those who were the best-suited to lead the people. These people were capable soldiers, philosophers, wizards and successful merchants. Using their skills, they guided the people through this difficult time.

Since then, the city has grown greatly. Once more Ilioloosti spread across the rivers and its influence was carried into nearby towns and villages. In exchange for loyalty to the ruling council, the satellite communities received formerly lost Milenian lore, such as irrigation, advanced construction techniques, education, literacy and so on. Ilioloosti did not expand very quickly, but those who fell under its sway were not conquered but were won over. While Ilioloosti was expanding, it remained a backwater compared to other city-states such as Mivosia and Kastelios. This changed in AC 438, when the senior philosophers of the city decided to build what is now the Academy of the Arts, where the Great Library once stood.

Over the following decades, the Academy attracted philosophers and sages from all over the region, all of whom added to the lore that was steadily accumulating there. Today, Ilioloosti is once again becoming a center of learning and reason, as well as a prominent city-state of northern Davania.

Don't Miss

Perhaps the most important thing to see in this wonderful city-state is the Academy of the Arts. The academy is renowned throughout the northwestern Meghala Kimata Plains as the foremost institution of learning, where anyone may come to study the various arts and sciences under the tutelage of acknowledged masters, so long as they are able to prove their willingness to learn. The instructors do not discriminate based on race or economic circumstances, but on a prospective student's desire to uncover the mysteries of the world and to question how it works. The academy specializes in astronomy, history, philosophy, chemistry, physics, literature, biology and theology and it has a vast collection of ancient scrolls and tomes—some of which date back to the Milenian Empire, or so I am told. I was very pleasantly surprised to see this wonderful place, for in accumulated lore it far surpasses the libraries of my beloved Kastelios.

Not only is the Academy wonderful for what it does; it is also a beautiful building to look at. The Ilioloostian stonemasons have done a pretty good job building the academy to match the classical style of the old empire, with its graceful fluted columns, colorful floor mosaics and lovely statues and reflecting pools. Were it not for the fact that this building was erected after the fall of the empire, I would almost think I was home in Kastelios.

Another wonderful feature of this city that I was thrilled to see was the great Colossus of Ilioloosti. Ever since I was a child, I have been told of this impressive work of art and finally I had the chance to see it! An awe-inspiring 80 feet tall, this great bronze statue of Halav was built 500 years ago by Alexandria Karamanes, who was then the most powerful wizardess in the land, as a gift to her home city. Legend has it that in a time of great need, when even Ilioloosti's greatest heroes fail her, the Colossus will come to life and defend the city-state from all who would inflict pain and misery upon the people. Truly a remarkable tale, I think! The Colossus stands astride the main gates of the

city, which faces north upon the plateau upon which Ilioloosti proper rests. It is especially beautiful during festive days, when garlands of flowers are draped all over the Colossus's body.

Not to be missed is the collection of statues of historical philosophers and leaders of the city, which surrounds Alexandria Square, the main market of Ilioloosti. Carved in the plinth of each statue is a brief biography of the person depicted—though those who cannot read Milenian will have a tough time of it! In Alexandria Square, a person may buy almost any good made in the region, whether it be cuisine or some sort of craft.

Another feature of this place lies outside Ilioloosti proper, along the eastern border of the city-state. Here, a long line of towers runs north-south along the eastern fringes of the lands controlled by Ilioloosti. Construction of this 25-mile long fortification was started in AC 1005 and completed around AC 1010 and it consists of towers, small fortresses and trenches. Each tower or fortress is within visual range of the one next in line and all are equipped with signal fires and mirrors to pass messages quickly. Ilioloosti's chief rival is Mivosia and it has weathered many attacks from its eastern enemy, hence the need for these fortifications.

Finally, as with many other city-states, Ilioloosti has its share of fine classical Milenian architecture and decorations, though not so many as Kastelios. Many people from the lands of southeastern Brun find these features inspiring and indeed they are, but perhaps we are used to them because they are always around us. Still, for all its beauty and tranquillity, Ilioloosti lacks the liveliness and above all the history, of places like Kastelios, though as a place to stay and to explore, it is well worth the visit!

Do Miss

Although I would love to say that Ilioloosti has nothing that should be avoided, this is not so. As with my own city of Kastelios, Ilioloosti has its less savory

parts, namely, the quarter by the south gate. Although reasonably well-patrolled by day, by night it is a dangerous place, filled with thieves, murderers and, I am told, practitioners of those elements of Milenian lore that are best left forgotten, such as the worship of evil Immortals and worse things. Mercifully, I did not have to travel in this part of the city and thus I have only hearsay as evidence. Still, I am glad that I did not have to go there.

KASTELIOS (City-State of)

Location: Continent of Davania, on coast of Sea of Dread. DV

Area: Approx. 600 sq. mi. (1,555 sq. km.).

Population: 26,300 (another 5,600 live in satellite villages and in the countryside).

Languages: Milenian (Kastelian dialect).

Coinage: *Sun* (gp), *moon* (sp), *heart* (cp).

Taxes: All citizens pay 15% of their earnings twice per year (Klarmont 28 and Kaldmont 28), as well as 7% of the assessed value of their land once per year (Kaldmont 28).

Government Type: Democracy (citizens elect the town council, who then elect a spokesperson to guide discussions).

Industries: Agriculture (primarily wheat and corn), cattle, crafts, fishing, sheep, shipbuilding.

Important Figures: Benji Trumblehorn (Shop Owner, hin, male, normal man), Marina Takanitas (Experienced Trader, human, female, normal woman), Xenthos Sarantakos (Council Spokesman, human, male, normal man).

Flora and Fauna: The plant life present in Kastelios is atypical for the region, due to human intervention. Where there should be water grasses, reeds, mangroves and bogs one finds instead grasses, bushes and trees, such as cypress, oak and pine. Many flowering plants are also in abundance, such as daffodils, orchids and tulips.

The original animal life that was present here consisted of alligators, various

amphibians and water birds such as flamingos and spoonbills. Due to the draining of the swamps, these have been forced north and south into the remaining swamplands. In their place have come the animals that the Milenians brought with them—primarily domesticated animals such as cats, cattle, dogs, pigs and sheep. Also present are bobcats and wild boars. Kastelios is fortunate enough to be “monster-free,” though this does not prevent the occasional sighting of blink dogs, displacer beasts, goblins, hippogriffs, orcs and trolls (especially near the swamps in the latter case).

Further Reading: Previous almanacs.

Description by Marina Takanitas.

It is with great pride that I share with you, gentle reader, all that I can say of my home in a few scant pages! Ours is a city that is truly the gateway to Davania, perhaps rivaling even Raven Scarp in the Thyatian Hinterlands. Regardless, I have only what I see with my own eyes to show me that Kastelios is leading the way in opening ties with the outside world. My city has changed so much during my twenty-six years of life, I can hardly say whether it has been a dream and just as much it is difficult to know where to begin...

The Land

The land upon which Kastelios was built was originally a swampy delta, which lay at the junction of the Amoros and Vasilios river systems. When the Milenians came, they used their engineering skills to drain the swamps and then run sewers underneath the city foundations. This left an area with rich soils, upon which our city was built long ago. The lands immediately surrounding Kastelios are rich farmlands and plains, upon which the villages of Phossos and Kantrios are built. Both of these lie southeast of Kastelios.

Kastelios is itself broken into four pieces, though all of these are encircled by the city walls and the sections are linked through the sewers and by ornate stone bridges. The

smallest section consists of Euripidos Island, a triangular island bounded on the west by a section of city wall and on the northeast and southeast by The Fork, which flows from the junction of the Amoros and Vasilios rivers towards the Serpent Strait and the Sea of Dread. Euripidos Island holds the Docksides—the roughest part of Kastelios. Along both sides of The Fork are numerous docks and quays, which service the many ships entering and leaving Kastelios.

The second piece is called Northside; it is bounded along the south by the northern half of The Fork and by the Amoros River, which, along with the Vasilios River, meet and then divide into The Fork before flowing into the sea. Northside is bounded with city wall along the north and it has the Garganin Gate—the road from here leads straight to that city. This part of Kastelios has many warehouses and businesses, as well as some residences towards the eastern end. The Great Market and The Ruins, are in this part of the city.

The third section is called Southside; it runs south of the southern half of The Fork and is bounded to the northeast by the Vasilios River. The south is guarded by the city wall, in which is the southern gate of Kastelios, called the Telosian Gate. The main road from here leads to the town of Telos Takesidhi. This section of Kastelios contains the Gymnasium, many small temples and residences, fine statues, as well as numerous pillared streets.

The last section is called the Old City. It is bounded on the east and southeast by city walls, on the north by the Amoros River and on the west by the Vasilios River. This section contains the Great Temple of Halay, the Public Forum, the House of Antiquities and many upscale residences. This section is the oldest part of Kastelios and it survived the collapse of the empire relatively intact.

Due to its proximity to the Sea of Dread, Kastelios is blessed with a mild climate—the temperatures are never so extreme as those that can be experienced even a couple of miles inland. Also, cool breezes blow in

from the east and north almost constantly, making the city a very pleasant place to live.

The People

The people who inhabit Kastelios are all of Milenian stock, though the blood of paler folk, such as the Hinterlanders, may have been added at some time in the distant past; for the men and women of Kastelios are decidedly fairer in complexion than those of nearby Kalavronti, or Ilioloosti. Despite this difference in appearance, we in Kastelios are no less Milenian than our neighbors. We honor the true Immortals—Halav, Petra, Zirchev, Protius and Asterius among others—and we hold a deep regard for the honorable traditions of our ancestors.

Our dialect of the Milenian tongue is said to be the closest in form to that spoken by our people when the Milenian Empire was strong. Whether this is true or not may never be known, but one need only spend a day with us to learn what it is to be truly Milenian!

Unlike many of the other city-states, Kastelios still follows the democratic principles of our ancestors. All citizens of Kastelios elect their representatives to the city council, who in turn elect a spokesperson—one who moderates council debates and represents the city to the outside world. We also regularly hold athletic games of skill, where adventurous souls may prove their mettle at wrestling, running, diskos-throwing and other events. These tend to draw great crowds and are never dull to watch. Our people also have a deep respect for knowledge: those who are experts in philosophy or other arts are encouraged to share what they know of our world and to debate with others. Such competition, both mental and physical, enriches our people and allows us to be the best we can be.

My people are kind and are always open to new ideas. This is why we are so eagerly opening up to the northern countries—so that knowledge and culture may be exchanged and with them the forging of deep ties may come to pass. The people of

Kastelios are also brave; we do not fear what lies across the sea, nor are we afraid to test ourselves. In doing so we become stronger and we can broaden our horizons.

This, gentle readers, is what awaits you should you come to Kastelios. On behalf of my city, I bid you come experience what we have to offer—the memories alone will be well worth the voyage!

Recent History

Kastelios was founded circa BC 650 by Milenian colonists pressing westwards across northern Davania. The Milenian Empire had already been established, but some yearned for the sea and desired to live on the coasts as well as expand the empire while retaining some autonomy. As a result, a large group of Milenian settlers descended upon what was once a large swampy delta at the junction of the Amoros and Vasilios river systems.

Within a few years, the swamps were successfully drained by engineers, revealing rich loamy soil that yielded bountiful crops. Tiberios Andrasos, who led the expedition, decreed that at the very junction of the river systems a great port city would arise. So it was that Kastelios was founded on that spot.

The settlement grew quickly and as time passed, more swamplands were drained to accommodate the need for more farmlands. Eventually, an area 15 miles across, with Kastelios at its center, was drained. Many homesteads and villages cropped up in this territory, all under the jurisdiction of Kastelios. By BC 150, Kastelios was a sprawling city of 60,000, with great aqueducts, statuary and paved boulevard leading from the sea to the inland territories of the empire. By this time, the Milenian Empire had largely retreated inland, except for this one city, its one great port. Many Milenians who left Davania in search of new lands passed through Kastelios and so this city was also seen as a springboard to adventure and new lives elsewhere.

This era, which modern Kastelians call their Age of Joy, came to an end in BC 30, when the region fell into civil war and anarchy during the collapse of the Milenian

Empire. Marauding soldiers and barbarians, some possibly from the modern Thyatian Hinterlands, passed through Greater Kastelios several times, looting and burning as they went. The city militia managed to fight off the worst of the incursions, but the damage had been done. What was once a beautiful city of 60,000 was now a third in ruins, with only 10,000 people within its shattered walls. Most of the citizens fled during the chaos, though few returned.

The true spirit of the people showed through in the aftermath. Realizing that they could only depend on themselves for survival, the survivors banded together and elected a council to lead them in the times ahead. A spokesperson was elected by the council to ensure that discussions would not degenerate into petty rivalries and that survival and the common good remained priorities. This system of leadership was quite like the old governmental system of the empire before it fell into decadence and it has remained in place ever since.

The Kastelians also kept in mind what made them great in the first place—a willingness to persist, reverence for their Immortals and openness to new ideas combined with a respect for tradition. Thus, the old Milenian ways were maintained and enshrined and with them remained reverence for the traditional Immortals of the Milenians. Since they had not fared so poorly in relation to other cities, the Kastelians kept their faith and they were able to draw on the knowledge of their forefathers to rebuild their city.

The people of Yavdlom also played an important role in Kastelios's regrowth. They brought in food when it was needed and helped the Kastelians repulse invaders during those first difficult years. Because of this, a close relationship has existed between the two nations ever since.

By AC 300, Kastelios was once again a beautiful city. The population had slowly grown to 15,000 and many of the buildings had been rebuilt and restored. New buildings were also built in the old style, but newer techniques were used as people

uncovered new ideas over the years. The villages of Phossos and Kantrios had sprung up in the periphery and these were added to the growing city-state. Look at the city at this time, one would never have guessed that it suffered any damage during the collapse of the empire.

Today, Kastelios has some 30,000 people living within its territory and it is continuing to grow in leaps and bounds. Though there have been some setbacks over the years, Kastelios has emerged from the collapse of the Milenian Empire as one of the few city-states that came out reasonably intact and flourished. More recently, the city-state took a risk and reached out to some of the nations of the Known World, sending delegations to Ierendi, Darokin, Minrothad and Thyatis in the hopes of building lasting ties with nations beyond the northern coast of Davania. In large part this gambit paid off and now the Kastelians are beginning to make their presence known to the people of southern Brun.

Don't Miss

The Public Forum is always worth a visit when in the city! Here one can listen to philosophers, scientists and other thinkers put forth their ideas on the front steps of this lovely white marble building, graced with massive columns and engravings along its front. It is especially lively when debates begin—these tend to draw crowds, depending on the topic. Inside is the Grand Chamber, where the thirty elected councilors debate issues of the day, guided by the spokesperson. Most meetings are open to the public, though important issues, such as declarations of war and the like, are always held behind closed doors.

Another sight worth seeing is the Great Temple of Halav! This structure has remained undamaged since its construction in BC 250 and daily services in honor of this Immortal have never been interrupted or stopped for any reason since that time. Elegant white columns, with a massive red slate roof, encircle and cover the temple itself. Inside the temple is one large room,

dominated by an immense altar—reputedly made from a single piece of quartz! Regardless, the intricate carvings depicting the great deeds of Halav and His many heroes are truly inspiring to the observer.

The Gymnasium is where all sporting events in Kastelios takes place. A running track encircles a modest rectangular building, in which are baths, supply rooms and indoor recreation areas. At least twice a year the city holds great athletic events here for all to see, where events such as running, diskos-throwing, archery and wrestling are held.

For those seeking necessities or luxuries, the Great Market is the place to go. Here one may find traders from places such as Yavdlom, Kalavronti, Ilioloosti, Hrissopoli, Sind and increasingly Minrothad, Ierendi, Darokin and Thyatis. Whether you seek common foodstuffs, weapons, or other goods, or more exotic items from deeper within the continent, this is the place to find them. The Great Market is increasingly becoming a meeting place for people of different cultures, too. It is no longer unusual to see adventurers come off the boats and meet locals here to hire out as guides.

Of course, a visit to Kastelios would never be complete without a thorough tour of the many public baths, small temples, bridges, public buildings, theaters and other reminders of this city's Milenian heritage. Graceful columns, imposing statues and paved streets all date from the Milenian Empire and everything from that time has been well maintained. It is also interesting to compare the different building styles through the ages, for, while the basic Milenian building patterns have been maintained, different architects added unique elements of their own.

Another thing worth seeing is something in Northside called The Ruins. This is a collection of rubble and half-collapsed walls that stood here even before the Milenians first came to the area. No one knows who built them, or what purpose they served, but they serve as an interesting attraction, nonetheless.

Finally, anyone wishing to learn more of the old Milenian Empire need only stop at the House of Antiquities. Here, proprietress Helena Demetrina has painstakingly collected, catalogued and restored thousands of relics dating from the days of the empire. Tiny amphorae sit with statuettes on the many shelves in this building, while mosaics grace the walls and floors. Helena has also collected many scrolls during her adventuring days and she is more than happy to share them with visitors. Truly a treasure trove of history!

Do Miss

Newcomers to Kastelios would do well to avoid the Docksides. This is the seedy part of the city, a veritable maze of damp alleys and derelict buildings on Euripidos Island. This area is run by the local street gangs and thugs, who, fortunately, spend too much of their energies beating each other to seriously threaten the rest of the city. Various governments have tried to clean up the Docksides, but the locals always put up strong resistance. Now the city concentrates on keeping the nasty elements inside this part of Kastelios. This is perhaps the greatest blot on our city's record.

MIVOSIA (City-State of)

Location: Continent of Davania, central Meghala Kimata Plains. DV

Area: Approx. 1,400 sq. mi. (3,625 sq. km.).

Population: 40,700 (21,500 in Mivosia, 19,200 living in scattered villages and towns).

Languages: Milenian (Mivosian dialect).

Coinage: *Crown* (gp), *half-crown* (ep), *tenth* (sp), *hundredth* (cp).

Taxation: All citizens are taxed at 25% of their assessed worth once per year (Eirmont 15).

Government Type: Military dictatorship.

Industries: Agriculture (primarily fruits and grains), mining, sheep, war.

Important Figures: Diamanes Thesakkrus (General of the Mivosian Army, human male, F14), Diocletian Merasthasius (Head of the Interior Ministry, normal human male), Petrassia Amonduria (Captain of the Mivosian Cavalry Brigade, human female, F12)—these three people lead the ruling triumvirate.

Flora and Fauna: The area upon which Mivosia was built sports plant and animal life typical for the region. Among the more common vegetative life that can be found here are all sorts of water plants, ranging from cattails to lily pads along the various waterways. On land, it is possible to find many species of grasses, as well as various shrubs and bushes. Nestled among the hilltops of this region are the few trees that exist in this part of the continent, most of these being cypress, mahogany and oak trees.

Thanks to intensive farming and relatively dense settlement patterns by local standards, there are very few wild animals to be found around Mivosia. Most of what people will see consists of chickens, the occasional cow and a large number of sheep. Despite this, people in outlying regions have encountered giant insects, gnolls, griffons, harpies, hippogriffs, orcs and on rare occasions purple worms.

Further reading: None.

Description by Marina Takanitas.

It was with some trepidation that I set out southeastwards from my home in Kastelios to explore this far-off city-state of the Meghala Kimata Plains. We on the coast do little trade with this place, as there is nothing that the Mivosians produce that we need, or that we cannot more easily obtain from our immediate neighbors. On top of this, news had reached us during the previous years of the depredations of the Mivosian army, as the city-state's forces steadily encroached upon its neighbors. Whether or not these tales are true, few people wish to head inland to this place by the Meghala Fithi River. For many, it is fine to venture as far inland as Ilioloosti, but no further.

The Land

Mivosia is situated on fertile hilly terrain bordering the great Meghala Fithi River as it flows northwestwards towards the Sea of Dread. The land is well-watered, with many streams and brooks cutting across one's field of vision and all emptying themselves into the Meghala as it surges by. Unlike Kastelios, Mivosia is not built over its waterways; rather, it looms along the northern shore of the great river, its high walls running along its length. Do not be deceived that this in any way compromises Mivosia's defenses, or its overall efficiency as a city. On the opposite side of the river looms a great fortress, its walls easily measuring 1,000 feet on a side and its main tower at least 200 feet in height. It is connected to the city by a great bridge, which can be raised in times of need. Although I could not approach the fortress to get a better look, I saw what could very well be sharpened stakes propped just beneath the river's surface—some large enough that I am sure they could easily skewer small ocean-going vessels. Add to this the impressive battlements atop Mivosia's walls and it is clear that this city-state is prepared to defend itself. How many of these defenses are magical I dare not speculate.

As for the land itself, Mivosia is indeed fortunate. Not only is it blessed with what appears to be a defensive position with all of its hills and waterways; it is also a fertile land. Even this far south, rain falls abundantly, brought by the northern winds and the soil is rich and black. Many irrigation canals have been dug back from the river and its tributaries and almost every inch of land outside the city that is not covered by buildings or roads has been given over for farming or for pasture.

The People

Seldom have I seen people so dour as the Mivosians! It is indeed difficult to believe that these people and my own, belonged to the same empire at one time and that they were indeed of one folk. In many ways the

Mivosians resemble the people of Kastelios: they tend to be relatively fair of complexion, with slight olive skin tones appearing here and there. What sets the Mivosians apart is the fact that there are very few among them who are not physically fit or marred with deformities of any sort. Perhaps what strikes the visitor most about this place is the prevalence of the military—soldiers stand on virtually every street corner and patrol every street on a regular basis. Military banners hang from all public buildings and, it comes as no surprise, most of the statuary in this city is in honor of the various generals who died in the service of Mivosia.

It was very difficult obtaining information for this portion of my submission on Mivosia for Joshuan, owing to the strict regulations governing contact between citizens and foreigners. No citizen of Mivosia may hold any sort of conversation with a foreigner without military supervision, under pain of forced labor. All foreigners, when entering the city's main gates along its western outer wall, are assigned a soldier to act as both a guide and as protection. This soldier will accompany the visitor throughout his or her stay in Mivosia and will never be more than ten feet away at any time. These soldiers must also be present for any contacts with citizens, to ensure that no vital information is given away to foreigners and that no subversive influences can take root among Mivosia's populace. When entering the city itself, I was forced to hide my true reason for coming here, as I had learned earlier that the *Mystaran Almanac*, which has just begun to see print in Davania, is considered by the Mivosian triumvirate to be subversive propaganda. Just last week I heard a man was sentenced to forty years of hard labor for trying to sell a copy of this book within the city. But enough of my troubles in getting this information to you, the reader, let me begin by telling you something of the people.

As I mentioned before, the Mivosians are a dour people. I think this is in part because of their militaristic environment and their harsh regime. In their society, the military occupies the highest social stratum—all

young men with ambition in Mivosia dream of becoming great military leaders. The sheer amount of pride the city feels towards its soldiers can almost be felt; there are numerous monuments dedicated to heroic soldiers and public orators preach daily to the people on how Mivosia can only be strong if its people support it by serving in its armies and by obeying the triumvirate. Mixed with this patriotic fervor are discourses railing against the inherent corruption of the other major city-states and how the lands around Mivosia seethe with infidels waiting to destroy all that remains of the mighty Milenian Empire. Of late, I am told, the recent invasion of Polakatsikes by the Heldannic Knights has also been a topic of discussion.

As the Mivosians idolize their soldiers and strong figures, they also denigrate those who are not so blessed. It seems to be an unspoken rule in Mivosia that only the strong may survive. Malformed babies are left to die of exposure, by order of the triumvirate and those who cannot, or will not, remain physically fit are treated as second-class citizens—a prospective burden on the state. Begging is forbidden within Mivosia's walls and those caught doing so by soldiers are escorted away—never to be seen again, so I am told. They also look down upon those from other city-states, especially those whose Milenian heritage has been somewhat diluted in their eyes. To the average Mivosian, no other city-state was so successful in repelling the invasions and chaos following the collapse of the Milenian Empire, nor was any other city-state so successful in maintaining Milenian art and culture. They feel they accomplished this through strict military discipline and as such the military occupies a position of power.

How does the average Mivosian react to all this? While I encountered some who, through subtle visual cues my soldier escort did not seem to pick up, told me that they disagreed with the government's policies, most of those I tried to talk to refused to converse with me, their reasons ranging from my being a lowly foreigner to gazing fearfully at my escort and telling me that

they had an urgent errand to attend to. The average Mivosian is truly a tortured soul, forced to bend to the wishes of a cruel regime, though some clearly support what is happening. What frightened me the most about the Mivosians was the seemingly mindless devotion to what many here see as Mivosia's manifest destiny—rulership over a resurrected Milenian Empire. For the sake of peace, I pray that this does not come to pass.

Recent History

Mivosia was founded in BC 512 to be an administrative center for the Milenian province of Lychaea. At its height around BC 350, it had a population of approximately 55,000 people. During this early period of its history Mivosia was well-known for the competence of its administrators, as well as the talents of its bards. Indeed, recently rediscovered manuscripts praise “the Lychaeon jewel of Mivosia, fairest of the fair.” Fragmentary records from this time describe Mivosia as a city of colossal statues of great statesmen, breathtakingly beautiful public buildings and roads and aqueducts that were nothing less than tremendous feats of engineering.

This golden period ended circa BC 60, when the troubles that had been plaguing the Milenian Empire came to Mivosia. Heroic tales of defeating barbarian and humanoid hordes from this time still survive to this day, in no small part because they serve the interests of the ruling triumvirate. During this time, Mivosia had the distinction of being the only Milenian city to successfully repel every attack against it; not one enemy soldier made it past the city's defenses. In BC 41, a general by the name of Solarus defeated a great horde of barbarians outside the walls of Mivosia and in response to his heroism, the public at the time demanded the imperial governor step down and hand over control to him. Solarus crowned himself king and started a line of rulers that lasted for centuries. During that time, Mivosia became a regional hegemonic

power, dominating the surrounding towns and villages.

The line of kings that Solarus had started ended abruptly in AC 472, when a coalition of military leaders overthrew the monarchy and installed itself as the government. The military had grown increasingly dissatisfied with the government's defense strategies and felt that it would do a much better job at running the city. This new leadership soon dissolved into a petty dictatorship, as internal squabbles steadily whittled the rulership down to one man, a former general by the name of Naxos. He then started a new royal succession, which was overthrown in AC 611.

For more than 350 years following this second revolution, there was a period of almost constant turmoil. New ruling military coalitions displaced each other in rapid succession and as continuity in government vanished within the city proper, Mivosia's hold on its satellite villages and towns began to slacken. This gradual decline continued until AC 981, when the current triumvirate, composed of Diamanes Thesakkrus, Diocletian Merasthasius and Petrassia Amonduria, took power. Since then, Mivosia has undergone a program of rapid remilitarization, expansion and centralization. Those towns and villages which strayed from the Mivosian orbit have since been re-incorporated into this growing city-state and areas that have never known Mivosian rulership are now finding themselves under its control.

More recently, Mivosian territorial ambitions have collided with those of the Heldannic Knights, a fanatical collection of soldiers and crusading priests serving the Immortal Vanya, Patroness of Conquest. Since the fall of Polakatsikes to the knights in AC 1015, the Mivosian war machine appears to have sprung to a new life, something that only bodes ill for the people of the Meghala Kimata Plains.

Don't Miss

Although Mivosia has many examples of well-preserved Milenian architecture, there is

not much here that recommends itself to the visitor. The various colossal statues of long-dead Mivosian generals are impressive, though. Perhaps the one thing that is worth seeing if you are here is the Citadel, the great fortress that sits across the Meghalo Fithi River from Mivosia. Although foreigners are not allowed to enter this great complex, it is still impressive to see even from across the river. Its great walls and towers and the massive central tower I mentioned earlier, are all fine examples of solid craftsmanship. The sheer bulk of the fortress is what I think would impress the average person, comparable, I hear, to even the great forts and castles of the southeastern nations of Brun.

Do Miss

Ideally, there is no reason why anyone should want to come this far inland to see Mivosia. As I have already explained, Mivosia takes a dim view to foreigners in general within its walls. Should you find yourself in Mivosia, you would be well advised to stay clear of all military patrols after dark, as they do not take kindly to curfew violations of any sort. In addition, stay away from all military buildings, no matter what time it is. Mivosia has strict penalties in place for those found guilty of spying.

POLAKATSIKES (*Dominion of*)

Location: Continent of Davania, eastern Meghala Kimata Plains. DV

Area: Approx. 336 sq. mi. (870 sq. km.).

Population: 8,350 (includes roughly 200 Heldannic Knights), approx. 1,550 in the countryside.

Languages: Heldannic, Milenian (Polakatsikan dialect).

Coinage: Heldannic Standard: *groschen* (5 gp), *gelder* (gp), *erzer* (ep), *markschen* (sp), *fenneg* (cp).

Taxes: Every citizen's worth is assessed annually and is taxed at a rate of 20%.

Government Type: Military dictatorship, member of the Heldannic Empire, town council has some autonomy.

Industries: Agriculture (mainly wheat, potatoes and other vegetables), cattle, crafts, sheep, smithing.

Important Figures: Wolfgang Stemmel (*Landmeister*, human, male, Pr13 of Vanya), Trimos Sortiropolis (Former *Bürgermeister*, human, male, normal man).

Flora and Fauna: The plant life that is to be found here is typical of that in subtropical plains. One can find sturdy grasses of all forms (including the more exotic types such as grab grass), as well as bushes and shrubs and occasional stands of cypress and other tropical trees.

The animal life is no less typical. Here one may find all forms of birds, including vultures, coexisting with antelopes, boars, elephants, gazelles, giraffes, hyenas, lions, monkeys, snakes and wild horses. Among the more exotic animals to be found here are blink dogs, the occasional chimera, displacer beasts and purple worms (though these are thankfully rare).

Further Reading: Previous almanacs.

Description by Friedrich von Eisendorf.

In the 1015th year after the crowning of the first emperor of Thyatis, the mighty armies of Vanya plunged their swords deep into Davania and struck a death blow against the people who caused our Patroness much grief in life—the Milenians! We were commissioned by Vanya Herself to prove our devotion by conquering land in the heart of the continent and by defeating a people She has long disliked. Although outnumbered, our superior arms, armor and training won the day against the defenders of the town of Polakatsikes. The town has been added to the Heldannic Territories and is henceforth the Heldannic Dominion of Polakatsikes!

The Land

Polakatsikes lies in the heart of the Meghala Kimata Plains and is itself not too far from the Meghales Amosses Desert. The town itself is surrounded by good farmlands and a range of hills known as Larnian Hills lies to the east. Of these hills, Pelmos Hill is the tallest in the group and was the site of the greatest battle in the conquest of this town. Out of respect for our fallen enemies and our own, a monument was built to the dead of both sides atop that hill. Towards the north, the grasses become taller, as one nears the great forests of the Jungle Coast. Towards the south, the land becomes hillier and more arid, until the Meghales Amosses Desert takes over. Perhaps the most interesting feature of this land lies in the Larnian Hills, where many great springs literally burst from underground, spouting water that slowly flows northwest. Various tiny rivers also run from the hills and these join up with this flow from underground. By the time one reaches Polakatsikes, these flows have merged into the beginning of the Meghalo Fithi River, a tremendously long waterway that is said to flow into the Sea of Dread itself, slowly gathering strength as it presses northwestwards. Despite the relative closeness to the desert, northern winds bring a great deal of humidity from the Jungle Coast—surely a blessing for the farmers!

The People

The people of our newest dominion are of Milenian stock. The average citizen of Polakatsikes is rather short, but stocky. They tend toward olive complexions and many of the men are bearded. All of the able-bodied are in excellent physical condition; their lives before we righteously conquered them were simple, but hard. They would make fine warriors for our armies.

They have a surprisingly structured society for such an isolated people—every citizen of the town has a specific profession and there is a definite hierarchy in their society, such that the town leaders, the generals and the most skilled craftspeople carry the most influence. Still, this system makes for mob

rule; their town council was little more than an arena for shouting matches when we arrived and I am surprised they managed to agree with each other long enough to resist us as long as they did. Be that as it may, our form of government for the town, under the wise leadership of Templar Wolfgang Stemmel and in cooperation with Trimos Sortiropolis, the original town council leader, is not oppressive for them. I have heard of no complaints.

These people, despite their heritage, have little regard for history. Most of them are concerned with everyday survival and there are too many pressing concerns to worry too much about where one comes from and how one's heritage affects current events. They maintain their buildings, they speak their language and follow some of their ancient customs and celebrations, but little more. They simply do not have the time or the energy to devote to rebuilding Milenian culture. This is just as well for us, as it would make them rather difficult to rule if they were prone to romanticizing their past, but I digress.

Despite their shortcomings, the Polakatsikans are a very independent-minded and steadfast people. They have always had to depend on themselves for survival and judging from the town itself, they had done admirably. They are quite disciplined and organized and seem to be receptive of outside ideas, especially if they prove themselves to be better than those that currently exist.

Recent History

Polakatsikes was established around BC 100 or so, not long before the collapse of the Milenian Empire itself. In fact, it was among the southernmost Milenian settlements at the time and was quite isolated. When the empire collapsed, the townsfolk simply retreated within their walls and waited out the next thousand years, tending to their farms and defending their lands in times of need. Existing town records tell tales of recurring invasions on the part of desert and humanoid tribes from

the south, but all of these were too disorganized and poorly-equipped to succeed in conquering Polakatsikes. As a result, the Polakatsikans looked after themselves and seldom had contact even with the other city-states.

The only outsiders who managed to conquer this town to date have been the Heldannic Knights. The fact that the town is no longer independent has shocked all but the most stalwart citizens of this tiny land, making resistance in the near future improbable. Some of the town's youth have become enamored by the novelty of the knights and some have begun to emulate them to a degree.

In AC 1016, the encroachment of the Heldannic Knights attracted the attention of the city-state of Mivosia and the two regional powers soon descended into hostility. A full-scale confrontation of some form seems inevitable.

Don't Miss

Those who are interested in classical Milenian architecture and culture will not be disappointed in Polakatsikes. One can find public buildings with graceful pillars and statues, fountains, beautiful groves, clean paved streets and a functioning sewer system. Many of the larger buildings were constructed when the town was first established, which means they date back a thousand years at least. One can also see changing building styles over the ensuing centuries simply by walking down a street. The weight of history is present in Polakatsikes.

One interesting place to see is the Town Forum, a sort of indoor amphitheater where the town council and now the Heldannic governors as well, discuss important policies and ideas. Most such meetings are open to the public and citizens are free to ask questions. Discussions have been much more subdued of late, as the town council and the knights seek ways to work together.

Another place worthy of visiting is the Library, the only source of written knowledge locally. Here specially-trained

caretakers have maintained a collection of scrolls and books, some centuries old. Many of them recount local events over the past thousand years, but others are collections of tales concerning Milenian legends and lore. Surely a wealth of information lies within for those so inclined!

In the coming years, visitors will want to see the Cathedral of Polakatsikes, when it is completed. Needing a suitable place of worship, the knights have taken over an abandoned house for now, but already the foundations are being laid for what will be an average-sized, but grand, cathedral devoted to Vanya. It should be completed within the next couple of years and will be a sight to behold in comparison to the local buildings.

Finally, the professional displays of martial skill on the part of the Heldannic Knights stationed here are always a sight worth seeing. Every day there is a parade in front of the Town Forum, with shining swords and armor flashing and banners billowing proudly. Some of the locals have come to watch these soldiers from a far-off land display their prowess and have always walked away impressed.

Do Miss

While there is no place within Polakatsikes that should be avoided due to danger, thrill-seekers would do well to avoid the central marketplace of the town. The chaos that is to be found there every day is enough to drive even the most balanced mind insane. Gesticulating hawkers compete for the attention of unwary shoppers, while pickpockets glide through the crowds. If you want to experience a dreary market, go to Hockstein or some other backwater town.

THYATIAN HINTERLANDS ***(Dominion of)***

Location: Continent of Davania, Jungle Coast region. DV

Area: Approx. 83,980 sq. mi. (217,510 sq. km.).

Population: 165,000 (30,000 in Raven Scarp, 35,000 living in scattered Thyatian villages and towns, 100,000 Thyatianized Hinterlanders scattered throughout jungles, unknown number living deep in the wilderness).

Languages: Thyatian (official), Thratian.

Coinage: Thyatian Standard: *emperor* (5 gp), *lucin* (gp), *asterius* (sp), *denarius* (cp).

Taxes: 20/25% income tax collected quarterly (Va. 1, Ya. 1, Fy. 3 and Ei. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. Expensive and magical items are also taxed 25% of their worth. 10% imperial *commercias* sales tax on all goods except food, clothing and fixed assets.

Government Type: Dominion, member of the Thyatian Empire.

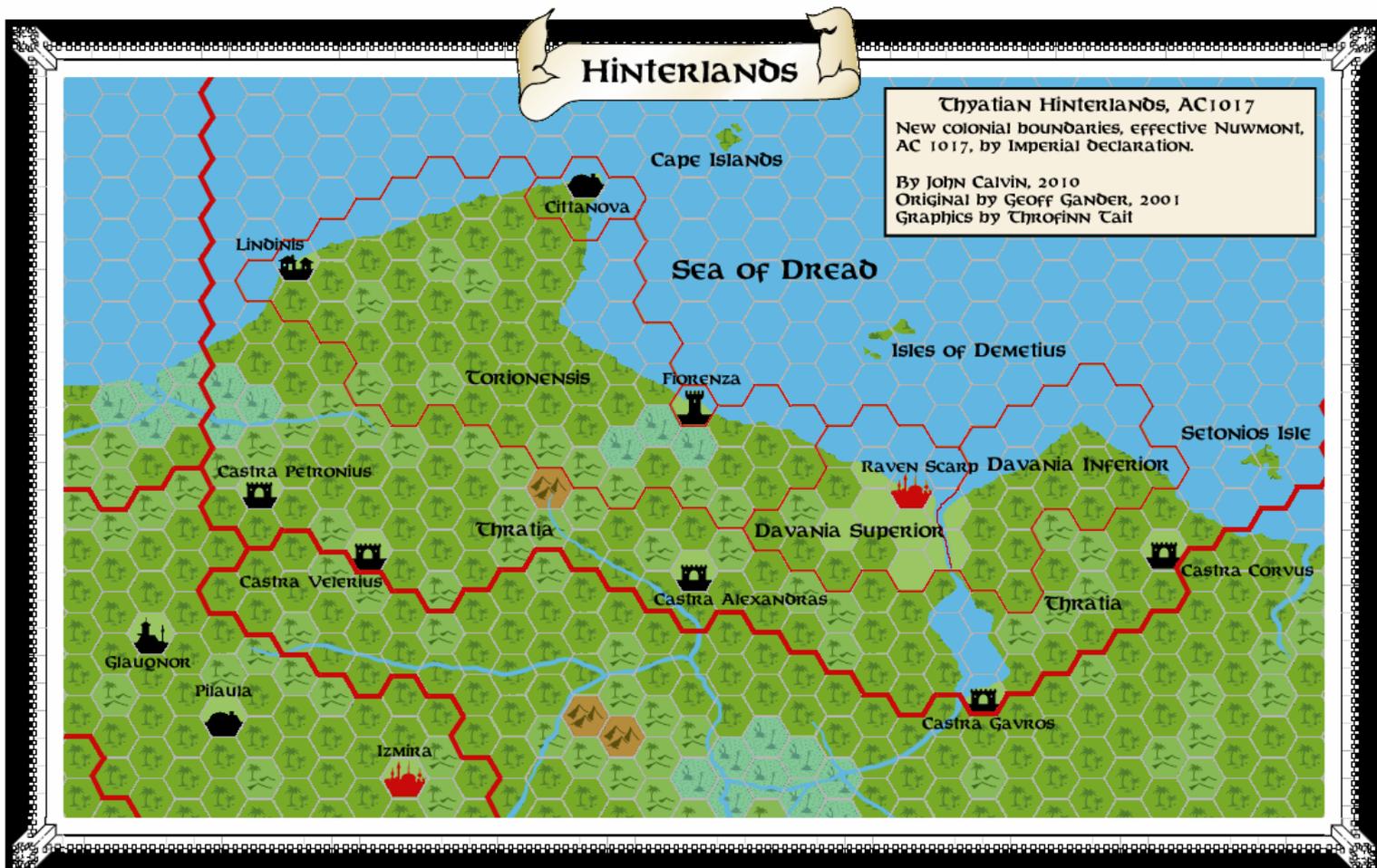
Industries: Agriculture (primarily fruits and grains), cattle, mining, sheep, war.

Important Figures: General Leilah ben Nadir (Governor, human, female, Pr30 of

Tarastia).

Flora and Fauna: The Thyatian Hinterlands are rife with jungle flora of every sort. One can find here almost any specimen imaginable, from mangroves along the coasts, to cypress, olive, banyan and sequoia trees inland. In the jungles themselves, the vegetation overhead forms a complete canopy, so that very little grows at ground level save for creepers, shrubs, fungus and so on. In areas where there is no cover of foliage, tall grasses predominate. Scattered among these plants are the more fantastic forms of plant life, from grab grass in open lands, to amber lotus flowers, archer bushes, strangle vines and whip weeds in the forest.

In terms of animal life, the Hinterlands are likewise endowed. The jungles hold all manner of beasts, including apes, tigers, snakes, wild boars, rodents and birds of every sort. Likewise, the open areas have



gazelles, lions, aurochs, zebras and other animals. The more fantastic creatures include displacer beasts, blink dogs, chimerae, centaurs, harpies and even black and green dragons deep in the interior.

Further reading: *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Marina Takanitas

I was quite surprised when I was asked to venture to the Thyatian Hinterlands to comment on the area! I had grown quite accustomed to fulfilling my duties near my home in Kastelios, or at least not venturing too far afield. Without a doubt this was the longest journey I ever took, riding on the Thyatian vessels plying the new route to the Hinterlands through my nation's waters. Now I would have the chance to see the fringes of the much-vaunted Thyatian Empire, of which I have heard so much lately. With all the events happening locally, it seems only fair that the Hinterlands should be explored in all their glory and with that I happily present them to you now, fair reader.

The Land

The Thyatian Hinterlands are set along a stretch of the northern Davanian coast known as the Jungle Coast, for obvious reasons. Though the lands upon which the Thyatians built their cities and towns was covered with virgin rainforests, much of it has been cut back along the coasts to clear space for the growing urban areas, as well as the numerous farms that are needed to feed the people. This is especially true for the area around Raven Scarp, which is surrounded by farms.

Once outside the heavily-settled regions, though, the jungles dominate. Great trees and shrubs form a dense blanket over the land, blocking out much of the sun's rays and trapping in the heat like a thick blanket. At high noon in the jungles, the heat can be so stifling that newcomers to the area will find it difficult to breathe. For the most part, only the fringes of this land have been penetrated by the Thyatians and beyond the

expanding network of roads and settlements, only the wilderness prevails.

In terms of terrain, much of the Hinterlands slopes downwards gradually towards the Sea of Dread. In the western reaches of the lands claimed by the Thyatians, jungle-cloaked hills predominate and here the seacoast is a mixture of sandy beaches and low cliffs. East of the River Torion, which flows through Raven Scarp towards the sea, the lands are much flatter. Aside from this general overview, however, very little in terms of precise details is known now, due to the difficulties in surveying this vast land.

The People

The Thyatian Hinterlands are a prime example of Thyatian colonization in action. In the cities and towns, the population is divided between the various peoples of the Thyatian Empire and the native Hinterlanders who have adopted Thyatian ways. When these lands were first conquered, the Hinterlanders made up the vast majority of the people living in the urban areas. Now, with colonization from the Thyatian mainland increasing in recent years, the Thyatians are rapidly gaining ground and will soon form the majority in most settlements.

The Thyatians living in the Hinterlands, especially those who were among the first colonists and their children, are slightly different from those living on the mainland. Being a distinct minority far from home, many Thyatians in the Hinterlands have adopted some of the local customs, including a more individualistic outlook on life and a greater reverence for nature. Some have even learned druidic lore and left civilization for the great jungles to start a new life. In other ways, they are still typically Thyatian—they heartily support their emperor and the empire itself and they have a great respect for the legionnaires who serve all around them. They also tend to be rather cosmopolitan, claiming to represent the greatest nation on Mystara, but also one of the most sophisticated ones. To me, the

charms of their culture are seductive, but, as with everyone else on this world, they conceal far more sinister elements. [*Obviously her own opinion. Ed.*]

The indigenous Hinterlanders, who make up most of the population here, are truly unique. These tall, fair-haired people are said to be great warriors, who respect strength and bravery in all its forms. I have heard tales that the physically weak in their culture, among those who still adhere to traditional ways, have miserable lives. Supposedly, only those who have the talent for magic, which is recognized as a strength or sorts, are given the same respect as that accorded a warrior. The Hinterlanders are also said to be highly individualistic. I have heard tales from retired legionnaires in which they describe the Hinterlanders in war as “great, pale-skinned men running rampant across the countryside, paying no heed to formations or discipline and trying to scatter all those before them.” What they lack in discipline, they make up for in ferocity, it seems. It is a good thing we in Kastelios do not have such for neighbors, but I digress.

The Hinterlanders are composed of four clans: the Raven Clan, the Rhino Clan, the Jackal Clan and the Leopard Clan. Of these four, the Raven and Rhino clans are predominantly under Thyatian rule and more and more of their people are adopting the ways of their conquerors. In the western reaches of the Hinterlands, the Jackal Clan is intermittently warring with the Thyatians, but is steadily losing ground, or so my sources say. Only the Leopard Clan is wholly free of Thyatian rule, but the locals tell me that a great offensive to the east will come someday, in which that clan, too, will fall under the rule of the Thyatians. Time will tell.

The two groups seem to get along reasonably well in the towns and cities of the Hinterlands. Many of the Thyatians living here, especially those who were born here, or those who have lived here a long time, respect the Hinterlanders and treat them as equals. Intolerant Thyatians, more often than not, tend to be those who have just arrived here and often they are the ones who

have not spent much time around people of other ethnic groups. In the countryside, relations tend to be more strained, it seems, as more land comes under the plow and the more traditional Hinterlanders are forced to retreat further into the jungles. What this may augur for the future, I have no idea.

Recent History

Although Thyatian interest in the Hinterlands dates to AC 988, when the first military vessels established beachheads not far from where Raven Scarp stands today, this region of Davania has a great deal of historical significance for the Thyatians through their legends. The story began long ago, when, according to the most ancient Thyatian tales, a great evil threatened their very existence. The Thyatians were forced to flee south, leaving their cool forested homeland for a great journey across the sea, to the jungled land of Davania. There, they fought to survive in their new home, fighting off humanoids and savage beasts and ultimately, they managed to make a home for themselves.

Not long afterwards, it seems, a great empire, possibly that of the Milenians, was growing at a meteoric pace on the Meghala Kimata Plains to the south and its warriors pressed in all directions, subjugating all before them. Although they fought bravely, the folk who would become the Thyatians, Kerendans and Hattians were ultimately forced to leave, though some remained behind. During the intervening years, the fair-skinned folk who remained and who survived the death throes of the Milenian Empire, may have become the people known as the Hinterlanders. They developed into a people of warriors, whose harsh and often short, lives in the jungle dictated great strength, adaptability and quick reflexes. It is unknown how long ago all this happened, though the Thyatians, Kerendans and Hattians fled several centuries before the fall of the Milenian Empire, which we in Kastelios have documented as happening circa BC 50 by modern reckoning.

Of the intervening years, little is known. The Hinterlander tribes kept no written record of what happened in their lands, keeping only oral records of great invasions of humanoids, as well as of the presence of a people that might have been elves, judging from their description. All that is known of events happening here between the collapse of the Milenian Empire and the arrival of the Thyatians are contained in those tales.

This changed in AC 988, when the Thyatians returned to Davania in great warships. After initially winning some easy victories along the coasts and around Raven Scarp, progress inland has been much slower, though steady. Of the four Hinterlander clans, only the Raven and Rhino clans have been largely conquered by the Thyatians. The conquerors have also been quick to tame the land in areas that have fallen under their control, clearing land for fortresses, fortified villages, roads and even the occasional homestead for those brave pioneers who wished to settle the land far from the growing settlements. Outside of these pockets of Thyatian civilization, the land is still filled with danger.

Don't Miss

During my stay in the Hinterlands I found several things of note, which any passerby should visit should he or she have the chance. Perhaps the most breathtaking sight that first greeted me as I entered Raven Scarp was the actual Raven Escarpment, after which the port city is named. Although the cliffs themselves are only 150 feet tall at most, the rock itself is crisscrossed with many different-colored bands. A gnomish prospector who I had the pleasure of meeting in that city told me that the different colors are caused by the gradual sedimentation of different forms of rock over many eons. At ground level one can see pink granite, with itself was extruded from mighty volcanoes ages ago. Above that are many layers of sandstone, limestone, obsidian, mica and finally chalk at the very top. The swirling of the different bands of

color was breathtaking; I have never seen its like anywhere else.

For those seeking imperial grandeur at its best, the Imperial Square is the place to go! Much larger than even the greatest market square in Kastelios, the Imperial Square is where imposing lines of Thyatian legionnaires drill every day and perform parades on holidays. Their ceremonial bronze armor was so highly polished on the day that I went, that I was nearly blinded! Aside from the displays of military prowess, one can also see the majestic buildings that house the colonial government of the Hinterlands. On the northern side stands the Imperial Legislature, where the famed Leilah ben Nadir, Governor of the Hinterlands, resides and holds court. On the other three sides stand impressive examples of Thyatian architecture, with great columns and walls of dressed white marble. Mind you, they are a far cry from the graceful buildings of Kastelios—it is clear to me who served as an inspiration for Thyatian architecture.

Another thing worth seeing is the Great Fall. Located a day's ride south of Raven Scarp, along the River Torion, this great waterfall plunges 300 feet and is bathed in multicolored water droplets where it ends its fall. Locals, both Thyatian and Hinterlander, say that the waters where the falls end have curative properties and some claim to have been cured of horrendous diseases by bathing there. At night, the waters at the base of the falls glow with a faint blue luminescence, the source of which is unknown, for many have tried digging there to no avail.

Do Miss

One area that Hinterlanders say should be avoided like the plague are the Fens of Lost Hope, which lay in the south of the Barony of Fiorenza. Ancient Hinterlander legends tell of a great battle fought here ages ago, after which the defeated force was imprisoned somehow. Local lore has it that this imprisoned entity was so malevolent that the very forests nearby were corrupted and ultimately the Fens of Lost Hope came

into being. This vast trackless waste is filled with all sorts of foul beasts and poisonous plants and the murky waters hold nothing but danger for the wanderer. So evil is this land that Hinterlanders who have greatly wronged their clans are sent here as penance for their deeds. I have also heard that there are great treasures within the fens, remnants of a bygone civilization, but none who have ventured here have ever returned.

VANYA'S REST (*Outpost of*)

Location: Continent of Davania, eastern coast by Gulf of Mar. DV

Area: 48 sq. mi. (125 sq. km.).

Population: 4,000 (does not include around 500 farmers supplementing local rations).

Languages: Heldannic.

Coinage: Heldannic Standard: *groschen* (5 gp), *gelder* (gp), *erzer* (ep), *markschen* (sp), *fenneg* (cp).

Taxes: None.

Government Type: Military dictatorship, member of the Heldannic Empire.

Industries: War, some agriculture (mainly grains and vegetables).

Important Figures: Heinz Kronenburg (Castellan, human, male, Pr15 of Vanya).

Flora and Fauna: The vegetation found around Vanya's Rest is typical of that in a damp coastal region. Along the cliffs there are numerous forms of mosses and hardy grasses, while further inland the grasses tend to predominate, with the occasional gnarled bush breaking the undulating fields. No trees can grow here—the winds would likely blow them over near the coast and the soils are too poor to nourish them further inland.

The animals found here are just as hardy as the plant life. Gulls and other sea birds' nest among the cliffs, managing to feed themselves by catching fish in the gulf. Also present in the cliffs are various rodents who feed off the eggs of the various birds. Further inland one can find foxes, groundhogs, numerous kinds of insects,

rabbits and the occasional snake. Some giant spiders are known to inhabit the region and in the lower levels of the fort it is possible to find giant rats.

Further Reading: Previous almanacs.

Description by Friedrich von Eisendorf.

As adjutant to His Most Exalted Templar, *Herr Kronenburg*, it is my pleasure and my honor to be able to serve Vanya at this fortress, Vanya's Rest. Only the elite of the Heldannic Order are ever permitted to serve here, charged as they are with guarding the remains of our Patroness Herself! Recent developments have also allowed us to take on another duty, that of expanding our domains on this continent for the greater glory of Vanya!

The Land

The land upon which this great fortress has been built is largely an unforgiving one. Harsh winds from the Gulf of Mar gust in from the east, forcing great waves to crash against the low cliffs along the coast constantly. Further inland and beyond the fort, the land descends gradually into the Aryptian Savannah, a largely arid, empty expanse of land. Even within our fort we are not completely immune from the elements, for the very winds that smash the shores with waves also bring dampness that chills everyone in this region to the bone. As a result, there is a microclimate here that makes the area feel more like a stretch of land in the Northern Reaches, even though we are not far from the great Aryptian Desert.

The fort itself is built atop the highest of the cliffs, such that we have a commanding view of the countryside and the gulf in all directions. Due west of the fort, no more than two or three miles distant, lie several small farms, tended by eager colonists. The soils here are relatively poor, but over time good crops have been coaxed from the reluctant earth. These souls assist in supplying the knights, who would otherwise have to rely totally on supplies brought from

home. When there is little action, many knights will assist the farmers in harvesting and sowing, as it is in everyone's interest that there be enough food for everyone.

The People

You will not find better people than those at Vanya's Rest! Only the most disciplined and stalwart knights are allowed the privilege of a five-year tour of duty here and all who come are always drilled mercilessly and give a top performance. It is said that many of the top members of the order had a tour here, such that time spent at Vanya's Rest is almost a prerequisite for would-be commanders. The people who farm outside the fort are also dedicated to Vanya and wish to assist in expanding Heldannic holdings by tilling the soil here. No doubt the promise of free land was also an attraction! The farmers also have some training with weapons and many can be called upon as auxiliaries in times of need.

Recent History

Around AC 925, certain Hattian worshippers of Vanya—promising fighters and clerics—received dream messages from their Immortal. She told them to secure their birthright, a land of their own where they could live as they chose. Before this could come to pass, they had to secure for Her a sanctified place, where Her earthly remains could be protected from infidels.

This place in question lay in Davania, on the coast of the Gulf of Mar. The boldest and most pious, eager to prove their worth to Vanya and to show respect for Her mortal remains, made a great pilgrimage to that region, as foretold in a dream. They landed after weeks of sailing and as one force, they stormed the shores, only to find a small settlement, populated by indigenous human tribesmen descended from the Milenians. These people were driven out, their village destroyed and the entire region was searched until the remains of Vanya were found. The tribesmen, known as the Meghaddara, were forced to wander the Meghales Amosses Desert and the Aryptian

Savannah in search of a new home—and have been the sworn enemies of the Heldannic Knights ever since.

The remains were then reverently placed under a stone cairn, upon which was built the great fortress now known as Vanya's Rest. Once the fort was complete, in AC 935, Vanya visited Her faithful and told them they had done well and secured Her rest from unbelievers. She then told them that they had to marshal their forces and return to Hattias, there to bring all who were true to Vanya's Path to the ultimate victory, a home of their own. Most of the Heldannic Knights, as they began to call themselves, returned to Hattias, but they left behind a garrison of elite soldiers to guard the fort.

Don't Miss

The one thing visitors must not miss is the fort itself! Those who come to Vanya's Rest will immediately notice how massive the structure is. The outer walls themselves are at least five feet thick and are thirty feet in height. At regular intervals along the walls are stout square towers, each mounted with heavy catapults and ballistae. Finally, the most breathtaking structure within the fort is the Great Cathedral, which houses Vanya's remains and is decorated by stained glass windows, numerous sculptures and tall archways, all in a gothic style.

Do Miss

In the territory claimed by the knights, the regions immediately to the north should be avoided. These northern territories are inhabited by the Meghaddara, who have been sworn enemies of the knights since they were pushed out of their own lands when the fort was built. Those wearing the insignia of the Heldannic Knights, or who travel in their company, will be attacked on sight by the Meghaddara.

Atlas of Norwold

Introduction to Norwold

The lands to the far north of civilization are lands of constant warfare and power struggles between the nobility. Once united as the Kingdom of Norwold, with the disappearance of Alphatia, the region's former king was unable to hold onto the reins of power. Now the land is dotted with hundreds of small kingdoms, counties, baronies and other type of dominions.

The realms of Norwold follow the old practice of feudalism, with the local lord controlling all aspects of life within the dominion. All the rest are merely peasants who toil at their leaders' whims. Some are lucky and have benevolent rulers, while others are treated no better than slaves by the tyrants who hold the crown.

The level of education in Norwold varies greatly, as do the cultures of the inhabitants. Those who colonized from Alphatia tend to be more literate (especially the nobility), as do the people conquered by the Heldannic Knights (thanks to their forced education in the ways of Vanya). Those of Thyatian descent are also literate, while the native Antalians are mainly uneducated.

Norwold is a land where the title of nobility hangs loosely on anyone with power. Rulers rise and fall constantly and their power reaches only as far as their armies can reach. Alliances are made as lesser nobles swear fealty to more powerful ones, only to find independence once their liege is overthrown.

Many adventurers with money and time to spare try to carve out their own dominions within the valleys of Norwold, only to have another self-proclaimed noble take it away with his own army. Those with patience enough to try again, or those capable enough of holding their own can quickly forge a dominion that will last years. Norwold is the place where the bold and daring can hope to carve out a nation of their own.

Encompassing all the northeastern area of the continent of Brun, Norwold stretches from the frozen Arctic Ocean all the way south to the Mengul Mountains. The beach along the Alphatian Sea delineates the eastern margin, while the imposing Icereach Range cuts off western Norwold from the rest of the world.

Correspondents for Norwold

Here is our list of correspondents that give us detailed information on the nations, places and events of Norwold:

Adik de Chevas

This mage from the sophisticated Principality of Nouvelle Averaigne is the latest addition to our cadre of correspondents from Norwold. A sage and expert of universal magic, poetry, literature and ancient mythology, Adik is a fine observer and a keen writer. Working in team with Arcadius, he will cover many regions of Norwold from now on.

Arcadius

This Traladaran mage is the Baron of Arcadia, a remote and wild dominion in northern Norwold. Although normally a solitary wizard, he has agreed to work for our almanac together with his colleague Adik de Chevas to map Norwold as none has ever done before. His acute political skills and his vast knowledge will undoubtedly serve him (and us) well.

Christopher Dove

Formerly an explorer and a renowned archeologist of the Old World, Christopher Dove has spent the last ten years teaching archeology and ancient history at the University of Corun in Corunglain, Darokin. He has published famous essays on the Nithian and Milenian civilizations and has made many interesting discoveries in the past years, the last one being the finding of the tomb of Nennaya-Sherat.

Now in his late fifties, this scholarly and well experienced fellow has agreed to join our cadre of correspondents on behalf of his student and our friend Ursula Bremen: he will cover the region of Wendar and Denagoth for the almanac this year.

Synthala of Aasla

Born in the once famous city of Aasla, Synthala is a ranger who worships the Immortal Zirchev. Having loved animals as a child, she quickly moved to the wilderness lands of Norwold as soon as she could afford it. Her home is now Alpha, the City of Rangers and Foresters. From there, she travels the breadth of Norwold, exploring all the wilderness she can.

Atlas

ARCTIC WASTES

The region known as the Arctic Wastes extends north of the Foresthomes, comprising the southern bogs near the Landsplit River and up to the frozen tundra and icy shores of this part of the continent. The great island of Frosthaven also belongs to this area, which is obviously the coldest and most inhospitable of all those found in Norwold. Nonetheless, many settlements and nomadic tribes do live in the southern area of the Arctic Wastes, coping with the elements and the warlike humanoid population to survive.

FROSTHAVEN (Kingdom of)

Location: Continent of Brun, island north of the continent, in the arctic circle. NW

Area: Approx. 22,455 sq. mi. (58,158 sq. km.).

Population: Approx. 6,000 frost giants, 1,500 cryions.

Languages: Grimen (frost giants' tongue), Cryion.

Coinage: None (barter only).

Taxes: Yearly tributes are paid to the great king as sign of submission and obedience. The exact amounts vary at the king's whim.

Government Type: Monarchy (the strongest giant is proclaimed great king upon the death of the former ruler).

Industries: None. The frost giants' fish, hunt and raid the southern regions. Cryions are hunter-gatherers.

Important Figures: Brunnkarth (Giant King, frost giant, male, F13), Ocylok (Elder, cryion, male).

Flora and Fauna: Only lichens and mushrooms grow in this desolate island of ice and rock. Nothing else can grow here and the intelligent beings living here prey off the smaller mammals and fish they find. Common arctic wildlife in this region

includes wolves, arctic wolves, remorhaz, polar bears and frost salamanders.

Further Reading: CM1 *Test of the Warlords*.

No description this year. [*Adik de Chevas and Arcadius provided us with basic dominion information, but no insight—watch for more next year. Ed.*]

KAARJALA (Kingdom of)

Location: Continent of Brun, north of the Great Bay, between the Kaarjavi and Vaaranavi rivers (known as the Landsplit River to most people). NW

Area: 63,206 sq. mi. (163,704 sq. km.).

Population: 60,000 settled humans plus 50,000 nomadic humans (on the average); demihuman population is negligible; humanoid population is unknown, though relatively low in the patrolled areas.

Languages: Saamari (a language unrelated to any spoken in the Known World; spoken in two dialects, Kaarjalan and Vaarana); some Alphatian.

Coinage: *Markka* (gp), *penni* (sp), *oren* (cp); coins of Alphatian and Littonian origins are also in common circulation here. Most of the economy is still based on barter, as coins cannot be eaten or wielded as weapons.

Taxes: Commoners usually give one-fifth of their assets at the end of each year (Kaldmont 28) to their ruling nobles, who then pay tribute to the king, usually one quarter to one third of their wealth.

Government Type: Monarchy, with a strong and independent minded noble class.

Industries: Agriculture (grains and potatoes; production is high due to the Great Saampo, an artifact held by the king of Kaarjala), dairy, fishing, logging and trapping. The nomadic Vaarana rely on the herds of reindeer during the winter months and farm ancestral lands in Kaarjala during the summer.

Important Figures: Kaarlo Taavinen (King, human, male, F18), Rikka Kaalwa (Maga, human, female, M16), Vaalkoi

Taapionen (Great Druid of the Kaarjalan Circle, human, male, Dr31), Pekka Seppanen (High Priest of the Church of Kaarjala and Grand Smith of Ilmarinen, human, male, Pr12 of Ilmarinen (Kagyar)).

Flora and Fauna: Kaarjala itself is unusual in that it has a rather more temperate climate than is the norm for this region; thus, creatures of a more southerly nature can be found in the land between the rivers. In terms of plant life, one can find scattered stands of pine and other coniferous trees within the region covered by the Great Saampo, as well as scattered flowers and shrubs. Outside this region, however, lichens, mosses and short taiga grasses predominate.

Domesticated animals include shaggy cattle, horses (ponies, mostly), dogs, cats and ferrets. Outside the region protected by the Great Saampo, of course, nature reigns and the northlands are very, very cold. Creatures native to the region include moose, elk, bears, wolves, reindeer and so on. It is also home to every sort of monstrous creature native to the arctic and sub-arctic: snow apes, white dragons, frost giants, frost salamanders and worse. There are also large numbers of nomadic humanoid clans and tribes, primarily living in the northwestern part of the country.

Further Reading: CM1 *Test of the Warlords*, *Kaarjala* by James Mishler, previous almanacs.

Description by Adik de Chevas and Arcadius.

While we were visiting the Kingdom of Littonia, many of the locals suggested that, if we were to truly understand the far north of Brun, we would do well to venture to the Kingdom of Kaarjala, which lies west of Littonia. After we had seen what we wished in Gaudavpils, we restocked our supplies and hired a guide andrejs Birkavs, to show us the way to this mysterious nation, of which we had only heard fragmentary tales. The journey from Gaudavpils to the Kaarjalan capital of Kaarja lasted two weeks,

but we were rewarded amply for our efforts, as you shall see below.

The Land

Kaarjala consists of a wide swath of verdant fields and forests on the high ground between the swampy, lake-strewn valleys of the Kaarjavi and Vaaranavi Rivers. While the land is set dead center on the arctic circle, the climate between the two rivers is much more like that further to the south; cool and moist in the spring and autumn, muggy in the short summers and dry and chilly in the long winters. In the north, the land consists mainly of taiga, great plains covered with short vegetation and blasted by harsh winds from the north, broken by the occasional bog where the Kaarjavi River flows. In the south, the Vaaranavi River dominates a half-frozen realm of bogs, swamps and blasted heaths. The lands under the influence of the Great Saampo are a different matter entirely. Here, as mentioned before, the land resembles those territories further south, with forests, meadows and a much warmer climate in general.

The People

The Kaarjalan people are the Saamari, a group descended from a mixed tribe of Oltec and Neathar peoples from the west. The Saamari have a long tradition of the heroic warrior and the royal family and many nobles claim descent from ancient heroes of legend. The realm is ruled by a hereditary king, though his power is usually only as strong as his personality; his function is primarily ritual in nature, as he is the Keeper of the Great Saampo, the ancient relic of the Saamari peoples.

The Kaarjalans primarily revere three Immortal Heroes, all of which were Great Heroes of Saamari legend. They are Vainamoinen, the founder of the kingdom as well as the Great Leader who led the Saamari out of the west; Ilmarinen; the Great Smith who constructed the Great Saampo; and Lemminkainen, who was the Great Wanderer of the Wastes, an heroic

figure who battled the forces of evil wherever they appeared; all three led the battle against the humanoid hordes that ravaged the region centuries ago. The Church of Kaarjala reveres all three of these Immortal Heroes as well as the Ancient Ones (older Immortals who were the patrons of the Great Heroes and the Saamari during the elder days) and the Exalted Heroes (heroes from ancient days who did not attain Immortality but were made into Exalted level associates of their respective Immortal Patrons).

The Vaarana still revere the Ancient Ones as well as the Spirits of Animals, Plants and Elements; they have priestly shamans as well as sorcerous (wizardous) shamans. There are also the Druids of the Circle of Kaarjala, who work with both the Vaarana as well as the Kaarjalans; they revere The Mother (Djaea) and are "led" by Her son, Taapio and his wife Mielikki (Exalted level entities who reside in the forests south and west of Kaarjala). There is another Exalted level being directly involved with Kaarjala; an entity known as the Lord of the Yuletide; Saanto Klaas, who visits children on special holidays and leaves gifts (he is said to be allied with certain clans of elves, gnomes and fairies who make his special, magical toys).

As regards wizardry, Kaarjalan wizards mostly learn their magic as apprentices to the local hedge wizard or wise woman, though the king and his maga, inspired by the success of Uppsala College at Norrvik, have considered founding their own School of Magecraft. It was around the time of the Battle of White Bear River that several groups of peaceful Alphatian wizards began to settle in these lands; they were assimilated into the general population and shared their knowledge with Saamari wizards and their apprentices. It is from their influence that the more modern aspects of Kaarjalan wizardry originate, though aspects of the shamanic wizardry practiced by the Vaarana still are found in some areas (a Vaaranasi wizard is, in fact, more likely to use a drum rather than a wand as his focus, for example and is in many ways similar to the *bakomons* of Ethengar).

Recent History

The Kaarjalan Saamari peoples migrated from the west to the land between the rivers in the early 1st century BC, fleeing from the advance of several humanoid hordes. They were led by the legendary hero Vainamoinen, who remained with the Saamari for over a century before continuing on his quest for Immortality. The Kingdom of Kaarjala was founded to maintain unity between the various Saamari clans, which formed the nucleus for the modern districts. The king of Kaarjala is the hereditary holder of the Great Saampo, entrusted to the royal family by Vainamoinen himself (who was, in fact, the grandfather of the first Kaarjalan king, Taavi Kaalevinen).

In those early years, the lands now occupied by Kaarjala were thinly settled by Littonian homesteaders, who resisted Saamari attempts at settling the land. A series of wars broke out between the newly-unified Kingdom of Littonia and the Saamari people. After ten years of intermittent and inconclusive warfare, the two peoples concluded a peace treaty, in which the nation of Kaarjala was formed. The two nations have been on good terms ever since.

The Kingdom of Kaarjala existed peacefully until the mid 6th century, when the Vaarana Saamari, cousins to the Kaarjalans, fled into the region following a major series of defeats at the hands of the humanoids. The Kaarjalan Saamari and the Vaarana united with the nearby elves, dwarves, hin and Littonians to defeat the invasion of the horde at the Battle of White Bear River in AC 640. The Vaarana then returned to their nomadic life, wandering the northlands, centered on the warm lands between the rivers. Since that time there have been no great threats to Kaarjalan sovereignty or to the Vaarana until the late 10th century, when new dominions, nominally under the rule of King Ericall of Norwold, began to spread northwards. Some elements of Kaarjalan society resent this colonization, considering it to be encroachment upon traditional Kaarjalan lands.

Don't Miss

The capital of Kaarjala is Kaarja (pop. 12,000), the only settlement of any notable size north of the Great Bay, with the obvious exception of the Littonian capital city of Gaudavpils. Kaarja is found in the exact center of the kingdom. Compared to the sheer ruggedness of the rest of the nation, this small city is a veritable island of paradise.

One thing that surely must be seen in Kaarjala is the Great Citadel, which is the center of Kaarja. This great stone building, rising from the stony ground like a great carved needle, is where the king holds court. We were truly honored, while staying in sheltered Kaarja, to be invited to sit with the king one afternoon as he went about his duties. Make no mistake, while Kaarjala may be an isolated realm, it is certainly not lacking in politics and factionalism. A lively stay, to be sure.

In an open steeple, on the highest tower of the Great Citadel, is found the Great Saampo, a mighty artifact in the shape of the sun. Truly a fascinating item! Deactivated, we were told, it is about 3 inches in diameter and unremarkable, appearing as burnished bronze covered in tiny black runes. When activated, however, it transforms into a golden sphere approximately three feet in diameter. It levitates at about seven feet above the ground and glows as a *continual light* spell of some sort, but the brilliance was so intense that we dared not gaze too long at it. It is said that the Great Saampo was constructed by the Kaarjalan legendary hero Ilmarinen and brought by Vainamoinen on the long journey from the west. The Great Saampo ensures that the entire kingdom will enjoy a beneficial climate as well as abundant harvests, since Kaarjala's location all but ensures that it does not enjoy the same sea-borne microclimate enjoyed by nearby Littonia. There are many other powers available through the Great Saampo, but these can only be used by those who know the magical runes or rhymes that will activate them, or so we were told.

The Great Saampo has been known to do many things: Call down the Great Aurora, which burns creatures of the night as though it were daylight; create gold; raise the dead; and, in times of extreme distress, it can be called upon to act as the sun. Truly a powerful construct!

Do Miss

While Kaarjala is truly a fascinating nation, filled with honest, good-natured people, there are many dangers here, which should be avoided if possible. Perhaps the most obvious threat to one's safety lies in the northwestern reaches of the nation—namely, the many tribes of humanoids that follow the reindeer herds. While they normally keep to themselves, these fierce tribes have been known, under the guidance of a powerful chief, to overcome their petty squabbles and wreak havoc. During these “years of strife,” as they are known locally, no country village is safe from their depredations and it is only through a concerted effort that they are beaten back into the wilderness from which they came.

To make matters worse, the inhabitants of Frosthaven, a great tribe of frost giants, have been known to raid the Kaarjalan countryside on occasion. Though they normally prefer to plunder its comparatively wealthy neighbor, Littonia, the giants sometimes cast their shadow in this fair land, too.

Finally, Kaarjala must also deal with a foul being known only as the Rimal Hag, whose frigid domain occupies the half-frozen bogs in the southern reaches of the kingdom. So steeped in legend is this enigmatic figure that few Kaarjalans dare mention her name, or acknowledge her existence, saying that misfortune befalls those who are not so cautious. No one admits to ever having met her, or even seeing her, for that matter, but the pall of dread that overshadows everything in Kaarjala during the Hag's Night (Eirmont 20—the time of the year when she is said to be at her most powerful) speaks for itself. Some claim that those who die horrible deaths are doomed to serve the

Rimal Hag for all eternity in their afterlives, while others say that she is the sole cause of all Kaarjala's misfortunes. Regardless of what the truth may be, travelers would be well advised to avoid the southern bogs of Kaarjala.

LITTONIA (*Kingdom of*)

Location: Continent of Brun, along the northern border of Norwold. NW

Area: Approx. 12,096 sq. mi. (31,329 sq. km.).

Population: 100,000.

Languages: Litoniesu (official), Lietuvan, some Alphatian in larger population centers.

Coinage: *Lats* (gp), *centime* (cp).

Taxes: All citizens are assessed for 20% of the value of their assets once per year (Kaldmont 28).

Government Type: Monarchy.

Industries: Agriculture (primarily grains and potatoes), cattle, fishing, forestry, sheep, shipbuilding.

Important Figures: Uldis VI (King, human, male, F16), Laila (Queen, human, female, Pr3 of Daina (Ordana))

Flora and Fauna: As a boreal land, Littonia's coastal vegetation is much like that of Norwold. Here, one can find great stands of pine and evergreen, as well as the occasional rare cluster of oak trees towards the south. Further inland, towards the much cooler hills and plains that make up a large portion of the country, sturdy grasses and small, thorny bushes, such as hawthorn and juniper, predominate.

In terms of animal life, Littonia is quite rich. The coastal forests abound with many species of birds, brown bears, deer, elk, field mice, foxes, moose, squirrels and wolves. Towards the interior, herds of caribou and sometimes bison, are often seen during the summer months. Also present here in this hard land are rabbits and wolves. In terms of more exotic creatures, it is possible to encounter various humanoid tribes living far

to the northwest, frost giants, ice wolves and occasionally yowlers.

Further Reading: CM1 *Test of the Warlords*, *The Kingdom of Littonia* by Geoff Gander, previous almanacs.

Description by Adik de Chevas and Arcadius.

Littonia has been known to us for many years, but in all that time it was a land on the periphery, a realm beyond Norwold. Many people in Norwold, if they thought of it at all, considered it to be a cold, forbidding land, with poor soils, horrible weather and plagued by monsters of all description. Having had the chance to go there, we have found that this is not true. Littonia is a vibrant land, one full of the warmth of the people and the richness of history. Let us now share our first impressions of this land, combined with a presentation of what we have learned.

The Land

Littonia is a northern coastal nation, where cool, damp winds from the southeast blast inland year-round and icy northern winds blast southwards over the inland plains. As a result of this odd combination of winds and warmer sea currents from the south, Littonia's coastal climate is far more hospitable than would otherwise be possible. This is especially noticeable along the coastal lowlands, where much of the population lives. Towards the interior plains, the climate becomes much drier and cooler. Coastal Littonia is comparable to southern Norwold in terms of climate, while the interior is truly a harsh land.

Littonia is a hilly country. From the forested coastal lowlands, which hold both the larger settlements and most of the nation's arable soils, the land slopes upwards gradually, reaching Namejs' Line roughly halfway to the western border. From these hills' westwards, the terrain becomes much rougher and the forests thin out rapidly, giving way to grasslands and swamps and then to open plains.

Several rivers cut across eastern Littonia on their way to the Alphatian Sea, the largest of which, the Gaudava River, is the main trade route through the nation. So important is this river that the capital city, the port of Gaudavpils, is built at its mouth.

The People

The Littonians are a hardy fair-skinned folk, who revere both their land and their history. Littonian sages claim that their people have lived in this land for millennia and they tell tales of great towns and battles amongst Littonian lords and heroes far to the south. Whether or not this is true, it certainly makes for a good story, which is another thing the Littonians enjoy. A favored pastime among this rustic folk is gathering in inns and other public houses and telling tall tales of long-gone heroes. Only in the larger settlements, such as Gaudavpils, can one find and partake in, the various pursuits popular in more southern nations, such as gambling, theater and so on.

Still, one must admire this brave folk for hanging on to its land in this isolated part of the continent. Regularly, frost giants come south from Frosthaven to loot isolated Littonian settlements and humanoids have been seen towards the west. These beastly raiders seem to be tougher than those we face in our own lands, for they are said to thrive in this northern climate and they know these lands well. Small wonder the Littonians want more ties with Alpha and other dominions of Norwold, if only for the added protection such ties might give them.

One thing a traveler to these lands must remember, though, is that there are in fact two peoples living in Littonia. In the southern two-thirds of the nation live the Litoniesu, who are by far the more numerous of the two. This group's language is the official one of Littonia and the nation's royal family belongs to this people. The Litoniesu are by far the most outgoing Littonians. These people are shrewd negotiators and merchants, who are used to the intrigues of city life. The other people living in Littonia are the Lietuvans, who

occupy the northern third of the nation. They are a people of farmers and trappers, who do not deal much with outsiders. Few Lietuvans live in Littonia's urban areas and when they do so they tend to keep to themselves. Some Lietuvans claim that they once had a nation of their own, though our research has found little evidence of this. If there was indeed a Lietuvan kingdom, it either existed long ago, or it did not exist for very long.

Recent History

The people of Littonia have lived in this part of the world for as long as they can remember, with many tales saying that they arose in these lands "at the dawn of time." While we highly doubt the truth of this, the Littonians have lived in these lands for a very long time—likely before the time of the Alphantian Landfall, judging by the apparent age of the most ancient tales told by these people.

The earliest tales tell of invasions by fierce humanoids, frost giants and the fair-skinned Antalian peoples to the south, whom we know today as the indigenous peoples of Norwold and the Northern Reaches. These were certainly dark times, when the Littonians were divided into petty baronies and fiefdoms, as often warring amongst themselves as fighting off outside forces. It was also around this time that the frost giants enslaved the Littonians and cruelly oppressed them. After many years of suffering, one man, the legendary Namejs of Littonian lore, led some brave followers and overthrew the frost giants, killing their leader and destroying their citadel of Høgborg. The tales tell of a time afterwards that was wonderful, where King Namejs ruled wisely before being summoned by the patron Immortals of Littonia for a great quest.

The ensuing years seem to have been ones of decline. The Lietuvans are said to have established their own kingdoms not long after Namejs's departure and the royal line started by Namejs himself soon fell into obscurity, until Karlis the Unifier, who claimed to be a direct descendant of the

legendary ruler, defeated his opponents and founded the modern state of Littonia.

From our inquiries, it seems clear that Littonia, in its modern incarnation, is rather new. Though this kingdom has existed for over 1,100 years, it has not been until relatively recently that it has taken on the trappings and appearance of anything resembling what we call a "civilized" state, with written laws, a national currency and formalized relations between nobles and commoners. Beforehand, it seems, Littonia was more of a collection of loosely-aligned nobles serving the House of Karlis, named after the noble warlord who united Littonia over a thousand years ago and started the royal succession. Commoners served their lieges through a sort of client-patron relationship, in which each had rough guidelines as to what was expected of them and what sort of support they owed each other in times of war. Today, Littonia seems to be well on its way to becoming a modern state in every sense of the word.

During the recent Norwold Wars [*AC 1016. Ed.*] Littonia remained out of the conflict and chose to act as neutral negotiator to avoid repercussions from the Heldannic and Alphan governments.

Don't Miss

While Littonia is very remote as far as nations are concerned, there are several attractions here that make this nation a rather pleasant one. In the capital of Gaudavpils you will find many of the comforts of home, including decent city walls and a paved downtown core. There are many shops and inns and a decent number of taverns, too. While the port itself has relatively few quays, the harbor is very deep, thus allowing even the largest ships to dock here. As foreigners, we attracted more than our share of attention, but that is to be expected.

One place that should not be missed is the ruins of Høgborg, which was once the main citadel of the frost giants during the period in which they ruled this land. Although records from this time are of course very

scant, little more than folk-tales, the brutal period of frost giant rule was the spark that led to the eventual founding of the modern nation of Littonia. At this site, so very long ago, the enslaved peoples of modern Littonia revolted against their oppressors, killing a large number of frost giants and ultimately throwing the remainder out. Today, a great obelisk stands next to the ruins, upon which the names of those legendary heroes who participated in those half-forgotten battles are inscribed. Truly a moving testament to the ancestors of this brave people.

Do Miss

As with many other nations, Littonia's urban regions are not without their own peril. The capital city, Gaudavpils, has its share of dark alleys, through which only the well-prepared should travel. The western reaches of the country are also quite dangerous. Few people live in this chilly region of plains and half-frozen bogs and it is said to be alarmingly easy to run afoul of humanoid bands—as well as frost giants. Those traveling to Kaarjala from Littonia should keep to the main road that links Gaudavpils with Kaarja and even then, they should traverse the distance hastily.

LOTHBARTH FOREST

The Lothbarth Forest is the region commonly known as the Foresthomes. It comprises all the woods north of the Great Bay and up to the Landsplit River, a broad, primeval forest of evergreens where elves and animals have lived side by side for centuries. The Foresthomes properly are the elven settlements, which are divided into smaller clans and families, but they all recognize the Lothbarth Forest as their homeland and always try to protect it from the outsiders' eyes and grasp.

ELMS (Barony of the)

Location: Continent of Brun, north of Leeha, west of Panteria. NW

Area: Approx. 997 sq. mi. (2,580 sq. km.).

Population: 1,000 elves.

Languages: Elvish (Shiye-Lawr and Alfheim dialects).

Coinage: Barter only.

Taxes: None. Each elf willfully helps the rest of the community as needed.

Government Type: Barony (elven dominion, the baron is advised by the clanmasters). Member of the elven Kingdom of Nordalfheim.

Industries: Hunting and gathering.

Important Figures: Quillan Elm-Grower (Baron and Clanmaster, elf, male, F14/M10), Lidial Almashiye (Almashiye Clanmaster, elf, female, Pr10 of Eiryndul).

Flora and Fauna: Well tended elms and evergreen trees abound in this area. Deer, bears, elk, wolves and other small northern forest animals can be found here.

Further Reading: CM1 *Test of the Warlords*.

No description this year. [*Synthala provided us with basic dominion information, but no insight—watch for more next year. Ed.*]

FORESTHOMES (Free Clans of)

Location: Continent of Brun, north of the Great Bay, south of the Landsplit River. NW

Area: Approx. 179,560 sq. mi. (465,060 sq. km.) in western and eastern Lothbarth.

Population: 10,000 elves.

Languages: Elvish (Shiye-Lawr dialect).

Coinage: Barter only.

Taxes: None. Each elf willfully helps the rest of the community as needed.

Government Type: Group of independent clans united under a council of clanmasters.

Industries: Hunting and gathering.

Important Figures: Soridel (High Priest of Sinar, elf, male, Pr10 of Eiryndul), Desel Leafbower (Leafbower Clanmaster, elf, male, R15.)

Flora and Fauna: Deer, bears, elk, wolves and other small northern forest animals. Frost giants also raid occasionally and other tundra monsters can sometimes make an appearance in the elven forest.

Further Reading: CM1 *Test of the Warlords*, previous almanacs.

Description by Synthala of Aasla.

Up in the northern evergreen forests of Norwold, just south of the famous Landsplit River, lives a scattering of loosely allied elven clans. Although each clan is independent, the elven inhabitants still refer to themselves as the Clans of the Foresthomes.

The Land

The land of forest homes is dominated by huge pines and other evergreens. In most areas, the underbrush is too thick to travel through, but there are the occasional patches of clear brush. Still, trees usually found more to the south, such as oaks and maples, can also be found quite regularly. In fact, it is usually in the oak forest that the nine clans of the Foresthomes make their clan strongholds.

The most important geographical feature of the area is the Landsplit River several hundred miles to the north of the Foresthomes. One branch of the river reaches down from the tundra and makes it all the way down to the westernmost town of Sinar, allowing the elves access to the Alphatian Sea almost a thousand miles away. Even though the elves rarely use the river as a means of travel, it has been useful on occasion to bring in large shipments of supplies or other necessities to the clans. Because of this access, the town of Sinar is the only clan stronghold that deals with non-elves.

Most importantly, the forest is rarely traveled by man. This means it is a haven and refuge of wildlife, as elves are always careful in their hunting. This is something any nature lover, such as me, can appreciate.

The People

Traditional to the elven ways of Shiye-Lawr, the elves of the Foresthomes are reclusive and arrogant toward non-elves. They view the elven race as superior to all others on Mystara and prefer not to deal with outsiders. Unlike the Shiye-Lawr, they have adopted the living style of the elves of Alfheim. By this, they live in the trees and under the stars instead of in cities of stone. Also, they prefer to hunt and sing rather than spending time studying and always trying to learn something new.

Despite their dislike of other races, a few humans—myself included—and even one dwarf have been accepted into their lands, provided we do not stay too long on any given visit.

The elves of the Foresthomes are divided into seven major clans plus several minor ones. Each clan is completely independent from the others. When a dispute arises between two or more of the clans, all the clanmasters of the Foresthomes gather together in Sinar and decide how best to handle the problem. This is as close as the clans come to be a nation since a civil war almost broke out ten years ago.

The Leafbower clan is renowned for its marksmanship and ability with the bow. Its clanmaster, Desel, leads them from the town of Silverleaf.

Clan Feryndul is more intellectual than the others, always ready to debate and give the various sides and opinions of any conversation. They have a small library in their town of Feryndul but refuse to place too many books into it in the fear of becoming too much like the Shiye-Lawr they left long ago.

The other clans don't really have any specialties. These clans are the Sunveils (town of Solan), the Sinar (town of Sinar), the Sanathyl (town of Sanath), the Wensaren (town of Follar) and the Esendath (town of Esendor). The Ithyshiye (the eighth major clan), who are now ruled by Ilsundal's High Priest Zoltan Hytaxius, are not counted among the free clans of the Foresthomes, nor are the minor Almashiye clan (under

Quillan Elm-Grower's rulership) [*See the report made by Adik and Arcadius for those elves living in White Oak. Synthala.*]

Finally, a small number of other minor clans also live in the forest of Lothbarth: half of them live among the free clans, the other half recognize Zoltan's leadership. Many of these Shiye came to Norwold during the Great War, when they refused to obey the Alphatian Crown's orders to fight against Glantri and chose exile in a foreign land to retain their freedom.

Recent History

Centuries ago, the elves of the Foresthomes left their homeland of Shiye-Lawr to colonize the frigid lands of Norwold. They were displeased at the strict order and laws of the Shiye-Lawr, as well as the neglect of the forest way by their continuous studies and learning. They therefore decided to create their own nation across the sea.

Nine main clans left Alphatia, eight of which settled in the northern forests. The ninth clan, the Shalidye, proceeded further south, completely separating from even their fellow colonists. Each clan claimed its own territory and was completely independent from the others.

And so it remained for several centuries until AY 1990 [*AC 990. Ed.*], when the humans of Alphatia started a massive wave of immigration to the area. They placed Ericall as King of Norwold and he granted dominions left and right during his first decade of rulership. At that point, the clanmasters slowly began talking about uniting to better deal with the increase of human activity in the area. As is typical for elves, it would take a long time before a decision was reached.

In AY 1995 [*AC 995. Ed.*], King Acroshiye of Shiye-Lawr decided he would try and regain control of the colonists. He therefore sent his daughter Rahasia [*Not to be confused with the elven mistress Rahasia who was possessed by a witch and later saved by adventurers several years ago. Once again, my elven contacts insist the two names are different to the ears of elves*

but sound the same to humans and other demihumans. Synthala.] and her mate Firehawk—a priest of Ilsundal—to try and regain control.

By AY 1997 [*AC 997. Ed.*], the charismatic Firehawk managed to unite the clans under the leadership of the priests of Ilsundal, with himself and Princess Rahasia in charge. But unlike Acroshiye's plans, he did not swear allegiance to Shiye-Lawr. Rather, the Foresthomes became an independent and unified nation. Firehawk also made connections with several of the human nobles of Norwold, including Martigan, Claransa, Sandralane and even King Ericall himself. This should have ensured a good future for the young nation.

Unfortunately, it all fell apart in AY 2004 [*AC 1004. Ed.*], when Rahasia gave birth to a female human child. Her affair with Count Martigan soon became public knowledge. At that point, Soridel, high priest of Eiryndul, began making statements that Firehawk was too incompetent to lead the Foresthomes and that he should be removed. The birth of a human child was a bad omen from the Immortals, stating their displeasure with Firehawk. The clans were split on to what to do and a civil war was on the brink of occurring.

Firehawk prevented the war from starting by accepting exile and the removal of the council of priests ruling the Foresthomes. He has reportedly moved to Wendar with his family, whom he has since forgiven. Rumors say he has even forgiven Count Martigan and the two are friends once more, although this apparently took several years.

Soridel then insisted that the clans should remain independent from now on, as if they were ever united again, such a cursed ruler could eventually take hold of them again. And the priest of Eiryndul won the argument: the clans have since remained independent.

At the insistence of Desel Leafbower, however, they decreed that the clanmasters would meet in a council at Sinar to regulate any disputes between clans. The clans of the Foresthomes had begun interacting a lot

more since Firehawk united them and such a council was therefore agreed to be necessary.

It is interesting to note that some sages speculate that the entire incident with Firehawk was set up by Eiryndul. It is believed that Eiryndul wanted to destroy Ilsundal's hold on the Foresthomes to prevent Alfheim from having an ally when they were invaded by the shadow elves in AY 2007 [*AC 1007. Ed.*]. If this is true, there were probably many more such subtle manipulations caused by the Immortals during the Great War than is apparent to the mortals' eyes.

In the last years, High Priest Soridel came into conflict with Zoltan Hytaxius's efforts to unite all the Foresthomes once more. Since Zoltan is a human and a priest of Ilsundal, this sounded as a double insult to Soridel, who has long since sworn that he will never allow the Foresthomes to become a new Alfheim as long as he lives. Up to now Zoltan managed to "lure one of the eight clans, the Ithyshiye, away from their true ways" [*as Soridel put it to me. Synthala.*] and his influence is still growing. However, another would-be elven unifier also exists in Norwold, Lord Elarianthas Blackblade of Ironwood. Taking advantage of the situation, Soridel has been successfully manipulating the rivalry between the two lords to make sure the Norwold elves remain independent and free from the oppressive yoke of an absolute leader [*at least that's how the free-spirited Shiye of Norwold view an organized country. Synthala.*].

The Foresthomes remained neutral in the recent [*AC 1016. Ed.*] Norwold Wars, since they were never directly threatened by the Heldannic and Qeodharan forces and preferred to maintain their isolation, especially towards human conflicts. The recent founding of the Kingdom of Nordalfheim and the alliance between Zoltan of White Oak, Quillan of the Elms and Blackblade of Ironwood has changed the balance of power in the region in favor of the Nordalfheim leaders and this has not been welcomed by the leaders of the free Foresthomes.

Don't Miss

If you have never seen an elven stronghold, then those are the sites to visit here in the Foresthomes. The houses within the trees and the rope bridges connecting each of the large oaks, make it appear to be a gigantic tree fort. It will bring out the child in anyone who ever used to climb trees as a kid.

The way everything blends into the trees and seems like an extension of nature itself is also miraculous. The elves somehow grow their house, making sure the trees will have a huge hollow knot in which their homes will be built.

Also, the sculptures and wooden designs are beautiful. As are their songs and music. For those desiring to experience the true way of the elves, with the destruction of Alfheim, this makes the Foresthomes the one place to go.

WHITE OAK (Elven Lands of the)

Location: Continent of Brun, north of the Great Bay, northeast of Panteria. NW

Area: Approx. 44,890 sq. mi. (116,265 sq. km.) in central Lothbarth.

Population: Approx. 5,000 elves.

Languages: Elven (Shiye-Lawr and Alfheim dialects).

Coinage: Barter only.

Taxes: None.

Government Type: Elven foresthomes each led by a clanmaster, recognizing explicitly the spiritual leadership of Zoltan and the political leadership of King Blackblade. Member of the elven Kingdom of Nordalfheim.

Industries: Hunting and gathering.

Important Figures: Zoltan Hytaxius (High Priest, human, male, Pr20 of Ilsundal).

Flora and Fauna: The dense northern forests are covered with evergreen, mainly pine; in the lands nearest to the Great Bay, they intermingle with various hardwood trees: oak, elm, maple, walnut, ash, orchard trees. It is among these that stands Zoltan's

magical *Tree of Life*—the *White Oak*. In the north, the pine trees do not block the faint sun’s rays, allowing a rather thick layer of vegetation to grow at ground level: shrubs, short grass; waist-high grass in glades. In the south, the thick canopy blocks the sun, providing little light for plants to grow underneath. Many animals live in the forests, especially small mammals and rodents, boars, deer, elk, caribou, moose, bears, wolves, blink dogs and white and green dragonflies. Many fairies also dwell there, especially centaurs, actaeons and shargugh. More dangerous denizens include the occasional rogue white or green dragon, basilisks, decapuses and the rare wyrds.

Coats of arms: High Priest Zoltan Hytaxius: Uses no coat of arm; human lords generally attribute him a white oak over green. Each foresthome also has its own symbol; human lords often represent the Shiye elves with one—or from three to a dozen—green pines over white.

Further Reading: CM1 *Test of the Warlords*, *Zoltan the Treekeeper* by Hervé Musseau, previous almanacs.

Description by Adik de Chevas and Arcadius.

Shiye elves live in small communities called foresthomes in the vast cold forests of Norwold; many such clans make their home in the area situated between the Great Bay and the Landsplit River. Among these, the foresthomes located in the central region recognize the leadership of Zoltan the Treekeeper.

The Land

This great forest is known to the elves as Lothbarth, the forest covered by snow, wrongly translated into “the White Forest” by both Thyatians and Alphatians; the native Heldanners simply refer to it as the Great Forest, a name commonly used by other settlers as well. Very few humans have made their home in this forest, preferring to settle on the coastline near the Great Bay or by the Alphatian Sea, leaving the reclusive elves pretty much alone.

The forest is sparsely populated by Shiye elves, a few thousands of them living in small clans called foresthomes. Foresthomes often exist miles and miles away from each other, mostly in the southern part where hardwood trees are more numerous. Elves rarely travel far from their homes, but hunters can sometimes be encountered in uninhabited wilderness—but beware because they are likely to hunt you like any game just for fun!

The climate of the southern and eastern parts of the forest are somewhat tempered by the Great Bay and the Alphatian Sea, though it remains rather chilly. This is enough for hardwood trees to grow, with almost a five-month growing season during good years. These are the parts of Lothbarth that Shiye live in, leaving the northern and western parts mostly uninhabited. Those regions experience very short growing periods, a few months at best and virtually none during the colder years, especially where the forest gives way to the Icereach range to the west. In such regions, only coniferous trees can grow and life is especially hard for those rare foresthomes that prefer to live in the pine trees rather than the more welcoming oaks.

The People

Lothbarth houses 21 Shiye clans (9 major and several minor clans), scattered about the forest; others can be found throughout the rest of Norwold. Of these, one major and seven minor clans can be considered directly or indirectly under Zoltan’s guidance [*including Quillan’s barony, which recognizes Zoltan’s spiritual leadership but is however independent. Arcadius.*]; the others have remained independent from his influence, often vehemently.

The most important of these clans is clan Ithyshiye, in which Zoltan originally settled when he came to Norwold. Not only is this clan one of the largest in Norwold, but it is also in its territory that stands the fabled *Tree of Life* that made Zoltan famous among the Shiye—and gain sway over the Shiye despite the opposition of the clergy of

Eiryndul. Despite the original friction, especially with the local clerics [*of Eiryndul, the traditional Immortal patron of the Shiye. Ed.*], the Ithyshiye are now staunch supporters of Zoltan [*but without forfeiting their cultural attachment to Eiryndul either. Arcadius.*].

A close ally of Zoltan's is Baron Quillan Elm-Grower: though independent from White Oak, the Barony of the Elms recognizes the spiritual guidance of Zoltan. The Almashiye clan is probably the most open-minded in all of Norwold [*it is probably why Quillan settled among them—that and the fact that they do use primarily elms for their homes, Quillan's preferred tree and a reminder of his home village in Alfheim. Arcadius.*] and certainly more supportive of Zoltan than many other clans. Quillan often acts as the representative of Zoltan regarding dealings with humans, as the elf enjoys their company more so than the estranged treekeeper.

The Shiye elves tend to be secretive and shun contact with the humans of Norwold. They enjoy playing practical jokes, a tradition that has not dwindled despite the influence of Zoltan [*most Shiye still revere Eiryndul above Ilsundal, despite Zoltan's best efforts, or even the efforts of Elarianthas Blackblade to the south to spread a new pantheon. Arcadius.*]. Since Zoltan himself is not a model of openness, this is one trait that his influence over the elves definitely did not change. On the other hand, worship of Ilsundal has somewhat spread again among the Shiye, as even many clerics of Eiryndul avoid strongly opposing the powerful Zoltan unless their patron Immortal urges them to.

Now that Zoltan has become the High Priest of the Faith of the Ancestors (the newly-created elven pantheon founded by Lord Blackblade and spread in all the dominions of Nordalfheim), he hopes that by widening the faiths allowed in the lands of Nordalfheim the elves will all come to recognize him as their main spiritual leader.

A few dozen Alfheim elves call the forest north of the Marquisate of Panteria home. These elves have followed Zoltan back to Norwold rather than remain in Wendar after

the invasion of their homeland by the expansionist shadow elves. They did not meet much welcome from their brethren, though and settled on the fringes of Lothbarth nearer to human lands. They often make pilgrimages to Zoltan's Tree of Life and have come over the years to trading goods from Panteria for products of Shiye (or their own) making, so that they now often look more like caravans of merchants than actual pilgrims.

Recent History

The Shiye elves of Norwold are a subgroup of the elves that left the Sylvan Realms, following the guidance of the elven Immortal Eiryndul. However, they didn't want to submit to the king of the Shiye-Lawr in Alphatia, as they were even more independent-minded than their brethren and settled in the isolated forest of Lothbarth in Norwold instead, far from both humans and other elves.

The Shiye enjoyed their freedom, as they were for the most part left alone by other cultures or races in their cold forest. Contacts with the native Heldanners, or with settlers from Alphatia, Thyatis or elsewhere were very rare at best and the dragons from the Wurmsteeth also left the Shiye alone [*it is speculated that a very old sub-species of elves, known as the Eldar, who are said to live among the dragons, may be the reason for the dragons' attitude, but this is an unconfirmed legend. Arcadius.*].

When King Ericall opened the lands of Norwold to colonization, the Shiye were very isolated, even from each other, only meeting occasionally at Sinar. The mere fact that some few nobles settled among them was a surprise to them, something they didn't expect and opposed rather vehemently. They made the life of these undesirable lords a misery, applying their Immortal's teachings with formidable refinery.

One of the most controversial such lords was Zoltan, because he was human and a high-ranking priest of rival Ilsundal. Upon his arrival among the Ithyshiye, he planted a seed which grew into a mighty *Tree of Life*

overnight *[there is no oral record of the elves that indicate such a rapid growth for a Tree of Life ever, but I may not be aware of all the elven treekeepers' secrets. Arcadius.]*. The existence of the *White Oak* *[named after the tree's actual color, which is the same as albino Zoltan's skin color. Adik.]* *[I believe that the oak is the same color as Zoltan's skin because it is somehow connected to his soul, maybe because of a special design by Ilsundal Himself. Arcadius.]* is very controversial among the Shiye.

The opposition to Zoltan came to a peak during the Great War, as the followers of Eiryndul vehemently opposed any cooperation with the Alphasians against the allies of Glantri *[which meant the Heldannic Knights, at the time. Adik.]*. Not only did they oppose Zoltan internally, but they even broke their traditional isolationism by stirring up trouble in Alphasian dominions. In AC 1007 Zoltan disappeared and it was thought he had left the land; actually, he was in Alfheim helping the elves flee the shadowelf invasion to Wendar.

After his return from Alfheim, Zoltan stopped promoting any tentative alliance with the Alphasians; he even cut almost all contact with the court at Alpha. It was also at this time that he earned the friendship of Quillan the Alfheimer. His promoting of Ilsundal still does not win him the affection of many Shiye, but he was able to expand his influence over a great part of Lothbarth nonetheless, especially after the sinking of Alphasia and the end of the Shiye's enhanced hostility toward the humans. Zoltan is very suspicious of the shadow elves and their openings toward the Alfheimers in Wendar; he and Elarianthas Blackblade agreed for the first time on something when the two absolutely refused the shadow elves any help to bring Canolbarth's rains back *[they finally got the help from an independent clan which opposed both lords. Adik.]*.

In the recent Norwold Wars *[AC 1016. Ed.]*, Zoltan didn't send troops to aid the southern nations engaged in the struggle. He preferred to follow his policy of non-intervention in non-elven matters, even though he helped Ericall and his nobles in

purging Norwold from the deadly Red Fog that threatened to kill thousands of people. In Sviftmont AC 1016, after seeking advice from his Immortal patron Ilsundal through prayers at the White Oak, Zoltan was imparted with a glimpse of the Immortals' plans for the elves and his part in its accomplishment. Thus, he went to Ironwood to relinquish his leadership in favor of Elarianthas Blackblade and took the lead of the official religion of the new-founded Kingdom of Nordalfheim, paving the way for the creation of the largest elven kingdom since the fall of Alfheim.

Don't Miss

It is very difficult to get a glimpse of a *Tree of Life*, especially if you're not an elf. The situation has only worsened since the invasion of Alfheim, as treekeepers had to give special attention to their artifact trees or even hide them away from the evil shadow elves. The *White Oak*, however, is not so restricted, because Zoltan wanted all Shiye, many of whom had never seen a *Tree of Life*, to be able to come and hopefully discover the way of Ilsundal. Alfheim refugees without a *Tree of Life* can also make pilgrimages to the sacred tree. Thus, contrary to what happens in most clans, access to the *Tree of Life* is not restricted to the treekeeper and his assistants, but open to any, including non-elves. In fact, this is the one place where the Shiye won't annoy you—but you bet they will play pranks on you on your way there, as they will be amused—or irritated—by the presence of humans in their forest.

Do Miss

Unless you're Shiye *[something I doubt, as I don't think many Shiye read the Mystaran Almanac. Adik.]*, I advise you not to venture into Lothbarth. Even though the elves will tell you that one can live in the cold forest, it isn't a nice place to go on vacation. Besides, the elves will detect the presence of trespassers rapidly and they certainly won't let your trip unfold uneventfully. But don't respond to their provocation with *fireballs*

though, as they would in turn resort to even greater violence. No, you should accept their practical jokes with smile and they will eventually let you pass; but if you really want to win their respect, you should return the favor and play even bolder and funnier pranks at them. Anyway, the safest way to get to the *White Oak* remains *teleportation*.

NORTHERN BAY MARCHES

The area called the Northern Bay Marches comprises all the dominions located north of the Great Bay, between the shores of the bay and the southern fringes of the Lothbarth Forest. These dominions have all been founded along the coast and they enjoy a rather safe position, both from an economic, military and political point of view.

DRAKEN (Duchy of)

Location: Continent of Brun, north-west of Alpha. NW

Area: 2,992 sq. mi. (7,750 sq. km.).

Population: 6,000.

Languages: Alphatian.

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: 25% of income.

Government Type: Duchy, member of the Kingdom of Alpha, member of the Norwold Confederacy.

Industries: Fishing, agriculture, military, trading.

Important Figures: Beriak (Duke, human, male, M17).

Flora and Fauna: Usual coniferous and evergreen trees abound in Draken, since the settlers didn't cut down large areas of Lothbarth. Great variety of fish can be found near the coast, many wild animals in the woods inland (elk, moose, bears, wolves, foxes, etc.). Many birds of prey and wild felines roam the eastern areas of the country, especially in the foothills near the western

mountains. A couple of dragons are said to live on said mountains to the east and some strange extra-planar creatures have been reported wandering in the forest near the count's abode.

Further Reading: CM1 *Test of the Warlords*, previous almanacs.

No description this year. [*Synthala provided us with basic dominion information, but no insight—watch for more next year. Ed.*]

LATELA (Barony of)

Location: Continent of Brun, north-east of Alpha. NW

Area: 1,995 sq. mi. (5,165 sq. km.).

Population: 5,650.

Languages: Thyatian, Alphatian.

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: 20% of income.

Government Type: Barony, member of the Norwold Confederacy.

Industries: Trading, logging, agriculture.

Important Figures: Longtooth (Baron, human, male, T15), Tano Tarantella (Guild Master, human, male, T11).

Flora and Fauna: The coastline of Latela is dotted with farmlands and orchards, while the inland regions are still covered by the evergreen trees (mostly pines and sequoia) so common in the Lothbarth Forest. The wildlife in the forested areas include common animals like deer, boars, elk and moose and more feral beasts like wolves, black and brown bears, pumas and yowlers. Fish are not so common in Latela's waters.

Further Reading: CM1 *Test of the Warlords*, previous almanacs.

Description by Adik de Chevas and Arcadius.

The Barony of Latela is basically a Thyatian province rather than an Alphatian dominion, since its ruler has shaped it using the Thyatian system he is so familiar with. Latela is incredibly rich for a northern

barony so far from the Old-World merchant routes and many believe its richness doesn't always come from honest trades.

The Land

The dominion of Latela is in many ways like Panteria and the former barony of Westria. It extends along the central shores north of the Great Bay, following the coastline and the plains some 30 miles in the interior of the great northern forests. A good part of these plains has been turned to farmlands and orchards, while the rest remains wild woods that are exploited by a bustling logging industry [*the main economic resource of the barony, according to the official data. Arcadius.*].

The coastline and the small villages in this part of the country (including the capital city of Civis Nova) have been built reflecting the typical Thyatian urban plan: a square or rectangular city map, with two main roads (*cardus* and *decumanus*) cutting the settlement in four living quarters, with a main square in the middle of the settlement. All the houses are one story and white painted, with a small temple in each settlement and even a public arena and a theater in the capital of Civis Nova. But there are some differences from the typical southern Thyatian town. First of all, all other streets except the two main roads are dark and narrow alleys, often unpaved, unlike the main roads. Also, the buildings (even the arena) have wooden sloping roofs, typical of the northern countries where heavy rain- and snowfalls abound in the coldest months.

The capital of Civis Nova (pop. 2,000) lies in the southernmost tip of the barony, with direct access to the Great Bay. Its port is one of the largest in Norwold, rivaling with those of Alpha and Panteria. Many foreign ships dock in Latela, especially those coming from Thyatis and the Isle of Dawn, which seem to have made special trade agreements with the baron. Latela's capital is a small pearl of Thyatian architecture, with all its buildings painted white and all the streets (even the narrow alleyways) paved with cobblestones. A natural amphitheater has been cut out in

the rocky promontory that faces the Great Bay, a couple of miles to the west in the outskirts of the town and dramas are held there regularly once a month.

Together with the amphitheater, the Temple of Asterius and the Guildhall are the other two interesting features of the city. The first is a white *templum* with a ring of outer columns that masquerade the inner walls. Inside, the temple is decorated with golden stucco works and paintings depicting the glory and munificence of Asterius towards his worshippers. The priests' quarters are outside the *templum*, in a smaller and less elaborate enclave. Ceremonies are held daily and many people participate with donations and services, testifying how widespread Asterius's faith is among the citizens. The Guildhall is the only two-story building in the whole country [*not even Lord Longtooth's villa is that tall. Adik.*] and is the place where representatives of all guilds of the dominion meet to discuss economic agreements or sell goods to foreign ambassadors.

The People

In contrast with the Thyatian homeland, which is a melting pot of different races, Latela is a country mostly inhabited by Thyatians of Kerendan and pure Thyatian origins, while the few Alphatians living in the region are concentrated in the hamlets and houses built inside the woods [*they are trappers and loggers. Adik.*]. The Thyatians are obviously aware of their heritage and do not miss any opportunity to display it in the face of Alphatians. However, Latela never created problems for Ericall and Baron Longtooth's loyalty to the Alphan Crown, although many times questioned, never failed. Latela enjoys a stable government and an enviable economic situation, which places the barony and its inhabitants among the richest in Norwold. Obviously, this only applies to the Thyatian majority, since they fill the ranks of the trading guilds. Alphatians are usually small craftsmen and woodcutters for the most part and even if a good deal of Latela's entries come from the

logging industry, the woodcutters do not participate much in the wealth of their industry.

The role of the guilds is very important in Latela, although not as much as is in Minrothad, Darokin or even Panteria. Guilds are left free to trade among themselves with whatever agreements they see fit, provided they keep accurate estimates of their revenues. Trade agreements with foreign nations must be made with the authorization of the baron, however and are always supervised by the United Guilds Senior Chairman, a position currently held by Tano Tarantella *[who founded the union and has been chairman since its creation. Arcadius.]*. This position is, according to some rumors, even more important than that of the baron, since the union's chairman has the final word on all trade agreements with any foreign merchant *[and since Latela's economy depends on the foreign trade, this is likely the truth. Adik.]*.

The Tarantella family is a well-known Thyatian dynasty that counts among its seemingly infinite members merchants, governors, senators, guild masters and rich landowners, both inside and outside the Thyatian Empire. However, some rumors say that the Tarantellas have also ties with the infamous Thyatian crime organization known as *Causa Nostra*, which has grown in power in the Old World (especially during the last decade) and caused the downfall of many merchants and rival thieves' guilds *[particularly famous is the Flaccus Scandal of AC 1004, where a Thyatian Senator was exposed as being one of the leaders of the Shadow Hand, a powerful Thyatian criminal organization, which suffered then a major blow from this event. Arcadius.]*. These same rumors also tell that the Tarantellas are behind Lord Longtooth's power and that Latela's revenues have been boosted more by the slave trade than by the logging industry.

Recent History

Lord Longtooth *[whose origins are shrouded in mystery, even though he insists in being the only—albeit illegitimate—son of a deceased rich Thyatian*

landlord. Adik.] came to Norwold in AC 1001, answering King Ericall's call to colonize the wild areas of his kingdom. He immediately swore fealty to Ericall and built the village of Civis Nova, concentrating on enlarging its docks and harbor. Once everything was ready and the dangerous beasts had been dealt with, the first waves of Thyatian immigrants began to hit the coasts of Latela at an impressive rate and the small village of Civis Nova soon became a full-grown town in less than a year. The settlers who came to Latela were basically poor artisans and beggars, who were convinced by Lord Longtooth they could have a new and better life if they left Thyatis for this new land. The strategy succeeded and indeed most of them changed their lives for the better.

During the Great War, Latela kept providing the Kingdom of Alpha with important food and weapon supplies, but it never sent its rather puny army on the battlefield. Some say Latela also helped the Thyatian troops that came to Norwold against the Alphas, but so far nobody has found evidence supporting this hypothesis. Also, other rumors state that Latela's guilds were involved in the bankruptcy that ruined the western dominion of Westria and that Lord Longtooth was about to buy the barony when Lady Celia of Panteria intervened and beat him in time. Again, these are but unconfirmed rumors, of course, since nobody *[not even the many provosts and bureaucrats sent by King Ericall. Arcadius.]* ever found something out of place in Latela's accounts.

Don't Miss

Civis Nova and its marvels are a must see, since they are a real novelty to the common inhabitant of Norwold. If you are from the Old World, Latela offers you the typical Thyatian atmosphere, so maybe you'll find yourself at ease there. Besides, you don't need a certified permission to have business or do many other things in Latela, which happens in nearby Panteria, so if you are a

merchant or if you are interested in making a profit without troubling too much with rules and laws, Latela is the land that suits you.

Do Miss

Even in a rich town like Civis Nova the alleyways are dangerous and brim with cutthroats and cutpurses. They especially target foreigners who visit the town and the narrow streets seem to have been built just to suit their shady needs. Also, since the guards are not reliable in Latela [*they seem strangely to always be looking the other side when something happens. Adik.*], it is best advised you count only on yourself to fend off any possible assault, especially at night.

NORDENHAFEN (Jarldom of)

Location: Continent of Brun, isle in the Great Bay, west of Alpha. NW

Area: 498 sq. mi. (1,290 sq. km.).

Population: 700.

Languages: Heldannic.

Coinage: Barter common; otherwise Alphatian Standard: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: 30% of income.

Government Type: Barony, member of the Kingdom of Ostland.

Industries: Fishing, hunting.

Important Figures: Bardeen Longwalker (Baron, human, male, F15), Kleng Bloodhand (pirate, human, male, F13).

Flora and Fauna: Nothing really grows on this rocky chunk of Norwold, except small, stunted shrubs and subarctic flowers. Few are the animals that live here, most notably seagulls, puffins and other avians, as well as seals and small fish. Occasionally monsters from the Elemental Plane of Water exit from the whirlpool south of the island and cause trouble, but otherwise no real monstrous wildlife is present here.

Further Reading: CM1 *Test of the Warlords*, previous almanacs.

Description by Adik de Chevas and Arcadius.

This small rocky island in the middle of the Great Bay is home to a small community of fishers and seafaring Ostlanders. It is not prominent in Norwold's political system, but it's worth noting as a clear example of how a dominion should not be run.

The Land

Nordenhafen is a rocky island in the Great Bay, halfway between Alpha and Leecha. It is flat and windswept most of the year and nothing can grow on its soil except shrubs and the common flowers of northern Norwold and a few vegetables (those resistant to cold climates). There are, however, many birds that have made nests on the isolated coasts of Nordenhafen through the centuries and when the fish are not enough to sustain them, the islanders hunt down the avians, preying on their eggs as well. Seals are also a common sight here and they are heavily hunted [*especially during winter, when the Great Bay waters freeze near the isle and people can walk on ice and lure the seals outside the water by making holes in the frozen bay. Arcadius.*], since their fur is a precious good to sell throughout Norwold.

Nordenhafen's only settlement is its capital, a village of 500 souls that bears the same name as the barony. It is nothing more than a fishers' village surrounded by a wooden palisade, with small thatched houses built with rocks and mud. Only the baron's manor is entirely made of wood [*probably the last and only trees that grew on the isle were used to build it. Adik.*] and it's the typical Ostlander longhouse. The Seadogs Tavern is the only gathering hall of the whole island and it is often crowded at night, full of sweating and cursing northmen whose only pastimes are mocking the baron or starting a fight. The remaining 200 inhabitants of Nordenhafen live in small hamlets on the shores of the isle and occasionally come to the capital when they need tools or edibles.

The People

Nordenhafen's few inhabitants rely solely on their fishing skills to survive and a few of them also hunt the seals who swim in the Great Bay, selling the byproducts to the nearby dominions to earn their living. There are a few craftsmen in Nordenhafen, most notably Ostlanders who came here lured by the baron's promises of wealth. They produce fine boats and small sailing vessels, but since no trees grow on the island, the baron must import the wood from Latela or Panteria. Obviously, the costs surpass the profits, but the baron insists in supporting this industry, hoping that one day it will boast the isle's economy *[this is but one proof of Baron Bardeen's shortsightedness. Adik.]*.

This small island was home to a few communities of Heldanners when Bardeen first arrived and most of the actual population is Ostlander, even though there is no real difference between the two stocks. The people of this barony are full of resentment, both towards the baron and the whole Kingdom of Alpha, because they blame them for their misery. Before Bardeen's coming, those few who dwelt here could survive by fishing and hunting seals, but since the arrival of the newcomers, the island's ecosystem has been altered. Now there are too many mouths to feed and not so many sources of food. The result is that most of the food must be imported and this means the baron must spend a lot of his income to avoid famine. But Baron Bardeen's greed is well known and instead of lowering the taxes he has raised them, believing he could claim a higher share of the income *[he doesn't understand that his subjects cannot keep up with such taxation because the island has no real economic resources to exploit. Adik.]*.

In order to keep the populace in line, Baron Bardeen uses the Hammer Guard as Nordenhafen's official militia. These are deranged followers of the official faith of the barony, the Church of the Thundering Hammer, a sect of fanatic worshippers of Thor, who go into berserk frenzy every time they enter a fight. It is difficult to keep them in line and prevent them from causing

brawls all around the country, but at least the baron doesn't have to pay them *[he gives his tithe to the church and the priests provide to the guard's needs. Arcadius.]*.

Finally, there are now many pirates in Nordenhafen. This is caused by the fact that at the end of the Norwold Wars, the Ostlander raiders that plagued the internal waters of the Great Bay found sanctuary in Bardeen's dominion and the lord is currently sponsoring their raids in the surrounding nations to get more than his fair share of wealth *[unconfirmed rumors tell he allied himself with Ostland at the end of the wars, thus explaining his current boldness. Adik.]*.

Recent History

Nordenhafen's history is notoriously devoid of any significant facts. Originally inhabited by Antalians, the isle was always left alone from all those who came to the Great Bay, since it held no mineral or animal resources and was too close to the dangerous elemental whirlpool. Then in AC 1003 Bardeen Longwalker, once a proud adventurer and pirate from Ostland, came to Ericall's court to found a new dynasty, pursuing dreams of glory and richness sent him by the Thunderer *[in fact, after the jarls of Ostland refused his claim over one of the dominions, he was forced to abandon his country to pursue elsewhere his dream of rulership. Arcadius.]*. He convinced many Ostlanders to follow him on his voyage *[using the Church of the Thundering Hammer as a tool to persuade others of the foreseen success of his deed. Arcadius.]* and so he finally settled the isle without any great effort *[aside from the great frost giants' invasion of AC 1004, which caused severe losses in Nordenhafen. Arcadius.]*, swearing fealty to Ericall and Alpathia.

The isle has experienced unrest in the years of the Great War, when many of its inhabitants pushed to be involved in the battle for Norwold. Some of them wanted to fight on the Heldannic Knights' and the Thyatians' side, while others insisted on remaining loyal to the oath of loyalty made to Ericall. The result was that a civil war nearly broke out in Nordenhafen *[although*

one cannot call a “civil war” simple skirmishes between dozens of furious individuals. Adik.] and the Hammer Guard was so busy keeping peace inside the country that it could not participate in the war.

The fate of this little domain is still unsure, mainly because Baron Bardeen is not a good politician and nobody cares if he will be removed by his own subjects. After his dubious conduct during the Norwold Wars [AC 1016. Ed.] many think he is on the verge of being replaced by Ericall for his incompetence at stopping the piratical raids inside the Great Bay. If the rumors about his real involvement in these raids is correct [many lords of the Northern and Southern Marches believe he is actually sponsoring the raids and protecting the raiders. Adik], then he could be removed anytime during this year [AC 1017. Ed.].

Don't Miss

If you like tavern brawls, fierce duels and hostile climate conditions, then Nordenhafen is the place to visit. You will find plenty of opportunities to show your muscles and fight your deal of ravaging berserkers. Also, Nordenhafen is the nearest place to the elemental whirlpool of the Great Bay and many ships with their sunken hoards are said to lie near the whirlpool. So if you want to take your risks, Nordenhafen is awaiting you.

Do Miss

If you are a civilized person, just miss the whole island, mainly for the same reasons stated above.

PANTERIA (Marquisate of)

Location: Continent of Brun, northeast of Leeha, on the northern coast of the Great Bay. NW

Area: 2,494 sq. mi. (6,460 sq. km.).

Population: 7,000, including 1,500 hin.

Languages: Alphatian, Thyatian, Heldannic, Lalor.

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: Vary in nature and amount, averaging to 25% of income, collected regularly by the guilds. People not affiliated to the guilds do not pay taxes but generally cannot work either.

Government Type: Marquisate, member of the Kingdom of Alpha, member of the Norwold Confederacy. Any and all activities are supervised by the powerful guilds.

Industries: Trade, some crafting.

Important Figures: Celia (Marquise, human, female, T20), Weston (Governor, human, male, T13), Lucci Dhay (Dame and Headmaster of the Trade Guild, actually a spy from rival Causa Nostra, human, female, T19).

Flora and Fauna: The uncultivated lands of the marquisate are sparsely covered by short grass and shrubs that can resist even the most frigid winters under feet of snow. Hin cultivate snow tulips in their gardens, which appear to be dead plants during their eight months hibernation but blossom in the spring into beautiful flowers larger than hin hands. Snow crabs come ashore during the winter to mate, but crab-hunters are careful not to stumble on deadly frost salamanders for whom the ice-plated crabs are a delicacy. Deer, wolves and other woodland animals can be spotted during the harsh winters. On rare occasions, frost giants come this far south in their forays into human lands, but the marquise is generally warned of their approach by Zoltan's elves or by Duke Ney.

Coats of arms: Marquise Celia: Black panther lying at the foot of a white oak, background silver (top) and gold (bottom); Governor Weston: Two diagonally-crossed black daggers with four gold circles (one in each quadrant), red background; Marquisate of Panteria: Black panther head, silhouette of a white sphinx (bottom left), gold background; City of Panteria: Black panther head, four coppery ships (one in each corner), gold background; Town of Cape Westria: Black dagger (blade pointing up), four gold circles (left half), black panther head (right half, top), silhouette of a white

sphinx (right half, bottom), red background; Panterian Guilds: Copper ship (heading right) with two silver waves below, black lion head (or specific symbol, by guild) (bottom), gold background.

Further Reading: CM1 *Test of the Warlords*, previous almanacs.

Description by Adik de Chevas and Arcadius.

Among the feudal dominions that dot the large expanses of Norwold, the Marquisate of Panteria is atypical—as much as are atypical all the dominions carved out of the wilderness by the heroes of various lands who answered King Ericall’s call before the Great War. But what makes this dominion stand apart from all the others more than anything else is the mere fact that this profitable realm never parted from Alpha to gain sovereignty, even after the Sinking of Alphatia, like most others did. Of course, this isn’t the lone peculiarity of this place.

The Land

The marquisate extends along the northwestern bays of the Great Bay, following the coastline and the milder plains a few miles into the interior to the edge of the great northern forests. A good part of these plains has been turned to farmlands yielding meager harvests, while the rest remain wilderness.

King Ericall granted Celia a good stretch of land, probably because the marquise always remained loyal to the kingdom even in the direst times. Besides, the marquise’s beauty and smooth talking certainly helped her build her dominion to its current size and status, not to mention her connections with the most influential nobility in Alpha and especially Oceansend. Also, the absorption of Sir Weston’s barony gave her dominion a sudden boost in both size and population, which she rapidly took advantage of.

Officially, the marches encompass all the land situated along the bay from the port-city of Panteria in the east, to the town of

Cape Westria in the west, extending 25 miles in the interior. However, nobody denies that the marquisate extends farther inland up to the fringes of the forest—the domain of the elves—which more often than not is farther away from the coast than the recognized 25 miles, sometimes even as much as 40 miles. Moreover, a vast area east of Panteria is dominated by the guilds from the marquisate and thus falls de facto under the direct influence of the marquise; it is largely expected that Celia will sooner or later lay claim to it.

Panteria is a prosperous port-city boasting 4,800 inhabitants. It is not walled and seems undefended, both from attacks by land or sea and even unpatrolled, but my guess is that the guilds enforce the law invisibly and could muster greater forces than would appear possible if the city was threatened in any way. Everything and everyone in the city looks and acts as if they had their own place in an orderly society and knew what they could do and what they couldn’t, even where there is most trepidation, like on the marketplace. Here one can find products from various places in the world, including the rare elven wonders that are traded by the secretive Shiye or goods from the mostly-forgotten kingdoms of Kaarjala and Littonia, as well as mundane or exotic goods from around Nayce, the Old World and even sometimes from Davania. Panteria’s deep-water harbor was recently upgraded (during the occupation of Oceansend by the Heldannic Knights) and now rivals that of Alpha itself. There are always many ships anchored there, mostly vessels hailing from Oceansend and Minrothad [*it seems Minrothaddan captains prefer to dock their ships here rather than in Alpha or Leeba. Arcadius.*]. Panteria is also the only city in all of Norwold where you can change any foreign coins for Alphatian crowns or vice-versa—for a small fee, of course.

Cape Westria is a town of some 1,800 inhabitants, half of them hin. The town is surrounded by a wooden palisade dating back from the days of the independent barony. The town feels orderly just like Panteria, though there are rumors of some

people working outside the ranks of the guilds. It is also whispered that Causa Nostra may have interests in the town and is fighting the influence of the guilds and that the hin are actually colonizing on behalf of Leeha [*both rumors started right after the merging of the barony into Celia's dominion. Arcadius.*]. The town is obviously less developed than Panteria, its port being used mainly for trade with the city rather than with the world at large. To tie the town to the marquisate as much as develop an alternate supply route, a road is being built between Panteria and Cape Westria.

The reason why Minrothad and Oceansend ships are so common here is trade agreements. With Oceansend there always was good relations, but then Panteria's deal became even more profitable because of the Heldannic Knights' takeover [*basically, most trade was diverted from Oceansend to Panteria. Arcadius.*]. With Minrothad, there is a guild-to-guild trade agreement standing. This agreement is profitable to both sides: Panteria, which doesn't have a large trade fleet, gains access to rare goods from faraway lands and increased traffic and can also accept foreign coins for that reason; the Minrothaddans gain a good entry point to a big market (Norwold and also Alphatia before it sank) where there previously was a big competitor instead (Alphatia itself), benefiting from special advantages (cheap anchoring fees, lighter bureaucratic procedures, reduced tariffs [*which still works for within Nayve. Adik.*]), guilds taking care of things for them. Minrothaddans are not forced to work with Panteria, it's just that most captains do because their government has signed agreements that allows them to make more money than by sailing to Oceansend, Alpha, Leeha, or rival Latela.

The People

Most of Panteria's population are humans from various ethnic origins, mostly Alphatians, Minrothaddans and some Heldanners, Thyatians, Karameikans and various other backgrounds.

A sizable portion of the population are Oceansenders, some of whom live in the marquisate, though most are refugees who left the city when it fell to the Heldannic Knights. Most of the nobility and gentry of Oceansend settled in Panteria rather than Alpha, as the marquise sent many ships to the falling city to allow their escape; though King Yarrvikson did go to Alpha, most of his court was staying in Panteria. Many nobles have returned to their estates now, but some stayed behind or travel regularly between the two. Many ships sail from Oceansend to Panteria, sometimes without stopping at Alpha and it is well known among the Norwold nobility that the guilds of Panteria have a branch in Oceansend and participated in the overthrowing of the knights.

In and around Cape Westria and to a lesser extent elsewhere in the marquisate, live peaceful hin who settled a few miles north of their ancestral lands in search of better soil for their beloved snow tulips. Those hin generally live in burrows—nicknamed igloos by their human neighbors because they are covered in snow most of the year—covered by gardens of blossoming tulips during the late spring and summer months.

Everything in the marquisate is regulated by the guilds; everybody lives by the guilds' rules. The marquise officially is head of state, but the guilds have the actual say in everyday affairs. There are guilds for every activity going on in the marquisate: trade of course, crafts, magic, fishing, agriculture, even snow tulip gardening. Everyone willing to do the slightest thing within the field of a guild must first register at the appropriate guild and follow its regulations. It is virtually impossible to do anything without registering at a guild; even beggars have their own guild! Those who tried anyway were soon forced to close shop: nobody would sell to or buy from them and they were regularly visited by burglars.

A craft guild, for example, grants the right to practice one's activity, buys from another guild or imports raw materials and sells it at a fixed price to the craftsman, buys the finished product at a price varying with the

craftsman's skill, then sells it to another guild or exports it. The guild also handles the whole tax aspect, speeds up or slows down the amount of work—and workers—according to market demand and raw material availability, plans the training of new craftsmen or immigration of master craftsmen from other regions, seeks out craftsmen that live outside of the guild and contacts other guilds to discourage their activities. All guilds work along these lines, with minor variants for each particular guild.

Each guild master is himself a member of the Master Guild, which purpose is to collect the taxes from the guilds and hand it over to the marquisate, create or disband guilds, set new trade lanes and economic agreements with other countries or guilds and decide on other high-level and often secret policies. The identity of the high guild master is kept secret, even from the other guild masters, but it is commonly believed that the marquise herself is in fact leading the most powerful guild of her dominion.

Recent History

Panteria is a fairly recent dominion; until the dawn of the new millennium, it was but wilderness, with just the occasional settler. When King Ericall invited heroes from all lands to come in Norwold and gain nobility and dominion in return for pledging fealty to the crown of Alphatia and to himself, many worthy heroes came to carve their own dominions; among them were Celia and Weston. Both became barons of Ericall and settled in this region of Norwold, founding cities to be their capitals.

Weston built a small tower where he wanted to create Cape Westria, encouraged settlers to come to his barony, surrounded the small town with wooden palisade for protection and traded with the hin of Leeha, the Barony of Latela and Alpha.

Celia built not much at first but set the base for what would become the guilds, attracting people she would entrust the guilds to. She also contacted various rulers and guild masters, especially in Minrothad and Oceansend and arranged for

advantageous agreements for both parties. She then had a decent port built in the bay and trade began. Cash was flowing into the guilds' treasury, the port of Panteria was a destination for many ships and soon the baroness set into motion an aggressive policy of immigration, attracting merchants, skilled craftsmen, but also simple farmers or fishermen, from Alpha, Oceansend, Minrothad and elsewhere, creating new daughter guilds as the need arose. Celia was awarded the title of countess in AC 1007.

In early spring of AC 1006 a most unusual storm destroyed a natural dam, thereby flooding his lands with salt water from the Great Bay [*this area is now back to normal. Adik.*]. Their burrows were flooded and their snow tulips never blossomed that year. A few hundred hin moved north into Westria, which welcomed them. But the barony was already in financial trouble, trade being shadowed by nearby Leeha and Panteria, further deepened by mismanagement. The baron began to contract debts, until his barony was on the verge of bankruptcy.

In AC 1010 the two dominions peacefully merged. Actually, Countess Celia flatly bought Westria [*some people speculated that the two would marry to seal the deal, but they didn't. Adik.*]. Celia paid back the debts and the guilds quickly extended their control over to the new lands—most certainly greatly annoying the creditors, who probably had other plans for the barony upon its bankruptcy. It was expected at the time that Celia would declare her independence from Alpha like so many other petty lords, but she instead started to go by the title of Marquise of Panteria—she loved the word—and asked at Ericall's court for that title to be recognized, which he gladly accepted.

When Oceansend fell to the Heldannic Knights, many ships allowed the nobility, gentry and some commoners to flee to Panteria before the Heldannic navy definitively blocked all access. The port of Panteria was upgraded to rival that of Alpha and harbor most of the Oceansend trading fleet. The guilds' branch in Oceansend was certainly crucial in the overthrowing of the

knights, probably covertly helping dwarves and Oceansenders smuggle arms, sabotaging Heldannic work and costing them much money, though their precise role remains largely undocumented but to the guilds' hierarchy.

Don't Miss

If you are persona non grata in hin lands, then don't miss a visit to Cape Westria anytime in summer so you can tour the carefully tended snow tulip gardens. There you will be amazed by the connecting patches of blossoming flowers, forming intricate designs with their colors ranging from snow-white to yellow, orange, pink, red and deep blue. If you are a spell-caster like myself, I strongly encourage you to *levitate* and marvel at how the patterns assemble like a vast mosaic across the individual gardens.

Do Miss

I advise everyone against doing any business in Panteria without first checking at the appropriate guild, unless you're looking for trouble. I [*Arcadius*] myself had the bad idea of simply casting a few spells while traveling the land incognito and quickly found myself in trouble—which I won't detail here—until I managed to prove that I was a lord of Norwold and a friend of Celia's. And yet I know that whenever I enter the marquisate the guilds still have me under watch all the time. I imagine with a shiver how easily this can become a terrible nightmare for a mere commoner with no connection to the marquise.

WESTERN BAY MARCHES

The Western Bay Marches comprises all of the dominions located west of the Great Bay but east of the Icereach Range proper. The nations of this area are some of the most powerful, wealthiest and most important throughout Norwold and they all enjoy a

great deal of freedom or independence from the Kingdom of Alpha.

CHITINE (Grand Duchy of)

Location: Continent of Brun, northwest of Lecha. NW

Area: 4,988 sq. mi. (12,920 sq. km.).

Population: 7,000.

Languages: Alphatian, Heldannic.

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: 25% of yearly income.

Government Type: Grand duchy, member of the Kingdom of Alpha, member of the Norwold Confederacy.

Industries: Military, agriculture, mining.

Important Figures: Ney (Archduke, furry, male, F17).

Furmies are bipedal, humanoid equivalent of normal ants. They normally live together in "anthills," called colonies. Furmies are asexual; the queen only lays eggs that are hatched into mature furmies according to the colony's needs (the eggs need one year before they can be hatched, but can then be stored indefinitely). The first eggs laid (generally between a couple and a half-dozen) are queen eggs, while all other eggs are normal furmies.

A furry's eyes are multi-faceted like those of a fly, granting it 60' infravision and a 360° vision. Its chitinous carapace grants it a natural AC of 4, while its four upper limbs allows it to wield a wide variety of weapons and shields (most warrior furmies are ambidextrous and can use a great variety of tactics with perfect dexterity). Furmies are resistant to spells and poison (+1 to saves) and have a 90% resistance to *charms*. Furmies can communicate empathetically with each other when within 60', or telepathically when in contact through their antennae. A furry can double its movement rate by running on its six limbs.

Furmies have a tremendous sense of loyalty toward their queen and their colony, for which they will typically sacrifice their

lives. This does not mean that furmies have no personality and are mechanical, instinct-driven creatures like ants; quite the contrary, just that their values would appear alien to most sentient creatures. Most furmies are of Loyal alignment and in fact eggs are normally screened for chaotic tendencies before hatching—and eggs that would bear potentially unstable individuals are destroyed mercilessly. Each furmy is born with its future decided for it in advance; the colony provides it with all it needs, including training for its position in the society. Most furmies are simple workers (farmer, craftsman, etc.), some are warriors, while some are bred for wizardry or priesthood or other important positions; thus, furmies of all classes and levels can be encountered. A furmy's life span is about 100 years; queens generally live about 500 years.

All furmies have an instinctive fear of water and will avoid crossing seas and oceans, or even smaller bodies of water—there is no known furmy sailor. They also fear fire. Because of their strange appearance and behavior, furmies will generally have a hard time meshing with other races—but that is something they rarely do anyway. Due to their physiology, they cannot speak the humanoid languages without a very strong accent (generally described as chopped and clicking, but the differences are actually more fundamental). Because of their nature, furmies have a hard time grasping various concepts like money, property, poverty, trade, fame, sex, love, family, lie, treachery, treason, often causing them to make major blunders (more often than not at their own expense, but they rarely even realize it).

Furmies are not native to Mystara, but from another world where insect-like creatures are the dominant form of sentient life. One colony accidentally came to Mystara long ago and though it is very rare, some of its members can sometimes be encountered. The exact location of the Mystaran colony is a secret no furmy will reveal to any non-furmy. The furmies worship the Immortal Furmy, allegedly the only furmy to have ever reached immortality and the founder of their society as an orderly

one. Though not native to Mystara and mostly uninvolved in its politics, Furmy grants spells to its Mystaran priests.

Flora and Fauna: The plains are lightly covered by evergreen trees, mostly pine, which become even rarer in the hilly and mountainous regions to the west of the duchy. As the duchy rises into the Icereach Range, trees are slowly replaced by shrubs, then hardy mosses until the altitude becomes too great for any plants to survive. Horses are bred for the knightly order; mountain goats, mountain lions and snow apes inhabit the Icereach Range. Frost giants or white dragons living in caves in the mountains beyond the border of the duchy occasionally attack despite their being regularly driven away by the duke's knights.

Coats of arms: Duke Ney: A six-branch black star (center) surrounded by four silver-red swords pointing to the corners, background green (upper quadrant), blue (bottom quadrant), yellow (left quadrant) and white (right quadrant); Duchy of Chitine: Two red diagonal lines, silhouette of a white sphinx (top quadrant), background green (top quadrant), blue (bottom quadrant), yellow (left quadrant) and white (right quadrant); City of Furmy: A six-branch black star (center), two red circles (top left and top right sextants), background green (upper sextant), blue (bottom sextant), yellow (bottom left sextant), white (bottom right sextant) and black (top left and top right sextants); Knights of Chitine: A black shield (center) behind a white circle, four red swords pointing from the corners to the circle, black background. The duke may also carry Alpha's banner when leading the armies of the king into battle as Ericall's general.

Further Reading: CM1 *Test of the Warlords*, previous almanacs.

Description by Adik de Chevas and Arcadius.

Along with the County of Draken that controls the access to the Great Bay, the Duchy of Chitine constitutes the backbone

of the defense of Alpha. The duke is inflexible in his loyalty to the crown of Alpha—and to that of Alphatia—and has been entrusted by King Ericall with the utmost powers for the safety of the kingdom. The duchy is literally the armor of Alpha [*chitin is the material that constitutes the ants'—and furmies'—hard protective exoskeleton. Adik.*].

The Land

The Duchy of Chitine is a rather large dominion backed by the Icereach Range to the west and the dense evergreen forest to the north. It is composed mainly of hills and mountains to the west, while rolling plains and light woods cover the eastern half of the domain.

The forest to the north is inhabited by Shiye elves, while lands to the east of the duchy are mostly uninhabited and remain neutral land between the domains of the hin and this dominion loyal to Alpha. A broad stretch of land to the south is the result of a mutual pact of non-belligerency between the Duchy of Chitine and the Kingdom of Siegeria.

It is the duty of the Knights of Chitine to patrol not only the duchy, but also the neutral lands beyond to ensure the safety of southern territories. They keep a watch over the White Bear River to make sure no threat bypasses them through this natural passage through the Icereach Range. They also patrol the buffer zones up to Siegeria's borders and up to Cape Westria in Panteria. They do not patrol the northern forest, instead relying on the elves living there to warn them of any frost giant raid or other threat. Unless the Great Bay is frozen enough to let an army cross it, no enemy should be able to reach Leeha or lands beyond without facing the knights before.

The People

The population of the duchy is composed mainly of Alphatians and Heldanners; a few native Heldann nomads also occasionally temporarily set their tents within the borders of the duchy.

The majority of the population is made up of commoners, mainly peasants, loggers, shepherds, craftsmen and miners exploiting the platinum veins in the Icereach Range, happy to be safe in the well protected duchy. The elite of the dominion, however, are the famous Knights of Chitine.

This order is the only one such in all of Norwold; its members come from all parts of Norwold and sometimes even from Heldann itself [*likely natives who do not worship Vanya. Arcadius.*]. The Knights of Chitine are sworn to protect the crown of Alpha; it is their utmost concern and they would without a doubt take orders from the King of Alpha before those of the Duke of Chitine himself. They value honor, courage, justice and faith, the four components of righteousness [*as symbolized by their coat of arms. Arcadius.*]; their motto is “To the last breath I stand.” The Knights of Chitine are highly regarded throughout Norwold, even in dominions that are not loyal to King Ericall—except those that are openly hostile, obviously— and are treated as nobility. They can go anywhere without being questioned or stopped, crossing borders as they go, ask for food and lodging at any noble's castle, carry weapons and administer justice, though some petty lords sometimes resent such infringement. They can also issue a call to arms in any allied territory and assume leadership of the army. Each knight is assigned a squire which tends his master's war-horse, weapons and armor; in return, the knight trains the squire to become a knight, teaching him his duties as a future Knight of Chitine, showing him the path to righteousness and training him in the use of the lance, the crossbow and various swords. The Knights of Chitine can generally be found patrolling around the duchy, training at Furmy Castle, attending King Ericall in Alpha, or anywhere in Norwold where their duties as protectors of the crown lead them.

There is always a group of Knights of Chitine accompanying Blind Wooster (a monk of Tarastia) to make sure his judgments are respected and his sentences carried out. The monk still acts as high magistrate for most countries of Norwold,

just like he did for all Ericall's subjects in the years before the Great War.

Recent History

Ney pledged fealty to King Ericall shortly after the land was opened to be divided into dominions. He immediately started the construction of a great defensive castle, but his alien nature [*Ney is a furry, an ant-like humanoid race from some unknown part of Mystara. Adik.*] and mentality scared away potential settlers who preferred to colonize other lands, like the adjacent domains of Alak Dool and Sieger. However, many would-be warrior-heroes came to the barony to be taught by the famous fighter.

Soon enough, however, commoners and peasants who were mistreated by Alak Dool's minions began to flock to Ney and Sieger's dominions, crossing the border and asking for the protection of the lord of the domain. The honorable Baron Ney became suspicious of his neighbor's ways and watched him carefully.

When Alak Dool betrayed the king and Alphatia during the Great War by supporting Thyatis, Glantri and the Heldannic Knights, Baron Ney and his elite warriors were ready and rode into the traitor's dominion and fought his evil minions. Alak Dool fled and his land fell. When Ney reported to King Ericall what had happened, his liege replied that the baron had greatly helped the crown by eliminating an enemy of Alphatia and that he had honorably conquered the land and thus would rule it in addition to his own, with the title of count [*other lords were either using the war to declare their independence, or even taking up the cause of the enemies of Alphatia, which helps explain why the king was so generous with those lords that stood by him and fought his foes. Adik.*]. Alak Dool's tower was razed.

After Alphatia's sinking, even more dominions won their independence. Count Ney remained true to his oath to King Ericall. He transformed his informal warrior-heroes into the first Knights of Chitine, bound to protect the crown of Alpha and be the protective shield of the

king. Two years later, King Ericall increased the size of his dominion and honored him as Duke of Chitine, giving him and his knights the task of patrolling the land from the Great Bay to the Icereach range to stop the advance of any hostile force. The king also gave him the task of watching over Sieger von Duwn, now an independent king; Chitine and Siegeria signed a mutual pact of non-belligerency and agreed that a broad stretch of land between the two dominions would remain neutral.

When the commander of the Alphan forces was executed by the Heldannic Knights after the fall of Oceansend, King Ericall appointed the loyal duke to the position. When Alpha joined the Nayce, Ney was officially recognized as General of Alpha.

In the recent Norwold Wars [*AC 1016. Ed.*] Ney led his Knights of Chitine to Alpha to protect Ericall from the attacks of the treacherous Black Duke of Ossian and the Qeodharan pirates. Unfortunately, a lone tyrant [*Coiger de Mory, a fanatic priest of Rathanos. Arcadius.*] living near his dominion profited from the lord's absence to march towards Chitine with a small army of efreet, fire giants and other fire denizens of the nearby Arch of Fire. The ensuing war went really bad for Chitine, claiming many of its bravest warriors, but the advance of de Mory's army [*led by an efreet lord named Duke Dabish. Arcadius.*] was somehow slowed by the intervention of the sollux of the Arch of Fire on Ney's side. The later addition of troops from Siegeria and Leeha blocked the efreet advance and at the end of the Norwold Wars lord Ney returned with his remaining Knights of Chitine to throw out the invaders. However, this didn't turn the tables as he hoped and the war is currently being waged as we write this parchment [*beginning of AC 1017. Ed.*], with a tense stalemate between the two sides.

Don't Miss

Furry Castle is the heart of the duchy, surrounded by sturdy walls. Around it lies the city of Furry, where few people actually

live because most of the industries take place elsewhere in the dominion [*in the platinum mines. Ed.*]; less than 2,500 inhabitants, mostly craftsmen, blacksmith and horse trainers, live here. But the most prominent feature of the castle is the presence of the Knights of Chitine, a hundred of them and their squires, who can be seen going about on their duties, performing their daily drills, majestic on their black war-horses and heavy armor. Within the walls of the castle lies a cathedral where the duke and his knights pray to the Immortals they pay homage to—the Immortal Furmy for the duke, Petra, Vanya, Tarastia, Diulanna, Halav, Ixion, Alphatia, Thor or Odin for the knights.

Do Miss

Although Alak Dool's tower was razed shortly after he had been driven out by Ney and his knights, the demonic magics of the evil wizard have not completely dissipated from the land. This threat still remains a matter of great concern to the duke, who isn't too knowledgeable about magic. The exact nature of the magical hazard is not known for sure, but several wise wizards of Norwold [*including Adik and Arcadius. Ed.*] have formulated the hypothesis that Alak Dool was trying to summon a fiend from the Pits to unleash upon his enemies. The spell was never completed, but various nasty creatures occasionally pop up at random, attracted by the weakening between the planes caused by the partial *gate*.

LEEHA (Shire of)

Location: Continent of Brun, on the western coast of the Great Bay. NW

Area: 998 sq. mi. (2,585 sq. km.).

Population: 6,700.

Languages: Lador, Alphatian.

Coinage: Barter mostly, otherwise Alphatian Standard: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: 20% collected twice a year.

Government Type: Democracy; elected clan representatives (clanmasters) advise an elected sheriff (count).

Industries: Agriculture, fishing.

Important Figures: Shaedrik Divotfoot (Sheriff, hin, male, F9).

Flora and Fauna: Leeha's rolling hills are forested with a mixture of evergreens, oak, maple, hickory, elm and ash in the southeast. Thickets, brambles and ferns are common beneath the taller evergreens. The forested areas abound with wildlife and wild animals can be encountered away from the settlements. The forests give way to gentle rolling fields and meadows filled with wildflowers and fruit trees, as well as crops. Streams are smaller and gentler in the fields that make up the heart of the shire. There's also an inland swamp near the Gulf of Leeha; quicksand is a deadly peril found amongst the peat bogs here. Twisted and stunted trees give shelter to all types of swamp denizens, monsters included.

Further Reading: CM1 *Test of the Warlords*, *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Synthala of Aasla.

Finally, I have had the time to see this marvelous land and what a pleasure! The hin county of Leeha has always been an independent, merry land to visit. It is divided into seven smaller dominions (called shires by the hin), but few outsiders notice this, since the hin always make decisions through consensus and live as a single nation. In this report, while describing the whole region in general terms, I will focus on the shires of Highthicket and Merrybrook, located south of the town of Leeha.

The Land

Leehashire is one of the most beautiful regions in all Norwold. Its rolling hills are forested with a mixture of evergreens, oak, maple, hickory, elm and ash in the southeast. Lakes and rivers are plentiful in the hills, which are known as the Catbergs. Hin

venture here quite often, but this area is more of a borderland.

The forested area is known as the Greenwood. The Greenwood is pleasant and peaceful and it abounds with wildlife. Wild animals are the only concern while traveling here. The forests give way to gentle rolling fields and meadows filled with wildflowers and fruit trees, as well as crops. Streams are smaller and gentler in the fields that make up the heart of the shire. Smaller ponds are also common in the fields. The rivers tend to flow toward the sea or into the White Bear River.

The Greenwood River originates deep in the Catbergs. It flows southward through the forest and across farmland, before turning west to join the White Bear just north of Leeha. The Naszbras River starts in a region of the Greenwood south of Goodfield. It flows peacefully from the woods across the fields to the east, then turns northward through Fogvail Swamp, before emptying into the Gulf of Leeha.

Fogvail Swamp is a dark and murky place, which is often shrouded in mist. Few hin dare go here. Quicksand is a deadly peril found amongst the peat bogs here. Twisted and stunted trees give shelter to all types of swamp denizens, monsters included. The inland swamp eventually gives way to salt marsh along the coast, but most of the water here is stagnant and infested with insects. During winter, the bogs will freeze over, making them easy to cross, but some monstrous inhabitants remain active all winter.

The White Bear River is a major waterway that is navigable for most of the year. It often freezes over during the winter. The river is deep and slow-moving as it passes through the shire, but the water is cold from its source in the Icereach Range. In some places, the river can be over a mile wide, depending on the season. The banks tend to be fairly steep as the river winds through the valley, but it is not so in all places. The banks of the river are very fertile allowing a wide variety of crops to grow there.

To the west of the White Bear, the forests become denser and evergreens grow more common toward the foothills of the Icereach. The western forest is called the Hightimber. The southern part of this forest is thick with smaller trees and ground cover. Thickets, brambles and ferns are common beneath the taller evergreens. North of Leeha, these woods tend to have older, taller trees with little underbrush. Moss and needles carpet the forest floor. The trees are broken by the occasional meadow. Freshwater lakes, ponds, rivers and streams are all abundant throughout this region. The River Dinelbras marks the northern edge of this forest.

The stretch of Hightimber Forest between Leeha and Grassy Knoll is crossed by the dangerous Snakebite River. Poisonous serpents are found in this area, including water moccasins and rattlesnakes. The Snakebite crawls its way to Saurian Saltmarsh, on the coast of the Great Bay. Hin rarely travel here.

To the north of the Great Bay, the woods also become increasingly more evergreen, but are rarely completely so. The trees are dense and thick, making travel difficult. The woods form a protective border on this side of the shire and have been dubbed the Northguard Woods. These woods are a true wilderness and are mostly unexplored.

Leehashire is composed of seven hin clan strongholds, each with its own leadership (and *Crucible of Blackflame*). The proximity of the clans to one another has encouraged the hin to develop together. The stronghold of Leeha is the clans' central gathering place; it is located near the White Bear River.

South of Leeha, following the White River to its source, lies the small clanhold housing the Highticket Clan. The clan and town both take their name from the Highticket River, which flows down from the foothills of the Icereach Range into the White Bear River. Highticket is a community of loggers and outdoors hin. Wood and timber are the primary resources of this area, which is deep in Hightimber Forest. Hin who are not loggers are most likely fur trappers or game

hunters. Grouse and wild turkey can be found here. Deer, bears and cougars also inhabit the surrounding woods and mountains, in addition to animals whose pelts are coveted by trappers, such as beaver, fox, mink and ermine. The hin are good stewards of the land and will never overcut the forest. This clanhold is significantly removed from Leeha, so that visits from outsiders are rare. When visitors do arrive, they are not greeted as warmly as they would be in Leeha.

Merrybrook is home to the clan of the same name. It lies down the road from Highthicket, near the confluence of the Highthicket, Fishrun and White Bear Rivers. As such, the rivers are the major fact of life for this clan. Fishing is their mainstay. Brook trout, salmon and other fish are plentiful in all of these fresh mountain streams. The waters also help to provide a fertile soil along their banks where various foodstuffs (such as potatoes) can be grown. The Merrybrook Clan are also skilled river pilots. Riverboats and sailboats can both be found here for navigating the White Bear and some stretches of the Fishrun. Smaller canoes and rowboats can advance further up the Fishrun and the Highthicket, both of which contain significant rapids.

The People

Overall, Leeha has the atmosphere of one big happy family. The seven clans are represented in roughly equal numbers, many of whom have chosen to live in Leeha permanently. The mix of full time residents and *yallaren* passing through make it an interesting place to visit. It may seem somewhat uncontrolled at times (especially during holidays), but the hin tend to watch out for their own. They are friendly folk who are willing to lend a hand to almost anyone. The residents are more aware than they may seem, however and many are quite worldly. The hin maintain a standing force of 1,500 warriors and, although the small folk try not to become involved in human quarrels, they will not hesitate to band together and defend their homeland against

incursions by monsters and other undesirables.

In comparison to the average hin of Leeha, those of the Highthicket Clan are hardworking and tend to keep to themselves and their woodlands. The Merrybrook are somewhat adventuresome and travel to Leeha and beyond fairly often. Some even take to piracy along the White Bear. The clan is quite receptive to guests who can arrive easily by way of the rivers. There are a few decent taverns and inns scattered throughout the clan's territory, all of which serve excellent "fish and chips." Celebrations and merrymaking are almost constant among this clan, which has its share of musicians and entertainers.

Recent History

The area of Leehashire was settled in the distant past by hin driven from the Northern Reaches by kobold invaders. It is believed that these northern hin originally left the Five Shires as colonists, or were driven from there during some earlier turmoil. The hin lived alone—and mostly peacefully, except for humanoid incursions—for many centuries, which is one reason they retained their Lalor language better than their Five Shires brethren. They have reacted peaceably to the arrival of human cities in the last century; in fact, they have profited from trade with the humans.

A great army of orcs, led by a green dragon, invaded Leehashire some 40 years ago (AY 1984) [*AC 984. Ed.*]. Hin losses were heavy, especially in the eastern clans (Gardener and Divotfoot). That area of the shire was in ruin. The hin forces were rallied by a brave young sheriff, Collin Nimblefingers, whose guerrilla tactics helped beat the orcs at their own game. The orcs were driven back into the hills and the dragon was not seen again. Sheriff Collin was secured in his office and he later successfully defended Leeha from an invasion of frost giants, from Frosthaven, in the brutal winter of AY 2002 [*AC 1002. Ed.*] when the Great Bay froze over completely. A key hero in that engagement was Shaedrik

Divotfoot, who succeeded Collin as sheriff in AY 2010 [*AC 1010. Ed.*].

Recently, Leeha has established diplomatic treaties both with the Kingdom of Siegeria and with the Duchy of Chitine (as representative of the Kingdom of Alpha) that guarantee its safety should the two parties come into conflict. It currently maintains peaceful relationships with all its neighbors and the hin enjoy the peace and prosperity of their position. Leeha remained neutral in the recent Norwold Wars [*AC 1016. Ed.*], although it did send troops to help the nearby dominion of Chitine when the army of efreet invaded it [*probably to stop it before it reached Leeha as well, thus avoiding a war on their own soil. Adik.*].

Don't Miss

Leeha is famous for its many fine inns and pubs. Without exception, these inns are high quality places, filled with warm food and good cheer. Many are large enough to accommodate humans. Hin songs and stories can be enjoyed with fine ale well into the night. Various acts, shows and other entertainment take place on an almost constant basis, with *yallaren* playing a large part.

Another interesting feature you should not miss when visiting Leehashire is the snow tulip fields. These marvelous and unique flowers blossom in summer and have an incredible variety of hues, forming intricate designs with their colors ranging from snow-white to yellow, orange, pink, red and deep blue. The Gardens of Leehashire are said to be one of the world's greatest marvels!

Do Miss

Definitely too dangerous to brave, especially after the Draconic Treaty of AY 2016 [*AC 1016. Ed.*], are the mountains to the south of Merrybrook, which are part of the Icereach Range and belong to the dominion of Siegeria. The traveler should also expect some problems if she chooses to roam the grasslands to the west, since this is the hunting ground of many packs of blink dogs and a few lycanthropes.

SIEGERIA (Kingdom of)

Location: Continent of Brun, west of Leeha. NW

Area: 10,475 sq. mi. (27,130 sq. km.).

Population: 39,000 (90% humans, 10% hin) and 500 gnomes.

Languages: Alphatian, Thyatian, Heldannic, Lalor.

Coinage: *Siegerin* (gp), *eronin* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: 25% of yearly income.

Government Type: Constitutional monarchy (kingdom divided in provinces, each ruled by an elected governor).

Industries: Cattle, agriculture, fishing, mining.

Important Figures: Sieger von Duwn (King, human, male, M20), Uthar Metzger (Baron, human, male, F18/M9), Lavim Hollister (General, hin, male, F10), Red Ork (High Priest, human, male, Pr14 of Odin).

Flora and Fauna: The plains are occupied by farmlands and grasslands, while the hills are lightly covered by evergreen trees, mostly pine, which become even rarer in the mountains in the heart of the kingdom. The somewhat milder temperatures allow herders to raise cattle and farmers to cultivate the soil, which is most fertile especially in the south, near the White Bear River. Domestic animals include goats, sheep, cows and pigs, while few are the horses that can be found in Siegeria (mostly imported). Wildlife abounds in the hills and mountains, with wolves, bears and boars being especially common in the north and east. In the middle mountains (the Jagged Teeth) a dragon is said to have its lair, along with a small tribe of giants and scattered humanoids. The hills and mountains of the southeast (in the former county of Dragonard) have rich deposits of precious ores that attracts miners as well as *aurumvorax* and dragons. Wild cold-loving beasts roam the southern mountains, where few dare venture.

Further Reading: CM1 *Test of the Warlords*, previous almanacs.

Description by Adik de Chevas and Arcadius.

Siegeria is a rather large and hospitable kingdom that borders Leehashire to the east and the Duchy of Chitine to the north. King Sieger von Duwn, a known and respected wizard, is the founder and supreme leader of this country, which is considerably interesting for its political system and its troubled history.

The Land

Siegeria consists mostly of three terrain types: wild and unsettled mountains in the center, fertile plains in the south and lightly forested hills in the north. The former county of Dragonard [*annexed at the end of the Norwold Wars, in Eirmont AC 1016 and now divided into five different provinces. Adik.*] added forested hills along the eastern border, where woods and light forest cover the rolling hills before turning into mixed forest. Siegeria is blessed with unusually good climate considering its position [*a fact often attributed to the magical skills of its king. Arcadius.*]: the summer is mild and quite sunny, while the winter is not so harsh as in other parts of Norwold [*temperatures usually range between 10°C by day and -10°C at night. Arcadius.*]. The main reason is that the strong and chilly northern winds are somehow blocked by the mountains rising in central Siegeria [*the Jagged Teeth, as they are called, reach the 9,000 feet mark. Arcadius.*] and so only two of the seventeen provinces suffer from the snow blizzards so common throughout Norwold. Abundant rainfalls in autumn make the grasslands always lush and this is a boon to the herders, who always praise Father Sky for the blessed water [*it is not surprising then, that Odin All-father, embodiment of the sky, is so popular here. Adik.*]. Farmlands are also well-tended and the country has no problem with food production [*although it suffered a severe famine during the last war that killed hundreds and made others leave the country. Adik.*]. Evergreen woods also exist in Siegeria and the human city of Arboria [*in former Dragonard. Adik.*] was founded by

Alphatians to commerce with the Shiye that dwell outside the dominion's borders.

In the central-eastern part of Siegeria, roads paved with cobblestones connect the southern city of Kishia with the northernmost Axnor and with the hin settlement of Surekeep (on the border with Leehashire) and with the other significant settlements of the dominion. Other simpler trails and dusty roads link the various hamlets with one another, even leading to the town of Arboria, nestled inside the Mur Woods in the east.

The mountains to the south, called by the locals the White Glacier, are technically part of the Icereach Range, although these are the easternmost tip. They reach 8,000 feet in height and vast glaciers cover their peaks all year. In the lowest parts however, many miners have found rich deposits of precious stones and gold and Siegeria now sells these raw materials to the other dominions or crafts them to produce refined goods to sell to Panteria, which then exports them to the Old World. Even though dragons razed the country during the Norwold Wars and are still often spotted in this region, they never venture beyond the peaks of the White Glacier now [*due to the political agreements between King Sieger and the Draconic Earls of Wyrksteeth. Arcadius.*], leaving Siegeria's populace in peace.

The political system is another feature that makes Siegeria a haven [*and that's also the main reason why there has been so many immigrants from the surrounding regions. Arcadius.*]. With the Liberation Charter of AC 1010, King Sieger proclaimed his country a "constitutional monarchy," meaning that the Liberation Charter was the official document that granted him rulership over the land. With this document, he changed the political system dividing the kingdom into twelve different provinces (three where the Thyatian minority lives and the remaining nine where the Alphatians and Heldanners dwell), each one ruled by a governor. The radical change is that the governor is no feudal lord, rather he or she is a bureaucrat elected by the populace living in that province [*something similar to what happens in*

Darokin, a nation that King Sieger seems to take as model for many things. Adik.] The governor has the power to administer the land on behalf of the people and the king and is sworn to fulfil this responsibility. He can issue laws and decrees, raise taxes and has a seat on the Kingdom Council that advises King Sieger. The king still retains his power over the army (he's the only one who can call the populace to arms) and over domestic and foreign policy in general and is still due the taxes levied from the people. However, his decisions can be vetoed by the council if all twelve members vote against him. This means King Sieger has still the reins of the kingdom (also, the crown is always in the hands of the von Duwn dynasty), but nominally the people have much more control over the land they live in.

In fact, King Sieger did this to solve two problems. The first was the obvious discontent of the Thyatian minority at the end of the Great War [*see the historical references. Arcadius.*]. The Thyatians didn't want to be treated the same way as the Alphatians were [*and considering King Sieger was a Thyatian, who had brought them to Norwold in the first place, they felt a bit betrayed by his open war against Thyatis. Arcadius.*] and demanded independence. However, they knew they couldn't escape King Sieger's grasp for long and their only possibility was the threat of a migration back to Thyatis. Sieger promptly avoided this by giving them partial independence with the formation of semi-autonomous provinces, but also retained their loyalty by putting a trusted man (former Thyatian General Uthar Metzger) as their acknowledged leader [*this proves Sieger is as cunning and subtle as the majority of Thyatians. Arcadius.*]. At the moment, the three Thyatian inhabited provinces see themselves as a united barony under Metzger's rule rather than petty provinces, so they only send one representative (Baron Uthar) to the Siegerian Council [*his vote, however, counts as one vote only, not three. Arcadius.*].

But the second and most important reason for the reform of the state was that King Sieger was tired of coping with everyday problems in his country and he wanted more

spare time to pursue his highest interest: magical research [*a very sound reason that explains his moves. Adik.*]. With this bureaucratic re-arranging of the kingdom, he has now much more freedom and time to study magic and its applications and he has still got the gold to go on with his arcane researches, so both he and his people benefited from his decisions.

The People

Four ethnic groups live in Siegeria: the Alphatian majority and the Thyatian, Heldannic and hin minorities [*Siegerian gnomes are negligible, even though they are often employed by King Sieger in some of his obscure researches. Adik.*]. The Heldanners have been living in the area the longest, but ever since the first Alphatian colonization of the Great Bay, they have been leaving this part of Norwold. They are mostly herders nowadays, even though many still remain loyal to the fierce ways of their forebears and belong to the Siegerian army as permanent volunteers. They are attached to their old beliefs and respect the law of the king because they consider him a powerful and wise man, who's been put on the throne by the Higher Powers [*at least that's what the state church preaches to them. Adik.*]. Along with the Heldanners, the hin of Leecha have also lived here for centuries and they seem content to be both Sieger's neighbors (those living in Leeshshire) and subjects. Also, the fact that the High General of Siegeria, Lavim Hollister [*a dear friend of Sieger's and one of his staunchest supporters. Arcadius.*], is one of them only makes them proud to live under such an enlightened ruler that has finally acknowledged the "true hin values."

The Alphatians are the first and most common stock in Siegeria and this is probably due to the fact that this country lies in a region that once was part of an extensive Alphatian principality [*there is historical evidence that has led us to believe that the famed Alphatian Prince Alinor once ruled all the lands surrounding the great lake south of Siegeria, now called Lake Alinor by the locals. Arcadius.*]. The Alphatians of Norwold are not like the

folk living in their motherland. These people are not so haughty and elitist, especially because there are few magic users among them *[and those who exist serve King Sieger. Adik.]* and they live off the land as simple farmers or artisans. They have been strongly influenced by the hin and now share the same easygoing manners and friendliness towards other people. They don't hate a person for being a Thyatian: after all their lord is Thyatian himself, but they respect him for his justice and bravery.

The Thyatians are the newcomers and they were brought here by Sieger von Duwn when he first settled the land in AC 1002. They started building their own life anew and persevered through hardships and dangers, always sure that Sieger was a capable ruler and that he would have protected them. It was their loyalty to him that kept them in check and because of his reputation as a harsh but just ruler they avoided conflicts with the Alphatians living nearby. But when Sieger managed to acquire *[through some obscure subterfuge, some say; through cheating and murders, others claim. Adik.]* the nearby dominion of Tescan *[whose ruler disappeared mysteriously after Sieger wed his daughter. Adik.]*, a dominion inhabited entirely by Alphatians, the first frictions began. At first it was only a general discomfort on the Thyatians' part, but when some hotheads began to burn Alphatian farms and a few inns, King Sieger intervened promptly and punished the culprits with a swift death *[he found them in a wink thanks to his spells. Adik.]*. Since then the Thyatians have felt a bit betrayed and this also explains why they now want to be ruled by another person, even though they know they cannot find a better place to live in Norwold.

A final note is mandatory and regards the religion preached in Siegeria. King Sieger is generally an open-minded person *[maybe this is due to the fact that he lived many years in Darokin, where "freedom" seems to be the holy word of the republic, sometimes to a scary degree. Adik.]* and this was reflected by his decision to leave his subjects free to worship their own Immortals. However, he is also a cunning man and while he did not enforce a state

religion, he arranged to have two main faiths spread in his dominion, two cults that only added to his power. Odin All-father and Vanya are the two prominent Immortals worshipped in Siegeria. The Church of the North *[similar to the pantheon of the Northern Reaches, but with great emphasis on the role of Odin All-father. Arcadius.]* teaches its followers that Sieger has been chosen by the Immortals to guide and protect them because of his wisdom and power. All things that happened so far to Siegeria have been tests and all dangers that Siegerians will face in the future will likewise be tests of faith, strength and spirit. Only with the von Duwns as their leaders will Siegerians be able to pass them all and see the true wisdom of Odin and so far Sieger has not deluded them. So, the more Siegeria is in danger, the more the faith in Sieger's powers grows strong. If you also take into account that the current high priest, Red Ork, was a former crewman of Sieger's flying ship (as the first patriarch was), you can understand how strong is Sieger's grip on religion. Vanya's worship is merely a fact of convenience for Sieger, since it keeps the nation ready in case of war and the Thyatians happy, although Sieger insists that he truly worships Lady Vanya *[but more probably this is just another cunning move to maintain good relationships with the Heldannic Knights, since Vanya's worship has been strongly supported since AC 1005, when Siegeria became an independent kingdom. Adik.]*.

Recent History

Siegeria was founded by Sieger von Duwn, captain of the flying vessel *Silver Arrow* *[whose design and power engine remain a mystery to us. Adik.]*, who came to Norwold with his friends and his crew in AC 1002, looking for glory and money. After swearing fealty to Ericall, the settlement began and it all went pretty smoothly, especially thanks to the cooperation between him, his friend Shuren *[now count of nearby Kameloth. Arcadius.]* and his ship's priest Ulf Karlsson *[who later left Siegeria after establishing the Church of Odin and founded his own dominion, Odinia, to the east. Arcadius.]*.

In AC1003 Sieger (still a baron) married Cassandra, the only daughter of the southern Baron of Tescan. A few months after their marriage, the Baron of Tescan disappeared while hunting in the hills [*the foothills of the Jagged Teeth mounts. Adik.*] and Sieger promptly claimed the whole barony as his, having married the sole heir of that land. So Siegeria became a county and Sieger got the southern lands, more fertile and connected to the Great Bay via the White Bear River. The former Baron of Tescan's body was never found and Sieger declared he had been victim of the dragon living in the Jagged Teeth. One year later the couple gave birth to their first child and heir [*a baby whose name is kept secret by Sieger, out of fear his name could give power over him to his future enemies. Adik.*] and he soon proved intelligent and well versed in magic like his father. Two others followed, a girl (Angelica) in AC 1005 and another male (Kurt) in AC 1011 [*although many rumors state that the third child was born with horrible malformations due to Sieger's magic, that were later corrected magically by his father. Adik.*].

In AC 1005, once the Great War broke out between Alphatia and Glantri, Sieger took his time to state his independence from Ericall's crown and founded his own dynasty, renaming the country Kingdom of Siegeria. He then made a pact with the Thyatian forces, who saw this as a great opportunity to send a bridgehead in Norwold and chase out the Alphatian forces living there. Sieger sold his country to the Thyatians in exchange for spells, protection and the promise to give him free rulership over the whole western Norwold. But this time Sieger had not predicted his countrymen's usual treachery and he got the worst of the deal. The spells they gave him were fakes, but when he discovered it, the Thyatian troops had already been positioned in his dominion and started conquering nearby lands in the name of Thyatis. They expected Dool's help as well [*Alak Dool, another renegade Thyatian lackey, ruled a barony north of Siegeria at that time, near Chitine. Arcadius.*], but he was stopped by General Ney of the Alphan Forces. After that, something strange happened: Ney should

have invaded Siegeria as well to eliminate any other possible threat, but this didn't happen.

What in fact happened is that Sieger went to Ney in AC 1006 and admitted his deeds: he had betrayed Ericall in his thirst for power. However, Thyatis had proved treacherous as well and now he wanted revenge. For this reason, he was now offering his skills and his intelligence to Alphatia. He wanted to help Ericall regain the lost territories and above all he wanted to reconquer his dominion. Sieger asked Ney to give him a last chance [*one must acknowledge that, without Sieger's timely help, Ney's dominion would have risked being invaded in a matter of weeks judging from the Thyatian war machine's results. Arcadius.*]. After a test of willpower, Ney finally agreed to Sieger's proposal. He would have refrained from invading Siegeria until Sieger's order, holding instead the Thyatian forces on the border with Leeha's help.

In the meantime, Sieger returned to Siegeria and organized a hidden resistance front of Alphatians, Heldanners and him, together with some of his older and stauncher supporters. In the following years, he was able to regain the population's support and to push the Thyatian legionnaires out of the southeastern provinces, also with the help of troops of soldiers and mercenaries sent by Ney himself. At the end of the war [*AC 1009. Ed.*], Siegeria was a divided nation: one part loyal to Sieger, the other one (inhabited by Thyatian settlers mostly) sided with the Thyatian General Uthar Metzger. Sieger had helped Ney and Ericall as promised [*also thanks to pacts signed with other nobles of Norwold. Arcadius.*], but at this point Ney wanted him to swear fealty to Ericall once more. If he did it, he would have lent him all the troops he needed to reconquer Siegeria once and for all. Otherwise, he would have called back all his troops at once. Sieger, being a proud man and dreaming of ruling an independent kingdom himself, refused. He had seen the havoc wrought by the war on Ericall's troops and estimated that he wouldn't have been able to lay siege to Siegeria so soon. He

still had an ace up his sleeve: the famous Thyatian cunning. He parlayed a lot with General Metzger and finally outsmarted him: he convinced the general that he was about to wage the final battle on his much battered forces and the troops reported moving in his lands sort of proved it *[after all, the Thyatian spies knew they were moving, not that their destination was Ney's territory. Arcadius.]*. Playing also on the fact that Thyatis never cared about its campaign in Norwold, for it never sent reinforcements *[this was because Draken and other dominions made a blockade of the Great Bay. Arcadius.]* and on the mutual respect they shared for one another, he convinced the general to surrender. But instead of capturing him, he made him a close friend and adept *[he's now a baron and Sieger's apprentice in the arcane arts! Adik.]*, freeing also his troops and promising lands to all those who stayed and sworn fealty to him. Many went back to Thyatis, but many others stayed.

With this coup, he was able to regain his dominion and proclaimed his independence from Ericall, re-establishing the Kingdom of Siegeria in AC 1010. In that same year, he signed a mutual treaty of non-belligerency with Ney as representative of Ericall and the northern buffer zone known as the "Pacification Strip" was created.

During the Norwold Wars of AC 1016, Sieger first hesitated to enter the fray against the Qeodharans and the Heldannic Knights, even though Ericall asked openly for his help, but later threw himself in the war when, according to some rumors, the Black Duke offended him somehow. Siegeria sent troops to nearby Chitine to help it against the efrete invasion, helped Lord Shuren against the piratical raids of the Ostlanders and King Sieger himself participated in the siege of Ossian and was instrumental in the Black Duke's defeat. At the end of the war, King Sieger got an agreement with the new dragon rulers of Wyrksteeth and managed to annex to his kingdom the nearby dominion of Dragonard with the wyrms' consent. In fact, the former ruler of Dragonard, Count Jax, was indeed a gold dragon and his death at the hands of the

humans called the Dragonslayers caused the dragons' wrath. For many months they ravaged Dragonard and other dominions near the Wyrksteeth, punishing innocent humans for revenge. At the end, Dragonard was left a scarred land and the wyrms claimed it, endangering the humans living there. King Sieger made his move then *[and some say the dragon rulers conceded Dragonard to him because he helped them in restoring order in the draconic society. Arcadius.]* and he saved their lives as well as gaining new precious mines. Now Sieger rules over five new provinces, former Dragonard lands, pays a small tithe to the dragons for the ore mined in the White Glacier and everybody's happy.

Don't Miss

Be sure to pay a visit to King Sieger himself if you are worthy enough to be received by him. He is a man of great intellect and superior cunning, an able strategist and a brave hero who doesn't despise a close combat from time to time *[in fact, he's expert in some sort of strange martial arts taught him by an unknown hin. Adik.]*. He can be found either in the capital city of the kingdom, Erones, in the northern area, or in his magic tower, near the southern city of Kishia.

Another interesting location to visit is Sieger's dry dock, where he harbors his new flying ship, *Silver Arrow II* *[the first one was destroyed around AC 1004, when he apparently run afoul of some vengeful entity. Sieger never talks much about this incident. Adik.]*. In this secret facility located somewhere in *[CONFIDENTIAL]*, groups of gnomes work steadily on new propulsion engines and other strange trinkets that Sieger commissions them. They number about *[CONFIDENTIAL]* and their facility also houses *[CONFIDENTIAL]*. *[The sections labeled confidential have been erased from the entry on behalf of King Sieger von Duvn, who politely asked the editor to respect state secrets. Ed.]*

Another interesting site to behold is Mine #1, some 1,000' up the northern foothills of the White Glacier. That mine is a honeycombed maze and its walls are shining

with gold veins and gems so that it is impossible to resist and not pick something. But you'd better resist temptation, for they are heavily patrolled and overseen by the elite forces of the kingdom and the punishment for gold theft in Siegeria is not pleasant at all.

Do Miss

Although nominally within Siegeria's border, the whole mountain area named the Jagged Teeth is a wilderness that even King Sieger has not yet tamed. A female red dragon named Kiriakiss rules over this region and many tribes of hill and stone giants are at her service, along with a few orcs and goblins. Their raids have now ceased after Sieger's agreement with the draconic earls and now King Sieger provides her with food and gold in exchange for refraining from raiding his dominion. Some rumors also report clans of rakasta [*snow pardasta, judging from their description. Arcadius.*] living in those mountains and they may be the cause of the humanoids' drastically low numbers. Anyway, if you are not King Sieger, you'd better stay out of the Jagged Teeth if you want to reach old age.

Also, never go past the northern side of the White Glacier if you value your life. Just because dragons do not invade and prey on Siegeria, it doesn't mean they've become tender lambs that will leave you in peace if you cross their territory. And believe us when we say to you, dear reader, that there are far more dragons than one might think in the White Glacier.

One last note to the wary traveler: west of Siegeria, just six miles away from the capital city of Erones, lies a dangerous wasteland that is rumored to be alive with a strange kind of beings. King Sieger doesn't talk much about the land, which the locals dubbed the Red Desert, but it seems it was originated after a great magical battle occurred in this area. Some expeditions we made on its fringes revealed that the sandy soil seems to be producing polymorphing creatures of sandstone that attack everyone treading over the wasteland, engulfing the

victim and pulling him below earth. What kind of monsters lie in this bleached desert nobody knows for sure.

SOUTHERN BAY MARCHES

The Southern Bay Marches comprise all of the dominions located south of the Great Bay and not too far from its coasts. Since this has always been considered the safest and richest area of Norwold, the majority of Norwold's largest and most important dominions are located in this region and they are all very close to one another, enjoying rather stable political or economic alliances.

ALPHA (Kingdom of)

Location: Continent of Brun, peninsula on the south shore of the Great Bay. NW

Area: 9,478 sq. mi. (24,550 sq. km.).

Population: 87,000, including 2,000 hin.

Languages: Alphatian, Elvish (Shiye-Lawr dialect), Lalor, Heldannic, Thyatian.

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp). Coins of many other nations are in common circulation here.

Taxes: 20% income tax, collected yearly.

Government Type: Independent monarchy, member of Nayce, member of the Norwold Confederacy.

Industries: Agriculture (grows barely enough for its own use), fishing, logging, mining and trapping.

Important Figures: Ericall (King, human, male, F20), Christina Marie Alanira (Queen, human, female, M13), Madiera (Magist, human, female, M18).

Flora and Fauna: Alpha features the plants and animals one expects of the northern wilderness. The peninsula claimed by Alpha is devoid of monsters thanks to the Regent Pass, but cold-climate creatures (such as snow apes, white dragons, frost giants, frost salamanders and sasquatches)

fill the rest of Norwold, as well as several scattered goblinoid tribes.

Further Reading: CM1 *Test of the Warlords, Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Synthala of Aasla.

Alpha is blocked off from the inland by a large stretch of mountains that cut off the entire peninsula at the neck. There is only one way through these mountains; an enjoyable hiking path known as Regent Pass. This narrow and rugged gap is guarded by a fortress garrisoned with an entire unit of the King's Guard, including his best woodsmen, climbers and trackers. This southern fortress marks the true limits of the king's lands, despite having once claimed all of Norwold as his kingdom.

The Land

The land between the garrison at Regent Pass and the city of Alpha is almost completely converted into farmland. Unfortunately, there is only the occasional patch of evergreens here and there and most wildlife has been hunted to extinction. Druidic lore claims that the soil is rich in nutrients deposited by glaciers from ages ago. Various natural lakes and small streams make sure that every farm has an adequate supply of fresh water.

At first glance, the City of Rangers and Foresters appears to be one immense fortress, with circles of walls within circles of walls to provide ample defense against any invading force. But despite the intense fortifications, the city earns its name by the numerous parks and woodlands found within the imposing walls. In fact, more wild animals can be found within these enclosed parks than in the land outside the city walls.

Alpha has a remarkable deep-water port within the Great Bay and ships from around the world can often be spotted within the large harbor. Numerous fishing boats can also be seen scattered throughout the Great Bay.

The People

Ancestry of the Alphans can be traced back to Heldannic, Thyatian and Alphantian roots. Most have been living here so long now that they simply consider themselves Alphans; racial ancestry does not mean much to these simple people. For some reason, the vast majority seem happy to have King Ericall to rule them, adding what they believe is a needed form of government and order to their lives. A rather strange belief for people who prefer to be left alone, but an accepted one none-the-less.

Most Alphans are simple farmers or fishermen who do not have the typical Alphantian disdain of non-spellcasters. Being removed from the former Alphantian mainland, magic did not become so mainstream in Alpha as to affect their lives very much. In fact, many of them are awed or cowed by displays of the arcane.

They are polite and welcome strangers eagerly in exchange for courtesy and the occasional stories about your travels. Most will mind their own business and rarely will anyone try to interfere with your plans. The peasants are content to simply do their work and not get involved in politics and "important" things.

Recent Events

In AY 1985 [*AC 985. Ed.*] Empress Eriadna of Alphantia decided to establish some colonies on the western continent of Brun and sent many settlers to Norwold. They landed on the great peninsula on the southern shores of the Great Bay and settled on the same site where Cape Alpha had been founded by Thyatians centuries before, naming their village simply "Alpha." In AY 1992 [*AC 992. Ed.*] Eriadna gave the crown of Norwold to her eldest and non-spellcasting son, Ericall, granting him a great deal of freedom. The new kingdom was too vast to be completely controlled by Ericall's troops, so he proceeded to reinforce his rule over the small peninsula and the nearby coasts and invited many would-be heroes to settle the unexplored areas of Norwold and to swear fealty to his crown. The strategy

worked too well, for dozens of candidates came to Norwold and tried to found their own fiefdom; many failed, but others succeeded, becoming the backbone of Ericall's kingdom.

The Great War resized Ericall's ambitions and made him see his mistakes in accepting so many foreigners as subject rulers of his kingdom. Many of the Norwold lords showed their true colors when Thyatis and Heldann sided with Glantri against Alphatia, allying with either the Thyatian Empire or the Heldannic Knights and attacking their neighbors who remained loyal to Alphatia. The southern dominions were thus ruined by the infighting and later conquered by the knights, who made their way up to Oceansend. Oceansend fell and was regained between AY 2010 and AY 2015 [*AC 1010-1015. Ed.*], but the situation is still tense down there at the moment. As for the northern lords, Ericall's loyalists were able to contain their assaults and they didn't cause much trouble. Alak Dool was banned from Norwold and Sieger von Duwn obtained independence from Ericall, but signed a peace treaty with him, thus restoring peace in the Great Bay region. King Ericall understood he could not consider himself the King of Norwold, so he renamed himself King of Alpha [*and of those many dominions still vassal to his crown. Synthala.*].

In *Burymir* AY 2014 [*Kaldmont AC 1014. Ed.*] Ericall married the sister of Lord General Mage Beriak [*Count of Draken. Synthala.*], Lady Christina Marie Alanira, during a lavish ceremony held at the grand ballroom. The wedding was a grand affair, attended by almost all the nobles still affiliated with King Ericall—and even some that were no more. Wealthy merchant families as well as respected priests (such as the priests of Zirchev) or other town members were also permitted to attend. To celebrate the union, the Town Watch has been renamed to the Queen's Guard. In fact, the love-smitten king has placed her in charge of the Queen's Guard; they are rumored to place any of the queen's orders before any order given by Ericall himself.

In AY 2016 [*AC 1016. Ed.*] the Norwold Wars started and Ericall formed the Norwold Confederacy [*a defensive and economic alliance among the free nations of Norwold. Synthala.*]. The confederacy started fighting on the southern front with Oceansend against the Heldannic Knights and on the northern front against the invading troops of Qeodhar and the renegade army of Ossian. The war ravaged all the dominions of Norwold and finally ended with a peace treaty signed with the Heldannic Knights, after the fall of the southern baronies and the allied Kingdom of Ostland. The Qeodharan forces retreated some weeks later and after the treacherous Black Duke of Ossian was crushed, Ericall proceeded in tightening his grip on the remaining nations and avoided a major war with the dragons of Wyrksteeth by recognizing their dominion over that region in the Draconic Treaty.

Even though the Norwold Wars officially ended in *Cyprimir* of AY 2016 [*Ambrymont of AC 1016. Ed.*], King Ericall believes the Heldannic Knights may try to resume their advance in Norwold during the year, so he has not yet disbanded the conscripted soldiers he recruited in AY 2012 [*AC 1012. Ed.*]. The decision is very unpopular with the commoners, but Ericall and his generals think it's best to stop the knights at Oceansend's gates than having to fight them on their doorsteps.

Don't Miss

One sight to visit would be the main palace of Alpha. It lies atop a large hill in the center of the most fortified area of town—over a dozen huge buildings all interconnected to each other with arches and bridges and walls. Dozens of chimneys dot the rooftops of the palace, more than likely keeping the place comfortably warm during the cold winter nights here up north. Various small parks and woodlands can be seen within the palace grounds as well, suggesting that great care is taken to maintain its beauty and appearance. And one must not forget the grand ballroom, which is a wonder beyond description. Still, despite

the architectural decorations, the thick walls and several dozen towers clearly indicate that the main purpose of the palace is indeed defensive.

If there is any sight worth seeing above all others, it would be the temple known as the Forest of Zirchev. And despite what you may believe, this account is not biased by my worship of that very Immortal. The Forest of Zirchev is a large temple made out of strong and sturdy oak that stands just over three stories high. A large brass bell tops the tallest spire, which can be clearly heard throughout the city. The true beauty of the temple is its sheer simplicity. Zirchev, in His wisdom, ordered that there be no fancy decorations, extravagant use of riches, or even statues made to honor Him. The only thing indicating that it is a house of Zirchev is a carving of the Forest Immortal's face just above the main double doors.

Zirchev has granted us many wonderful birds who "sing" the hymns during the prayers that honor Him. This wonderful chorus has earned the admiration of many Alphans. Even priests of other Immortals have been known to observe a ceremony or two just to hear the wonders of nature sing in honor of Zirchev. Because of this, many Alphans have a greater respect for nature than most city-dwellers, as the numerous city parks and the wildlands in the area can attest to. Nature will therefore never be mistreated and we owe it all to the Forest Immortal.

Do Miss

The mountains in the southern area of the kingdom are very dangerous to explore [*that's also why the Regent's Pass garrison has been established. Synthala.*]. They abound with feral beasts like mountain lions and all kinds of great cats, yeti and sasquatch clans and even a few goblinoids. On the highest peaks, wyverns and other dragon-like beings have their nests and it is said that an ancient white dragon controls the whole mountain range that extends into the Alphan peninsula.

FREE PLAINS (*County of*)

Location: Continent of Brun, southwest of Alpha, on the western foothills of the Wyrksteeth Range. NW

Area: 1,496 sq. mi. (3,875 sq. km.).

Population: 2,600.

Languages: Alphatian, Heldannic.

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp); barter common.

Taxes: 20% income tax, collected yearly.

Government Type: County, member of the Norwold Confederacy.

Industries: Fishing, herding (horse), agriculture.

Important Figures: Allisa Patrician (Countess, human, female, F15).

Flora and Fauna: The Free Plains, as the name implies, consist of grasslands, steppe and farmlands. The cold freshwater Dragon River, which cuts through the southern area of the dominion, is rich in fish, which is one of the main resources of the barony's economy. Game (both avians and mammals) is abundant in the plains and the main problems come from the dragons and wyrmlike beasts living in the nearby Wyrksteeth Mountains and from the occasional otherworldly monstrosity coming out of Redhorn barony to the north.

Further Reading: CM1 *Test of the Warlords*, previous almanacs.

No description this year. [*Adik and Arcadius provided us with basic dominion information, but no insight—watch for more next year. Ed.*]

KAMELOTH (*Duchy of*)

Location: Continent of Brun, southeast of Leeha, along the small Bay of Kameloth. NW

Area: 4,738 sq. mi. (12,270 sq. km.).

Population: 19,000, 77% humans, 17%*hin*, 6% elves.

Languages: Alphatian, Heldannic, Lolor, Elvish (Shiye-Lawr dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp); barter common among elves.

Taxes: 25% income tax, collected yearly.

Government Type: Duchy, member of the Norwold Confederacy.

Industries: Fishing, agriculture, cattle, mining.

Important Figures: Shuren (Duke, human, male, M18/F16), Jonas Whiteshore (Seneschal, hin, male, F3).

Flora and Fauna: All kinds of terrain are present in Kameloth: overgrown forests in the south, rolling and steep hills in the west and lowlands and grasslands in the east and center. As a result, many types of natural products grow here, from vegetables to cereals, from evergreen trees to fruits and underbrush. Wild animals and small tribes of orcs and hill giants live in the western hills between Kameloth and Leeha, while wolves and ferocious predators can be found in the south. Monstrous fish also prey on the smaller ones in Kameloth Bay. Dragons from the Wurmsteeth make occasional forays into this territory as well.

Further Reading: CM1 *Test of the Warlords*, previous almanacs.

No description this year. [*Adik and Arcadius provided us with basic dominion information, but no insight—watch for more next year. Ed.*]

Also, even if not technically part of the dominion, the Strait of Todstein to the north has a bad reputation among the locals [*and this is confirmed by the rumors about that place that circulate in the northern County of Draken as well. Adik.*]. It is believed that the Isles of Todstein and Graben were once inhabited by a fiendish necromancer that got blasted by the Immortals for the heinous crimes perpetrated on the folk living in those islands. Nowadays the isles are presumed deserted and the sailors keep away from the fog-filled area.

OSSIAN (Barony of)

Location: Continent of Brun, on the shores of the gulf south of Alpha. NW

Area: 998 sq. mi. (2,585 sq. km.).

Population: 1,800.

Languages: Heldannic.

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp); barter common.

Taxes: 30% income tax collected yearly.

Government Type: Barony, member of the Kingdom of Alpha, member of the Norwold Confederacy.

Industries: Fishing, agriculture, hunting.

Important Figures: Heinrich Niederhaus (Baron and Grand Knight of the Order of the Ash Rod, human, male, Pa10 of Odin).

Flora and Fauna: Ossian is a lowland valley nestled between the Ossian Bay and the Wurmsteeth. Wild animals and monsters can be encountered in the southern regions, especially on the foothills of the Wurmsteeth, while the north and central areas are safer and filled with farmlands and pastures. Woods on the eastern border provide small game, but wild beasts are also common in this region and hunters must be very careful.

Further Reading: CM1 *Test of the Warlords*, previous almanacs.

Description by Adik de Chevas and Arcadius.

Once a large and proud nation of both Heldanners and Alphatians, after the Norwold Wars of AC 1016 Ossian was reduced to a small barony, with more than two thirds of its land lost in the shrinking of the nation. Its former ruler, the Black Duke, treacherously betrayed Ericall and allied with Qeodharans, but he paid for his insolence in the end, dying at the hands of the just rulers of Norwold. Now Ossian is beginning to bloom again under the rulership of its new enlightened ruler, although the problems to overcome are still many.

The Land

Ossian currently occupies only the central coastal area of what was once the duchy with the same name. Its territory comprises the lowlands going from the foothills of the Wyrksteeth to the south to the shores of the Bay of Ossian to the north. This vast valley, dubbed Friedental by the locals, is where the great majority of Ossianites live, under the protective wing of the Order of the Ash Rod. The valley consists of many farmlands and grasslands useful to raise crops and to tend small herds of sheep and goats *[although herding is not so common, given the presence of the Wyrksteeth dragons to the south, who are constantly looking for easy animal prey. Arcadius.]*. The other main economic revenue for the barony is fishing, which is plenty indeed thanks to the blessed waters of the Bay of Ossian.

The Ossianites left the old capital of Schwarzthal *[seat of the Black Duke's machinations and black magics. Adik.]* at the end of the war, when the invasion of the Alphan forces left next to nothing of it. The new baron, Sir Niederhaus, sponsored the construction of a new capital in the middle of the current barony, on the shores of the Bay of Ossian and far from the prying eyes of the dragons. The new capital, Thorstadt, now houses many of the old inhabitants of Ossian as well as all of the refugees from Odinia *[another barony north of Ossian, near the Strait of Todstein, which was invaded and completely razed first by Qeodharans and then by dragons in AC 1016. Arcadius.]*. In accordance with Baron Niederhaus's wishes, Thorstadt is dominated by an imposing wooden palisade some 30 feet tall to block out any possible land invasion. The palisade has four watchtowers oriented towards the four cardinal points and each one is armed with ballistae to repel any possible flying threat *[even if dragons don't assault Ossian for now, due to the Draconic Treaty, other flying beasts such as wyverns and manticores have no such scruples. Adik.]*. The town also boasts some tricky caltrops in its harbor that prevent all ships from docking without explicit permission from the harbormaster *[who must send forth a small boat to show the docking ship the safe route*

through the caltrops. Adik.] Baron Niederhaus is trying to establish his barony as an important center for shipbuilding, using the skills and knowledge of the Odinian immigrants, although the required wood grows only on the hills at the southern border of the barony, which are currently under the dragons' sway.

The last important feature of Thorstadt is the Hall of the Ash Rod, a majestic longhouse of Heldannic tradition that is the holy headquarters of the Knightly Order of the Ash Rod. Baron Niederhaus is also the grand knight of the order, which has sworn fealty to Odin All-father and to the northern pantheon and whose main goal is to protect the populace from any danger. For this reason, the order is rather popular among the people, although the Odinian immigrants remember well that the order could not prevent the destruction of their former homeland *[in fact the order was originally created in Odinia and later moved to Ossian when Odinia was destroyed and Sir Niederhaus got the rulership of Ossian in Kaldmont AC 1016. Adik.]*. Inside the hall priests, *godar*, skalds and paladins of the church gather once a year to celebrate Odin's Death *[Kaldmont 20. Arcadius.]*, to remember Odin All-father's sacrifice when He created mankind and gave them His wisdom, the runes *[this is one of the many features the order has taken from the Odinian Church of the Northlands. Arcadius.]*. The hall is a wooden thatched longhouse, with many coats of arms hanging from its inner walls. Each symbol refers to one of the noble knights who have sworn to defend Ossian from any threat and who now constitute the Council of the Ash Rod, the knightly assembly that helps Baron Niederhaus in ruling the country.

The political system of Ossian is pretty straightforward: everything is in the hands of the priests belonging to the order. They act as village *bürgermeisters* and spiritual leaders, as judges and officers of the army *[even though the military charges are reserved to the knights of the order properly. Adik.]*. Since they are the Immortals' ears and mouths, nobody can really contest their judgments, so the Ossianites can rarely question them.

The People

Nowadays the Ossianites are Heldanners to their heart. All of the Alphas who once lived here migrated to Draken or to Alpha at the end of AC 1016, leaving the land to the Heldanners [*to the joy of Sir Niederhaus, as many people say. Adik.*]. The Heldanners are great workers, fond of drinking and telling old tales regarding the ancient forefathers and their Immortals. They are honorbound people and seldom act maliciously, even with strangers. The Ossianites as a whole are a simple but honest folk, with a great faith in the Immortals and in what they call “Wyrd” [*a philosophical and religious concept imported to Ossian by the order, which in turn took it from the Odinian Church of the Northlands. Arcadius.*]. We have not been able to determine whether this Wyrd refers to a strong belief in the power of destiny or to a real Immortal [*since there is an Immortal with the same name worshipped in the church's pantheon. Arcadius.*], but whatever it is, the Order of the Ash Rod gives it the highest power in nature. This way, they explain, their defeat in Odinia wasn't properly their fault, but it was Wyrd's will: Wyrd wanted the order to escape doomed Odinia in order to reach Ossian to protect it [*a clever trick to justify everything, if you ask me. Arcadius.*].

As mentioned before, the Church of the Northlands imported from Odinia by the order is now the dominant faith in Ossian. It's slowly spreading its influence even to the other Heldannic communities south of the Great Bay, much to Sir Niederhaus's joy [*since after the death of High Priest Ulf Karlsson—who was also Baron of Odinia—in AC 1016, Sir Niederhaus is now the highest ranking member of the church. Adik.*]. In fact, thanks to its *godars* (itinerant priests and paladins), the church counts new shrines and temples in Alpha, Kameloth, Siegeria and even some of the Tranquil Coast baronies (including Oceansend). The tenets of the faith are quite straight and begin with the Creation Myth: humans spawned from Yggdrasil, the World-Ash. Then Odin All-father hanged Himself on Yggdrasil and gave humans the knowledge of the runes [*magical symbols He*

received during His coma. Adik.] to control nature and their instincts. Men attained reason and prayed Odin All-father to thank Him for His gifts. Then Loki the Trickster came to the world and tempted men, who succumbed to Loki's treachery. Giants invaded the human lands and the humans invoked again Odin All-father, asking for protection. Odin sent them His son, Thor the Thunderer, who repelled the giants in the mountains and chased Loki away. But Loki still plots and schemes with evil and malicious men and monsters to conquer the human lands, so the Order of the Ash Rod was created, to defend humans from the Trickster and His allies. That is, until the day of Ragnarok comes, when all the Immortals and mortals alike will meet their fates and Wyrd will prevail.

Recent History

The Black Duke founded the dominion of Ossian back in AC 1002, when he migrated to Norwold from Alphatia with his entourage of lackeys and Alphatian commoners. The county soon achieved the status of duchy by conquering nearby lands and killing the humanoid population [*and also because the Black Duke asked Ericall to be granted an elevated status in comparison to the other “common” rulers of Norwold. Adik.*] and the Black Duke tightened its grip on his people by prohibiting anyone from leaving the duchy. Then the Great War came, but this part of Norwold was mildly touched and the duke remained quiet. It was only during the later Norwold Wars of AC 1016 that he showed his envy towards Ericall's power and sided with the Qeodharans [*actually many say he planned the whole invasion from the start. Adik.*], attacking the nearby Kingdom of Alpha and blackmailing many of the Norwold rulers. At the end of the war he was finally defeated and the duchy reduced in status as well as in size [*part of it was absorbed by the Draconic Earls of Wyrksteeth. Arcadius.*]

By the end of AC 1016, a group of Odinian immigrants [*the last survivors of the massacres perpetrated by the Qeodharans, the Black*

Duke's troops and the dragons. Arcadius.] settled in the central part of former Ossian, led by the surviving members of the Order of the Ash Rod. The Order of the Ash Rod was founded in Odinia in AC 1006 by Sir Niederhaus, with the sole purpose of fighting evil in Norwold in the name of the Northern Gods [the order was pivotal in recruiting the best warriors of Odinia and nearby lands and organizing the army of Odinia, which started to repel the pirates and contain the dragons' attacks. The years following the end of the Great War and the sinking of Alphatia saw the order rise high in Norwold, as well as the church, with many longhouses and shrines founded in many regions south of the Great Bay. One such stronghold has even been built in the isle in the center of Alinor Lake, between the Wyrksteeth and Icereach Ranges and is now recruiting new members for the Order of the Ash Rod to counter the Heldannic Knights' advance. Adik.]. Their leader, Grand Knight Heinrich Niederhaus, petitioned King Ericall for the rulership of Ossian and the Council of Norwold awarded it a title nobody had claimed so far. Baron Niederhaus put time and efforts to rebuild the power of his order in the new land and so far [three months after his arrival. Arcadius.] he has managed to build a fortified capital and to give Ossian a new political system.

Don't Miss

Do not miss the Hall of the Ash Rod, for it is a really inspiring place to visit, especially during Odin's Death celebrations. The hall is filled with a mystical energy that gives all those who prey inside it a strong vitality and such a sense of unity with the universe and the Immortals' powers, that they feel regenerated and somewhat inspired to perform incredible tasks.

Do Miss

Stay away from the southern border altogether. Although its lush forests are a breathtaking sight, the presence of the Wyrksteeth and its winged dwellers is a strong enough deterrent to any explorer who is not familiar with the place. Also, the evergreen forests hide their own share of

dangers (both natural and animal), not only the mountains, so the unwary traveler is warned.

REDHORN (Chaosarchy of)

Location: Continent of Brun, southwest of Alpha, along the southern shore of the Great Bay. NW

Area: 498 sq. mi. (1,290 sq. km.).

Population: 700 diaboli, 50 humans.

Languages: Diabol, Alphatian.

Coinage: Gems, gold nuggets or barter commonly used.

Taxes: None (everything belongs to Diablerus I).

Government Type: Chaosarchy (diaboli's concept of government, not unlike formal anarchy like can be found in Surshield, Bellissaria).

Industries: Mining (gold), crafts (goldcraft), fishing.

Important Figures: Diablerus I (Baron, diabolus, male, M10/F5), Alden (Alphan Ambassador, human, male, F3).

Flora and Fauna: Redhorn consists of grasslands and farmlands, with some woods in the southern parts, near the rolling hills to the west. Strangely enough, the landscape seems often "warped" at nighttime, with otherworldly red and greenish hues emanating from the ground. Local animals have long left the countryside since the diaboli settled the land and previously unseen and distorted parodies of the former wildlife now roam the dominion [*probably imported from their own dimension by the diaboli. Arcadius.*]. Other stranger and alien monsters occasionally pop up in the wilderness, threatening the diaboli as well as the few humans who live here.

Further Reading: CM1 *Test of the Warlords*, previous almanacs.

No description this year. [*Adik and Arcadius provided us with basic dominion information, but no insight—watch for more next year. Ed.*]

UBLAAT-NOR (Khanate of)

Location: Continent of Brun, southeast of Lecha, between Kameloth and the Free Plains. NW

Area: Approx. 998 sq. mi. (2,585 sq. km.); no definite borders, however.

Population: Shifting between 1,000 in winter and 2,500 in other times of the year (nomadic migrations).

Languages: Viaskodas, Heldannic.

Coinage: Barter commonly used.

Taxes: 1/3 of the family's goods must be given to the *khan* (baron) yearly. He redistributes half of the total amount to the needy families and keeps the remaining half.

Government Type: Barony, member of the Norwold Confederacy.

Industries: Horse herding, hunting, agriculture.

Important Figures: Brogahn (Baron, human, male, F15), Barkal the Red (Tribe Leader, human, male, F13).

Flora and Fauna: Ubla-at-nor consists of grasslands, steppes, rolling hills and a few cultivated farmlands. It resembles the wide grasslands of Ethengar, with many colorful flowers dotting the plains and lowly hills in spring. Small ponds and streams crisscross the country and a few pine groves grow here and there. Small game is abundant and horses (both wild and tamed) are numerous in this valley. Monstrous flora includes grab grass patches and thorn bushes, while great cats, hippogriffs and manticores are the most dangerous predators roaming Ubla-at-nor. Unicorns have been reported traveling regularly through the region.

Further Reading: CM1 *Test of the Warlords*, previous almanacs.

No description this year. [*Adik and Arcadius provided us with basic dominion information, but no insight—watch for more next year. Ed.*]

ICEREACH DOMAINS

The Icereach domains are those nations located in the area dominated by the Icereach Range, which marks the westernmost border of Norwold. It is a rough and inhospitable region with heights reaching 18,000', especially in the northern area, where the pair of volcanoes called the Arch of Fire is located. For this reason all of the major dominions have been founded south of the great lake called Lake Alinor, where the weather is milder and the dangers are less abundant. It is to be noted however, that even the southern area is not without dangers, since to the west lies the inhospitable Kingdom of Denagoth and to the east tower the peaks of the Wurmsteeth.

ARCH OF FIRE (Efreet Kingdom of the)

Location: Continent of Brun, northeastern reaches of the Icereach Range. NW

Area: Approx. 5,000 sq. mi. (12,950 sq. km.); about 2,500 sq. mi. (6,475 sq. km.) around each volcano.

Population: Believed to be 2,400 efreet, 1,000 fire elementals and 400 sollux.

Languages: Unknown languages from elemental plane of fire.

Coinage: Unknown, if any at all.

Taxes: Unknown, if any at all.

Government Type: Efreet duchy; sollux resistance front.

Industries: Unknown.

Important Figures: Feudelance (Brother of the Sun, sollux, male, F14).

Flora and Fauna: Small plants and animals common in more southern regions than Norwold. Fire monsters (such as lava lizards, fyrsnaca, fire salamanders and elemental beings) abound here as well.

Further Reading: CM 1 *Test of the Warlords*, *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Synthala of Aasla.

You can find the Arch of Fire approximately halfway between a large swamp along the clear White Bear River and the large, picturesque Icereach Range. For those not familiar with the wilderness regions of Norwold, it would be about 15 to 20 days travel west of the city of Leeha. You'll know you're on the right track soon enough as the arch of flames can easily be seen up to 5 days away during the darkness of night.

A large ribbon of flame leaps out of Northern Mount Cantrinus and lands a good four days' walk to the south in Southern Mount Cantrinus. The arch created must reach a height of 4 to 6 miles (7 to 10 km) at the very least. It seems that the two volcanoes form some sort of planar conduit, creating a loop to and from the Elemental Plane of Fire. Because of this, sages believe that the Arch of Fire will be a permanent feature of the region.

The Land

The land around the volcanoes is a wasteland of fire. This area is relatively flat considering how mountainous and jagged the rest of the Icereach Range is. The entire zone is crisscrossed with flowing streams of molten lava, which in turn melt all the snow on the mountain peaks and create rivers and lakes of meltwater. These rivers just as easily lead to rivers or lakes of lava, plunging into the molten rock. Steam rises at these mixing points, creating dangerous patches of boiling vapor. The entire place is a deathtrap to those not experienced with the outdoors. Falling in any of the lakes is liable to cause you to freeze to death, while the lava flows will melt even your bones. Steam geysers are relatively common as well, creating hidden traps for those not paying attention to their surroundings.

The vegetation here is rather unusual for Norwold. Because of the intense heat in the areas directly around the volcanoes, species that are normally not present in the north are thriving here. Even small mammals that normally avoid the cold and snow can be

found scurrying about. Despite this, vegetation and animals are very rare; it's just too dangerous to have a thriving ecosystem. Another problem is the fact that the rivers of lava often change course, burning up whatever is in the way. Most areas are also covered in solid rock, obviously of volcanic origin. There is therefore little soil for plants to grow or live on.

The People

As determined in AY 2014 [*AC 1014. Ed.*], the two volcanoes of the Arch of Fire are inhabited. Northern Mount Cantrinus has been transformed into a stronghold under the control of what appears to be two to three thousand efreet. Not much is known of their culture, but they definitely appear expansionist and tyrannical. It would be dangerous and foolish to approach and try to learn more about them.

Southern Mount Cantrinus is the home to about one thousand fire elementals. Although friendlier than the efreet, they still have no concern what-so-ever about the life here on the Prime Plane and one can never be too sure what type of reception to expect from them. Sometimes they'll burn visitors, sometimes they won't. Those that aren't destroyed are either conscripted and forced to fight the efreet or thrown out of their territory.

A new culture has arrived on the scene since last year. A camp of about 400 sollux [*a full description of a sollux is available in the Mystara Monstrous Compendium Appendix. Ed.*] has been set up in the plains between the two volcanoes. These strange, red-skinned humanoids are very warlike and disciplined. They are obviously trying to eliminate the efreet on Northern Mount Cantrinus and have engaged in numerous battles with them.

Unlike the other elemental creatures, the sollux are at least approachable by visitors. It seems that all the sollux here are members of a Brotherhood of the Sun, some sort of knightly order that has sworn to destroy all efreet found on Mystara. Their leader, Feudelance, invites everyone to join them on

their holy mission. It seems this event is a first in the history of their people. Never have so many Sun Brothers united to face the efreet. Then again, they claim that never has there been this many efreet in any one place. Feudelance insists that this is merely the staging ground for the efreet and that they will try to invade all of Mystara from here. The Sun Brothers plan on stopping them well before then, however.

The sollux found here at the Arch of Fire are very militaristic and orderly. Still, they are also all Sun Brothers, therefore I have absolutely no idea whether their true communities behave in this matter, or whether this is just the way of life at their military camps. After all, one can't judge the Thyatians by the way their legionnaires behave in their various camps.

Recent History

From what I've managed to learn from Feudelance, it seems that the Arch of Fire has been the home to several thousand fire elementals until about 6 years ago. At that point in time, the efreet conquered the Northern Mount Cantrinus and created their stronghold. Blocked off from reinforcements from the Plane of Fire, the elemental population has slowly dwindled over the years (some fled back to their home plane, others were killed by the efreet). And so it would have continued until last year.

That is when the Brotherhood of the Sun learned of the efreet city. They have been trying to destroy it ever since. At first, a small group of three Sun Brothers arrived, but when they saw their opposition, they made the historical call to amass an army of Sun Brothers. This army is still in the process of being built [*apparently the Sun Brothers have been scattered throughout Mystara until this gathering. It will take some time for all of them to arrive or even receive the word of the forming of an army. Synthala.*], but so far 400 sollux have responded.

Feudelance wishes to thank the writers and editors of the *Mystaran Almanac*, as it was through their description of the Arch of Fire that they learned of the presence of the

efreet. Now the battle rages on and Feudelance insists it will continue until every last efreet is destroyed.

The fire elementals, which have been saved by the arrival of the sollux, do not participate in the war. They merely watch the two groups fight it out. If thankful for their rescue, they have yet to show it.

Don't Miss

There is really no way to describe it beyond what was mentioned by Alasdhair MacCallum: "Well, the arch itself is one of the wonders of the world, a beautiful sight that is definitely not to be missed if one has the occasion to visit."

But as I've mentioned, this is not a journey for someone who does not have any wilderness skills. For those who do, even the trip here from Leeha will be filled with beautiful sights and scenery that is not to be missed by any nature lover.

Still, the Arch of Fire is best viewed from far. If you get too close, you will more than likely get caught up in the interplanar war that is transpiring. And unless you happen to be immune to fire, it is not something you want to see or do.

Do Miss

Don't dare approach the efreet city too close, or they'll toast you in a matter of seconds.

ARCADIA (Barony of)

Location: Continent of Brun, west of Oceansend, in the Iceeach Mountains, bordering Lake Gunaald. NW

Area: Approx. 500 sq. mi. (1,295 sq. km.).

Population: About 300, including 250 dwarves and 50 humans.

Languages: Alphatian, Heldannic, Dwarvish.

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp); gold nuggets or barter commonly used.

Taxes: None, inhabitants sometimes give goods to their baron to gain his protection from dragon attacks.

Government Type: Barony in name, no real government, independent but loosely allied with the Kingdom of Alpha, member of the Norwold Confederacy.

Industries: Fishing, mining (gold), crafts (goldsmithing, weaponsmithing).

Important Figures: Arcadius (Baron, human, male, M20), Sandryth (Draconic Envoy, gold dragon, male, young adult), Tark Takkras (Clanlord, dwarf, male, F10).

Flora and Fauna: Arcadia consists mostly of high mountain, overlooking western Lake Gunaald. The cold freshwater lake is rich in fish, which constitute all the animal life that can be found in the area. A few evergreen trees grow in the small valley bordering the lake, soon replaced by small shrubs, then bare rocks on the towering mountainsides. Some rare chimerae and wyverns make their lairs in caverns high in the mountains, while dragons from the Wyrksteeth to the east occasionally swoop by.

Further Reading: CM1 *Test of the Warlords*, previous almanacs.

Description by Arcadius.

Arcadia is a small peaceful dominion located on the western bank of the southernmost of the three major lakes that lie in the heart of the Icereach Range [*many smaller lakes dot the region. Arcadius.*]. It is commonly avoided by travelers because of its secluded position, but it does trade with the nearby dominions of Chevas and the Barony of the Lake, using the bigger lake (Lake Alinor) as a means of transport to reach Siegeria and Leeha and from there, all the dominions of the Great Bay [*safer than crossing the Wyrksteeth. Arcadius.*].

The Land

The Barony of Arcadia lies, to most eyes, in the middle of nowhere. It is an isolated dominion in the tall Icereach mountains, though it also encompasses part of Lake Gunaald. The fact is I rule only over the

Tower of Arcadia, which is built on top of the highest peak of the dominion and I do not try to enforce any law over the rest of the land that is nominally mine; hence I don't really know where it starts and where it ends.

Most of the land is thus high mountains. This does not mean it is a poor land, however. Though there is almost no vegetation and virtually no animals, the soil is rich in valuable minerals, mostly gold. A small clan of dwarves runs profitable gold mines a few miles north of the Tower of Arcadia. The highest peaks are covered with everlasting snowcaps and cold winds from the north blow most of the year.

The Tower of Arcadia is built on top of the highest peak and is surrounded at all time by snow. Unless you are well equipped, I do not advise you go there by normal means; the best way to reach the tower is by air, or by magic. When the sky is clear, the tower can be seen from below, including by fishermen at work on the lake. Most of the time, though, clouds block the sight, as the peak stands above the cloud line.

A feature of note is Lake Gunaald, which is frozen during a good part of the year, typically from mid-fall to late spring or early summer. It is a freshwater lake, whose waters abound with delicious white fish called gunaald (the lake is named after the fish) that fetch high price on Leeha, Alpha and even Oceansend's markets. Several families live off the lake's bounties, fishing from small boats in the summer and making holes through the frozen layer of ice the rest of the year. Most of those fishermen live in the sheltered valley stuck between the lake and the high mountains, because it is quite safe from the cold northern wind thanks to the mountain range.

One peculiarity of the barony that surprises many fellow nobles, especially King Ericall, is the fact that I do not collect taxes of any kind from the few inhabitants of Arcadia, nor do I enforce a single law. Truth is, the dwarves govern themselves, with their own regulations and justice and it wouldn't be wise to meddle in their internal

affairs. As for the fishermen, they are simple people who don't need any law to tell them how to live their lives. However, they both fear me and praise me for supposedly keeping any dragon attack on them at bay and when they can afford it they donate fish supplies or, more rarely, offer their services. The dwarves also accuse me of being an agent of the dragons that only want to steal their gold, but they trade with me anyway.

The People

Arcadia is sparsely populated at best, due to the fact that it is such a remote place and that I never actively tried to attract new settlers. In fact, I never even conducted a census and population numbers I give are estimates only.

The majority of Arcadia's population is made up of dwarves, a single clan of them, the Takkras. This clan was established some 187 years ago, when young Tark, youngest son of a clan from Oceansend, discovered how rich in gold the mountains west of Lake Gunaald were. He brought with him some members of his former clan and was designated as clanlord by his followers and has ruled his clan ever since. The clan's main business is gold mining, of course and all sorts of crafts related to the working of gold. The dwarves often buy tasty fish from the fishermen of the valley, for which they pay in raw gold nuggets. The dwarves are quite paranoid about dragons, whom in their minds are all after their gold. They often accuse me of being in league with them, which I sort of am, not to mention that in their eyes wizards are not much better than dragons in the first place. Anyhow, since they have not suffered from any dragon raids since I settled in Arcadia, they grudgingly recognize that I may somehow be protecting them and occasionally trade with me precious, beautifully crafted items that I use as vessels for magical experimentation in exchange for magical items and commodities that I bring back from Alpha or Oceansend or beyond.

The rest of the population are native fishermen of Antalian descent who have

been living off the bounty of the nearby lake for an unknown number of generations. They sell gunnaald they don't eat to the Takkras dwarves, or smoke it and carry it downriver and sell it to the hin who are fond of it. And the leftover they give to me, hoping the dragons and I will keep on leaving them alone...

Recent History

Dwarves and native humans have been living in the area for quite some time, long before Arcadia was founded. Dwarves moved to those high mountains 187 years ago when they discovered gold veins and will likely stay there as long as there is an ounce left to mine. The fishermen have been living by the lake for an unknown duration, as they don't keep any records. From their language I speculate that they have been living there in complete autarky since the earlier days of the ancient Antalians, before Loark's horde brought the dark age of most of their people. In their secluded valley, the scattered fishermen probably went undiscovered and lost contact with other tribes. According to the hin of Leeha, at one time they found about the fishermen and their wonderful gunnaald and began trading with them. Unfortunately those events, if they ever happened that way, are undated.

The Barony of Arcadia is fairly recent in comparison. I was appointed baronial status in AC 1002 and the erection of Tower Arcadia took until AC 1004 because of its nearly inaccessible location. And yet I got help from the dwarves—for a hefty price, but that was well worth it. Since Arcadia is so isolated from the rest of Norwold and since I do not levy an army, Arcadia has been unconcerned by the recent wars that have plagued the continent. With no taxes or troops coming from Arcadia, I am pretty much left to my own devices by King Ericall, which means that I am only loosely allied with Alpha.

The only exception to this concerns dragonkind. I am in permanent contact with the Kingdom of Dragons in the Wyrksteeth through Sandryth, a gold dragon. This is part

of an agreement between the Council of Dragons and myself upon establishing my barony, which states they would agree to share some of the knowledge they have accumulated over the millennia with me—I hope to one day be allowed into their hidden city—in exchange for my help in ensuring the humans and especially their lords, do not encroach upon the draconic lands or slay non-renegade dragons. Sandryth and I are diplomats of sorts between the two races.

On that matter, there is one event in recent history that I wish to clarify, concerning the dragons' assault on Heldannic *warbirds* above Oceansend. King Ericall did ask me to petition the council for such an action, but I was not surprised when Sandryth answered that the dragons would not get involved in human business and thereby violate an ancient treaty, unless the knights actually attacked them first. However, Ericall was not satisfied with that decision and tried to find some more open-minded dragons—as he didn't need a full commitment from the dragons in the first place, just a handful of them to keep the *warbirds* in check. Thus he contacted a young, active red that was upset by the conservatism of the council and decided to act, sure that the council elders would in time back the move.

Don't Miss

Two things: if you like good, freshly fished gunaald, try fishing with the natives and if you like beautiful landscapes, take a look at Tower Arcadia perched high in the mountains during a clear day from either the valley below or from the lake.

Do Miss

The renegade dragons that occasionally venture or make their lair in the vicinity.

CHEVAS (Baronie de)

Location: Continent of Brun, west of Oceansend, in the Icereach Mountains, on

the south-eastern shores of Lake Alinor. NW

Area: 498 sq. mi. (1,290 sq. km.).

Population: 500.

Languages: Heldannic, Averoignian.

Coinage: *Adik* (gp), *glyph* (sp), *florin* (cp); gems or barter commonly used.

Taxes: None. The baron and the aristocrats own the land and they give it to serfs to work. Serfs must keep only the minimum required to survive, the rest is given to the ruler.

Government Type: Barony, independent but loosely allied to the Kingdom of Alpha, member of the Norwold Confederacy.

Industries: Fishing, agriculture, mining.

Important Figures: Adik de Chevas (Baron, human, male, M19), Gilbert de Fausseflames (Aristocrat, human, male, M12), Roger Dumas (Seneschal, human, male, M2).

Flora and Fauna: Chevas consists mostly of cultivated plains and rolling hills bordering the sandy beaches of Lake Alinor. The cold freshwater lake is rich in fish, which constitute all the animal life that can be found in the area. A few evergreen trees grow on the hills and on the foothills of the Icereach, soon replaced by small shrubs then bare rocks on the towering mountains. Some wyverns and griffons make lair in caverns high in the mountains, while dragons to the east occasionally swoop by.

Further Reading: M2 *Vengeance of Alphaks*, previous almanacs.

Description by Adik de Chevas.

La Baronie de Chevas [or the Barony of Chevas, if you go by Thyatian common. Adik.] is a small but proud dominion located on the southeastern shore of Lake Alinor, the biggest lake in the Icereach Range. It is not so important from the economic or military point of view, but it is a pleasant stop on the dangerous route that takes the traveler from northern Leeha to the southernmost dominion of Two Lakes Vale.

The Land

The Barony of Chevas is similar to Arcadia in many ways. It lies in an exposed and somewhat off-the-way position, in the middle of nowhere. West there are the Icereach Mountains, west the Wyrksteeth and both brim with dragons and intelligent monsters that prey on all the settlers who come to this region. Also, the weather is not especially comfortable, since Chevas lies in the so-called Valley of the Wind, a great valley that begins near Kameloth in the north and extends southwards up to the Barony of the Lake. This vast plain is always windswept during most times of the year, because the winds blowing from the north are not stopped by the mountains, but rather conveyed inside the valley, which then gets much more than its fair share of storms and tornadoes. However, Chevas is not hopeless against these dangers.

Ever since my arrival, I have begun protecting the land with spells and magical items that are able to stop bad weather from endangering my dominion. The wild animals and monsters are another matter, but that was similarly solved through the use of magic. Today, Chevas is the safest place one could find in the whole Valley of the Wind.

My dominion is divided into smaller fiefdoms we call *maisons* [*an Averoignian word to indicate a house or a group of people. Adik.*]. These *maisons* are ruled by an aristocrat appointed by myself and this way I assure the land is always exploited in the best way possible. In fact, each *maison* knows well the characteristics of its territory and each takes the appropriate decisions to exploit it fully.

The People

Even though not as heavily populated as the northern dominions, Chevas is a tiny little corner of wisdom and happiness, where everyone earns what is needed to survive without making any great effort. True, some people are richer and live better than others, but this is the right order of the world. After all, if there were not leaders to guide the populace, it would surely go into anarchy and fall in disgrace in a matter of years. For

this reason, there are two classes in Chevas, recognized and supported by the people: the aristocrats and the commoners. Aristocrats are people who own and lead the *maisons* and who give the land to the commoners to cultivate and exploit. The commoners' task is then to work hard to maintain the aristocrats, while the aristocrats' task is to protect the commoners and direct them to exploit the land in the best possible ways. Each part cannot live without the other, this is the order of things in Chevas.

Aristocrats are cultivated and wise literati who came to the dominion from Nouvelle Averoigne (Glantri) when I first settled the barony. As a result, most of them are wizards who got their degree at the Great School of Magic, but a few are non-spellcasters, to testify that Chevas is not so obsessed with magic as Glantri is. The commoners are both Heldannic natives of the region as well as Averoignian servants and farmers who moved north with the lords when they came here in AC 1005.

Another stock of people can be found in Chevas during certain periods of the year. They are nomads who constantly roam the Valley of the Wind and who call themselves Viaskodas. Even if nominally under the rulership of Lord Brogahn of Ublaata-nor, these people have no real intention to settle down and they always run with their horses throughout the plain, following the seasonal changes. In summer they can be found in Ublaata-nor, in the northern plains, but when the last months of autumn come and the weather begins to worsen, they take up their herds and migrate southwards, passing through my barony as well and staying for a few weeks [*given the relative safe harbor they find here. Adik.*]. Then, when the rainstorms pass, they mount on their saddle again and head south, where I am told by Lady Winnefred of the Lake, they traverse her dominion and end up in another secluded valley to the west.

Recent History

I came here in AC 1004, following the clues I found in an old tome regarding a

certain crazy Alphatian prince who had lived here a few centuries before. I was intrigued by the story of Prince Alinor of Alphatia, who apparently founded the first big Alphatian settlement in Norwold well before Empress Eriadna's claim over this land. I was fascinated by the way he had been portrayed in the famous poem "The Madness of Prince Alinor," and I absolutely wanted to find evidence of his real existence and the truth about his mysterious doom. However, much to my dismay, I found the best archeological sites to be already claimed, so I relegated myself to this untouched corner of the Icereach Range and started researching. It was only after some months that it occurred to me I had to give King Ericall significant proof of my capacity as a baron if I wanted to ensure my permanence here. So I invited a few friends from Nouvelle Averoine and together with them I created the Weather Control Station, a hidden facility that allows us to control weather inside the dominion *[quite a feat, although the relatively small dimensions of my barony helped a lot. This is also one of the reasons I am not interested in conquering other lands. Adik.]*.

Once this was accomplished, we began recruiting commoners and established the *Code des Lois*, the laws of Chevas. That was AC 1005 and the dominion has done quite well so far. During the Great War we didn't experience any significant threat, aside from the usual draconic assaults, which were however repelled without many losses *[I really do not understand why dragons, with all their wisdom, still persevere in attacking my dominion, even though they know in advance they cannot win. Adik.]*. The main reason why the population is so low is indeed wild monstrous predators like dragons. If I ever had too many people here, I would not be able to protect them all from the monsters living nearby and this would result in breaking the *Code des Lois* on the aristocrats' part, thus throwing the barony into chaos. This, together with the limited capacities of the Weather Control Station, are the main reasons that have kept Chevas so small and underpopulated for so long. But we like it that way here.

Don't Miss

Be sure to come during the last week of autumn, when the winds blow fiercely and tornadoes start sweeping the valley. It is an incredible sight, so remain on the borders of the dominion and see huge whirlwinds and tornadoes coming closer than a few yards without actually affecting you at all. Few will ever manage to stare right in the center of the maelstrom's eye without taking any risks!

Do Miss

Do not venture too far from the borders, because the intelligent monsters have by now well understood the limits of the Chevasian aristocrats' scrying powers and they keep away just the distance needed not to be spotted, but are ready to ambush those who venture too far in their territory.

LAKE (Barony of the)

Location: Continent of Brun, west of Oceansend, in the Icereach Mountains, between the northern Lake Alinor and the southern Lake Gunaald. NW

Area: 498 sq. mi. (1,290 sq. km.).

Population: 1,000.

Languages: Heldannic.

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: *mirror* (sp); gems or barter commonly used.

Taxes: 15% income tax collected yearly.

Government Type: Barony, member of the Norwold Confederacy.

Industries: Fishing, agriculture, crafts (shipwright).

Important Figures: Winnefred of the Lake (Baroness, human, female, Pr18 of Ixion).

Flora and Fauna: The Barony of the Lake encompasses a broad valley nestled between two lakes and some mountains. The cold freshwater lakes are rich in fish, which constitute all the animal life that can be found in the area. Monstrous wildlife comes from amphibious creatures or gigantic fish as well as from some winged predators that

swoop down from the Icereach Mountains nearby.

Further Reading: M2 *Vengeance of Alphaks*.

No description this year. [*Adik and Arcadius provided us with basic dominion information, but no insight—watch for more next year. Ed.*]

MORY (Tyrannie de)

Location: Continent of Brun, west of Chitine and Landfall, near the Arch of Fire. NW

Area: 498 sq. mi. (1,290 sq. km.).

Population: 100 humans, 100 fire giants, 300 hobgoblins.

Languages: Averoignian, Hobgoblin, Giant.

Coinage: Barter commonly used.

Taxes: None (everything belongs to Tyrant Coiger, who gives permission to his subjects to use his land as he sees fit, exacting permanent fealty and service in the army in exchange).

Government Type: Independent barony loosely allied with the Efreet Kingdom.

Industries: Raiding, mining.

Important Figures: Coiger de Mory (Baron, human, male, Pr17 of Rathanos).

Flora and Fauna: The barony occupies one of the mountains in the Icereach Range near the Arch of Fire, extending both above and below its surface (especially below, in a vast complex of caves and tunnels where almost all of the dominion's hobgoblins and giants live). Given the extreme temperatures and the unforgiving weather of the region, few trees grow in the barony and fewer plants are able to flourish at all outside, while lichens and fungi abound in the caves. Monstrous wildlife consists of rocs, marauding dragons, red worms, fire salamanders, lava lizards, slimes and jellies and even from the occasional phoenix that ventures over the mountain and inside the grottos. Mountain lions, panthers and wildcats are also frequent encounters, as well

as rival bands of independent hill and stone giants.

Further Reading: M2 *Vengeance of Alphaks*, previous almanacs.

No description this year. [*Adik and Arcadius provided us with basic dominion information, but no insight—watch for more next year. Ed.*]

TWO LAKES VALE (Barony of)

Location: Continent of Brun, northwest of Landfall, in the Icereach Mountains, near the border with Denagoth. NW

Area: 498 sq. mi. (1,290 sq. km.).

Population: 800.

Languages: Heldannic.

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: *crown* (gp), *judge* (cp); gems or barter commonly used.

Taxes: 20% income tax collected yearly.

Government Type: Barony; independent but loosely allied to the Kingdom of Alpha.

Industries: Fishing, agriculture, mining.

Important Figures: Maltus Fharo (Baron, human, male, F13).

Flora and Fauna: The Barony of the Two Lakes Vale encompasses a small valley nestled between the Icereach and the Mengul Mountains, in the southern part of Norwold, near the Denagothian and Heldannic borders. Two lakes stand in the middle of the dominion, providing its inhabitants with plenty of fish. Monstrous wildlife comes from gigantic fish as well as from hippogriffs, rocs and manticores that live in the mountains surrounding the valley. Mountain lions, panthers and wildcats are also frequent encounters. A group of hydras is said to live in the little swamp near the western lake.

Further Reading: CM2 *Death Ride*, previous almanacs.

No description this year. [*Adik and Arcadius provided us with basic dominion information, but no insight—watch for more next year. Ed.*]

FINAL RANGE DOMAINS

The Final Range domains comprise all those nations which lie in the Final Range, the mountain chain that begins some 100 miles north of Landfall, touching the Wyrksteeth and running along Norwold's eastern coast ending just another 100 miles from the northernmost tip of the Wyrksteeth. The Final Range peaks reach 15,000 feet in height and are surrounded by more or less rocky hills. The settlements are obviously located in the foothills of the range for the most part, especially in the valleys in its northern tip, where 1,000' high hills are predominant, but an isolated dwarven stronghold has been built near the center of the chain, in the very heart of the mountains.

KILDORKAK (Dwarven Barony of)

Location: Continent of Brun, north of Oceansend. NW

Area: 498 sq. mi. (1,290 sq. km.).

Population: 2,500 dwarves.

Languages: Dwarvish (Kildorkak dialect).

Coinage: Gems or barter commonly used.

Taxes: 30% income tax collected yearly. 20% tithe to the Heldannic Knights collected every four months.

Government Type: Barony (formally allied with the Heldannic Territories, maintains a clanmaster, although his actions are overseen by an Heldannic Governor).

Industries: Mining, crafting (gems, silver and gold).

Important Figures: Gard Rocktooth (Clanmaster, dwarf, male, F12), Niddrow (Forge Keeper, dwarf, male, F8/Pr8 of Kagyar), Hölger Scholz (Heldannic Overseer, human, male, Pr5 of Vanya).

Flora and Fauna: The mountains north of Oceansend are home to many mountain felines, including intelligent ones such as rakasta. Other wildlife includes bears, moose and ibexes, the latter especially found at higher heights. Yeti, sasquatches and snow apes can also be found, as well as cave

dwellers such as ropers, hulkers and giant spiders. Other monstrous beings that can be found in this region include the occasional white dragon, some mountain giants and dragonnes. Plants are abundant in the valleys and foothills of the Icereach, but the soil becomes barren beyond 7,200' of altitude, with only scrubs and thorn bushes resisting the chilly winds and the colder atmosphere.

Further Reading: CM1 *Test of the Warlords*, previous almanacs.

No description this year. [*Adik and Arcadius provided us with basic dominion information, but no insight—watch for more next year. Ed.*]

MOONLAND (Barony of)

Location: Continent of Brun, southeast of Alpha, on eastern shores of Norwold. NW

Area: 1,496 sq. mi. (3,875 sq. km.).

Population: 4,300.

Languages: Heldannic, Alphatian.

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp); barter common.

Taxes: 20% income tax collected yearly.

Government Type: Independent barony.

Industries: Fishing, hunting, agriculture.

Important Figures: Sandralane (Baroness and Patriarch, human, female, Pr14 of Matera).

Flora and Fauna: Two thirds of Moonland's territory is made of rolling forested hills, while the remaining eastern part is a flatland bordering the New Alphatian Sea. The woods are filled with many animal species, both game and predators. The monstrous wildlife includes groups of humanoids coming from the northwestern hills, the occasional packs of hippogriffs or griffons and wild cats. Also, Moonland is said to harbor more than its share of lycanthropes and many dire wolves roam its area without fear.

Further Reading: CM1 *Test of the Warlords*, previous almanacs.

Description by Adik de Chevas and Arcadius.

Moonland is indeed a strange place in Norwold, certainly one that has undergone a drastic change in the past. Today it is a strange, funny place to visit once in a while, especially if you love anarchy and chaos in its most positive form. Its customs are a bit weird in comparison to the more civilized countries, but it is nevertheless a haven for all those who seek a safe enough hideout from the outer world.

The Land

Moonland is located just south of Ironwood and it borders on both the elven barony to the north as well as Vyolstograd in the west. Being nestled between these two dominions, it shows the common traits of all the region, that's to say huge evergreen trees, from sequoias to firs to oaks, that tower magnificently to the sky both in the southeastern valleys and on the low hills to the west and north. The woods are teeming with plant and animal life and herds of deer and moose roam freely in these primeval woods, hunted by both wild predators and by humans and humanoids alike. Flocks of sparrows, woodpeckers and skylarks also make their nests in the highest limbs of the tree trunks. Fresh streams of sparkling water flow through the forest and small ponds dot the countryside especially in the eastern areas.

One could say that Moonland is a natural haven for animals and in fact the major industry for the country is hunting [*and also fishing along the beaches of the New Alphantian Sea or in the ponds inland. Arcadius.*]. There are few farms and these are mostly found along the coast and the leaders of Moonland's communities seem to have no intention of boosting agriculture, even though the soil could give fruitful harvests.

The inhabitants of this barony live mostly scattered throughout the woods and few are the significant settlements to be counted as villages [*again, mostly found along the coast. Arcadius.*]. The only place that could be labeled "town" is indeed its capital, Lunaria,

which can be found in the heart of the dominion. The settlement is surrounded by a wooden palisade and all its houses are basically wooden huts that range from one story shops to three-story inns and taverns. There are in fact many taverns in Moonland, even located in isolated places inside the woods and each one is a safe heaven from the dangers of the wild woods. Lady Sandralane's own house is the Temple of the Moon, located in Lunaria's main square. The building is a mishmash of different architectural styles of the Old World, even though the original rounded plan can still be made out by the keen observer. The temple's appearance reflects the particular tenets of this faith, which has been gladly embraced by the great majority of Moonland's inhabitants.

The People

Moonland's people can be mostly defined as "peaceful chaotic anarchists," or simply as lunatics in some cases. They all live to the day, without paying too much attention to daily routine and deadlines. Most of the people are hunters and woodcutters, even though Moonland's logging industry doesn't produce as much wood as it could. The reason is that Lady Sandralane has issued a law that regulates the amount of wood that can be cut yearly and this has been done to avoid deforestation and the consequent loss of woodland game [*as is happening in nearby Stamtral. Arcadius.*]. Even though Moonlanders do not like laws, they seem to understand the problem and have so far kept in line with the rules. In fact, some rumors even have trespassers promptly caught and executed by other inhabitants, either by skinning or by abandoning them to the wood's dangers.

Moonland has no real set of laws, except the above-mentioned rule about woodcutting, the freedom of faith and the strange law called Majority Rules, which everyone follows. Basically, all inhabitants follow common sense when interacting with one another, but if some disagreements arise, then the people are called to judge

over the matter. The two parties may summon up to five people each (even foreigners) and must explain to them the problem, giving each their version of the issue. Then the summoned people give their vote to one of the two and the party that gets the majority of the votes wins the issue. For this reason, trials in Moonland usually last no more than one day and there are no formal judges to enforce the laws.

A police force does exist, however, more for protecting the country from outside dangers than for inner security. The Moonlanders are also employed as rangers, patrolling the woods to catch any trespassers who hunt illegally or cut down trees without authorization. They can kill any trespassers on the spot and can intervene in any brawl or feud only if one of the parties involved calls in for help. This could seem normal to the civilized people, but the fact is calling for help is a sign of weakness in Moonland: this means the individual is not able to take care of himself and will probably be the target of other assaults (both verbal and physical) in the future.

A few words must also be spent on the unique religion of Moonland, the Church of Matera. This faith worships the moon in all its forms and social applications: the moon as patroness of fertility, love and romance, the moon as keeper of secrets, the moon as cause of change, madness and freedom [*three things considered very close to one another by the followers of Matera, each one respected and sought. Adik.*], the moon as symbol of stealth and cunning, the moon as lady of sky and sea and finally the moon as bringer of wealth and good health. All these aspects of the moon can be embodied by different Immortals, but the Church of Matera does not really pay homage to each different deity. Rather it worships Matera, the moon, as a whole, in all its different facets and shapes, because the whole cannot be reduced to the sum of its parts. The great majority of Moonlanders respect and follow this anarchic faith and it is basically religion that keeps them united as their common point of aggregation.

Recent History

Lady Sandralane came to Norwold from Glantri in AY 2001 [*AC 1001. Ed.*] to found her own dominion. She was fed up with Glantri's oppressive rules against clerics and priests and since she was raised by her parents in the faith of Razud in the principality of Blackhill, she could not tolerate that situation anymore. When her parents died of natural causes in AY 2000 [*AC 1000. Ed.*], she made her decision and came to this side of Norwold, founding her dominion after swearing loyalty to Ericall.

At first Moonland was inhabited by many Alphatians and a few wilder Heldanners and she tried to teach them all the ways of Razud, issuing many laws to regulate their lives and avoid possible hostilities. At that time, rumors also had her dating none other than King Ericall, maybe in a way to spread Razud's word further in Norwold or maybe truly out of love, this we cannot know. The fact is that with each passing year, the inhabitants of Moonland became more and more restless and she kept adding on laws and decrees to prevent any possible riot. This culminated in the exodus that brought many Alphatians to the Kingdom of Alpha in AC 1005, leaving the barony nearly deserted and prey to bandits and tribes of humanoids coming from the north and west.

In AC 1007 anarchy fell over Moonland when Thyatians landed south of it and marched northwards to conquer this side of Norwold. The Thyatians brought with them a terrible plague in the Tranquil Coast region and Lady Sandralane tried to counter both the invasion and the plague, ending up sick herself and powerless against the Thyatian legions. In a feverish night, she received an omen from the sky and the legend tells that the silvery moonbeams cured her and transported her to a secret cave inside the woods. There she met with the leader of the lycanthropes living in Moonland and she forged an alliance with him, converting to the faith of Matera [*some rumors explain her recovery and conversion with the fact that she was infected by this werewolf and became a lycanthrope herself. Adik.*]. From that moment on, the Thyatian legions began to lose ground in

front of the chaotic hit and run tactics of the Moonlanders and their lycanthropic allies and were later forced to retire both because of the effective resistance of the locals and the disease. The Moonlanders on the other hand, did not suffer from the disease anymore and this was later attributed to the holy moonbeams that bathed them during the night *[the real cause is yet unknown to us sages. Adik.]*.

In AC 1010 Moonland was a different country, with most of the laws abolished and a great deal of independence and authority to all the citizens. Even the taxes were decreased and this prompted many Heldanners living in the nearby lands to come to Moonland looking for a better life *[this is especially true for those living in Stamtral and the free territories south of Moonland, where the Thyatians had destroyed nearly everything. Arcadius.]*. After regaining freedom and chasing out the Thyatians, Sandralane also declared Moonland's independence from the Kingdom of Alpha and refused to send any salt tax to Ericall anymore *[after all, he did not help her when the Thyatians invaded her country. Arcadius.]*. Now Moonland is dubbed the "reign of anarchy," rivaling with the outlandish Chaosarchy of Redhorn on this and Ericall has no intention of reclaiming it for now. However, its customs seem to attract many people, both free-willed individuals and wanted criminals, who still come to this little corner of the world.

Don't Miss

Moonland's woods are very well tended and still possess much of the ancient magic that fills these places all around the world. A few druids live here and it is always a pleasure to stay and exchange information with these wise men, who will teach you about the ways of the region in order to be prepared for the unexpected.

Also, the capital of Lunaria is a weird enough place to visit, with all its different architectural styles and the amazing Temple of the Moon towering in its center. Be also sure to pay a visit to the 100 inns of Moonland, since each one is completely

different from the all others. They are one of the greatest attractions for both tourists and Moonlanders and the innkeepers are always friendly to the customers. Besides, if you are traveling through the woods, an inn is the best place to be after the sun sets and moonlight madness strikes.

Do Miss

If you are brave adventurers and love flirting with death and strange encounters, then Moonland's woods after sunset are the place you'd love to visit. If however you are just a normal person, who holds his life dear and wants to see his elder years, then avoid the woods and remain on the trail, since beasts do not usually attack those who do not venture outside the known trails. Another place to avoid is the northern border, where humanoid tribes usually make raids on isolated cottages and unwary travelers *[and they do not seem to care if you walk on a trail or not, unfortunately. Adik.]*.

NORDALFHEIM (Elven Kingdom of)

Location: Continent of Brun, southeast of Alpha, facing the New Alphatian Sea. NW

Area: 3,486 sq. mi. (9,030 sq. km.).

Population: 4,200, roughly 75% elves, 20% humans and 4% other demihumans (in Laran only), 1% intelligent woodland creatures.

Languages: Elvish (Callarii, Shiye, Alfheim and Vyalia dialects), Thyatian, Alphatian, Fairy Tongue.

Coinage: *Golden leaf* (gp), *silver acorn* (sp); barter common.

Taxes: Gifts of the trees (special: see under Land).

Government Type: Barony (independent elven dominion: the baron is advised by the clanmasters).

Industries: Hunting, Crafts (woodworking, leatherworking, goldcraft).

Important Figures: Elarianthas Blackblade (King, elf, male, F10/M15),

Thyandros (Blackblade Clanmaster, elf, male, F9/M9), Taragin Oakbranch (Lightseeker Clanmaster, elf, male, F10/M10), Renshiye (Shalidye Clanmaster, elf, male, R10/T8), Sythandria (Mythuinn Clanmistress, elf, female, M7/Pr7 of Ilsundal), Shelingar (Lightseeker Clanholder, elf, male, F4/M3).

Flora and Fauna: The elven Kingdom of Nordalfheim (formerly known as the Barony of Ironwood) consists mostly of a large evergreen ancient forest and also comprises a narrow area of plains near the coast of the New Alpathian Sea. The elves don't cultivate the land extensively, but rely on the fruits and the products of the forest and on the game that lives inside it; small kitchen gardens can be found near the coastline. The animals commonly encountered in Ironwood are bears, deer, elk, moose, wild boars and wolves. The land is a haven for sylvan races and has been totally purged of the humanoid tribes that once lived here (though they continue to live on the nearby mountains and hills in the north). A clan of treants and centaurs also live here in a special protected zone of the forest, as well as some unicorns, fairy folk, hsiao and metamorphs. Creatures such as basilisks, gorgons, chimerae, decapuses and monstrous plants have been spotted throughout the dominion.

Further Reading: CM1 *Test of the Warlords*, previous almanacs.

Description by Synthala of Aasla.

After the shaking political events happened last year [*AC 1016. Ed.*] in this part of Norwold, I felt obliged to travel again to Ironwood [*now called the Kingdom of Nordalfheim. Synthala.*] to witness firsthand the changes that occurred and report them to you, dear readers. Although none of the geographical features of the land changed, many things now run differently on the political and religious field, so it is my duty to inform all of you that a new great elven nation is raising in Norwold: Nordalfheim. The northern home of the elves is constituted of the former Baronies of the

Elms, White Oak and Ironwood [*here referred to as Nordalfheim properly. Synthala.*]. Elarianthas Blackblade is the king, Zoltan the high priest and Quillan the ambassador to the Norwold Confederacy.

The Land

The Kingdom of Nordalfheim is a political alliance of various different dominions: the Barony of the Elms and the Barony of the White Oak in the north and the Barony of Ironwood in the south. The Barony of Ironwood itself is the political center of this new nation and has thus been renamed Kingdom of Nordalfheim, which is what I am about to describe in this report. The kingdom lies some 280 miles (440 km.) to the southeast of Alpha, nestled under the northernmost tip of the Final Range. The dominion itself is small in comparison to the northern foresthomes, but it's a haven for the elves living in southern Norwold. Only about one sixth of the entire area is not covered by forest: in this zone lies a city that closely resembles the human towns [*the king admitted that he copied the town plans of his birthplace, Rjfllian, in the Kingdom of Karameikos. Synthala.*]. This is the city of Laran, where the king is building a great port that will help boost the economy of the nation and trade with other countries. However, this is not the capital of the kingdom, which in fact is named Persimmon and is located deep inside the forest, built in the typical elven style.

Laran is the only place of the entire barony where non-elves are free to roam and reside. The buildings have been built by human engineers and suit the human way of life. Also, King Blackblade has provided the city with a complicated system of running water of gnomish design that makes everyone happy and, above all, clean.

The forest that covers the land almost entirely is made of huge evergreen trees, from sequoias to firs that tower magnificently to the sky like ancient colossi. The woods are teeming with natural and animal life and the elves take great care in protecting the natural heaven their lord is

trying to create here. Herds of deer and moose roam freely in the Forest of Persimmon and flocks of sparrows, woodpeckers and skylarks make their nest in the highest limbs of the tree trunks. You can also find fresh streams of sparkling water flowing through the forest and gatherers and hunters that move around so silently that it's difficult to discern them from the common sounds of the woods.

However, only fellow elvenkind are allowed this breathtaking experience. It is indeed forbidden to any non-elf to venture into the forest, a law Lord Blackblade passed in AY 2005 [*AC 1005. Ed.*] for the sole dominion of Ironwood, but that is now upheld in all of Nordalfheim, making it very similar to the foresthomes. This step has been taken to prevent the destruction of the ecosystem the Nordalfheim elves are slowly and patiently trying to build and protect and all the elves living here support and enforce it.

One last feature of the land worth mentioning is its economy. Each year the elves give their lord the "gifts of the forest." Basically, the baron receives a share of the products the elves gather and hunt in the woods, plus some of the byproducts of hunting, craftworks and a few mineral resources that some elves extract from the soil or the rivers using the appropriate tools built by the gnomes and hin living in Laran. These gifts of the forest represent what the human landlords call the standard and resource incomes. Aside from these, the elves are not obliged to pay anything else to their clan, even though they must be always ready to lend a hand and work for it should it be needed. As for the people living in Laran, a tax of 10% of their annual income is collected once a year and all the imported or exported products are duty free (a real economic heaven). Laran is also the only place where coins are minted and have a value inside the kingdom: in all the other parts barter is the rule [*although the elves are known to barter not only products of the woods but also finely crafted items and jewels. Synthala.*].

The People

The majority of the population of Nordalfheim [*although the locals still call it Ironwood. Synthala.*] is elven, with the few representatives of the human and other demihuman races living together in the town of Laran. The elves of Nordalfheim, however, do not belong to one single stock or clan: there are Callarii elves from Karameikos (about thirty percent of the elven population), who came here with Lord Blackblade when he founded the dominion about ten years ago. Then there are the Shiye, who already lived here when the elf-mage arrived (fifteen percent of the elves) and who have successfully integrated with the other elves. And finally there is a large chunk of newly arrived Alfheimers (forty-five percent) and some representatives of the Vyalia of Thyatis (ten percent), who are beginning to integrate with their brethren. The elves are just like any other members of their race found in the Old World, even though the influx of the Shiye culture has made them a bit wiser and prouder than the common ones. They view themselves as the new example of the true elven race, being the result of a multicultural elven society that has taken the better features of its members. So these elves consider themselves as the guardians of the Old Way, as they call it, a way of life and of thinking that has been lost by modern Alfheimers [*the previous model of the elven race, according to Lord Blackblade. Synthala.*] and that has been slightly modified by the Shiye, the Callarii, the Vyalia and all the other clans due to their past and present history. What Lord Blackblade is trying to do in Nordalfheim is to recreate the elven land of the myths, Evergrun, where all the elves lived in peace with one another and with their forest brethren, the animals and the wood spirits.

Lord Blackblade is an ambitious elf, almost an idealist, but so far he has been able to achieve many of his goals. However, his ultimate goal, what his people now call the Great Project, is far more difficult and demanding than founding a barony and creating a natural park. Yet he and his followers seem resolute and very confident

in the possibilities and are now very close to reaching the greatest achievement for their race: to unify all the elves of Norwold under the same banner, in order to create the first elven empire of the world. Now that Zoltan of White Oak and Quillan of the Elms have joined Blackblade in his dream, the Great Project is nearing its completion, although considering how the northern Shiye are fond of their secrecy and independence [*which was also what prompted them to leave Alphatia and settle in Norwold. Synthala.*], it may still take a long while before a whole empire of elves is created in Norwold. But who knows: considering Lord Blackblade has a whole elven lifetime to accomplish it, maybe his dream will come true in the distant future.

During the past three years Lord Blackblade introduced in the dominion a slightly modified religious belief that helped integrate the various clans and strengthen their ties instead of creating rivalries. Being a well educated and experienced elf, he created a veritable elven church named the Faith of the Ancestors, where he included all the Immortals worshipped by his people without choosing anyone as head of the pantheon. The common belief that unifies all the believers is that these deities are inextricably linked to the elven race, that they have all worked to protect it and make it great, that they all gave the elves the gifts of the forest and that for this reason they must all be revered to the same extent for the greater glory of the elven race. This way he is trying to prevent the religious disputes that might arise among the various priests and give the elves the possibility of revering their own patron without angering the other believers or their Immortals. The pantheon of the Faith of the Ancestors so far comprises Ilsundal, Mealiden, Ordana, Eiryndul and Calitha Starbrow. The elf-mage is convinced that this is the first step to uniting all elves, but it will take him a long time to make this “universal elven faith” popular among all the elves of Norwold. Yet Zoltan’s decision to join Lord Blackblade and become the high priest of the faith has now increased a hundredfold the importance and the popularity of this religion among the

Norwold elves, who are now being promised by both Zoltan and Elarianthas Blackblade a great future in the name of freedom and supremacy.

Recent History

The dominion is fairly recent since the Barony of Ironwood was founded in AY 2003, [*AC 1003. Ed.*], yet it is already remarkably stable for a frontier land and enjoys friendly relationships with neighboring states. The founder of the barony, Lord Elarianthas Blackblade, is the clanholder of the Blackblade clan to which all of the land belongs. He is the leader of the country in front of King Ericall, to whom he swore fealty, but since we are talking about an elven dominion, he must also answer to the clanmaster of the Blackblades [*his father Thyandros. Synthala.*] and to the other three sages who represent the major clans of the barony: Taragin of Clan Lightseeker [*newly arrived Alheimers. Synthala.*], Renshiye of clan Shalidye (Shiye) and Sythandria of clan Mythuinn (Vyalia). Lord Blackblade founded the barony in AY 2003 [*AC 1003. Ed.*], when he persuaded many of his old clan mates to join him up in Norwold and created clan Blackblade, with the blessings of the Callarii leaders of Karameikos. In the ensuing years he remained loyal to Ericall, but was seldom involved in the power plays that erupted among the other barons. Rather he was content with his small isolated dominion and worked steadily to make it a haven for his race.

Persimmon was built at the end of year AY 2003 [*AC 1003. Ed.*] and the construction of Laran followed in AY 2004 [*AC 1004. Ed.*]. In AY 2005 [*AC 1005. Ed.*] Lord Blackblade passed the famous Protection Act: only the elves and the sylvan creatures were allowed to roam freely in the forest, whereas the other races were confined to Laran and the coastal territories. During all those years he had worked to integrate the Shiye and Callarii cultures, but it was only at the end of year AY 2006 [*AC 1006. Ed.*] that the Shiye that lived in his

territory finally swore open allegiance to him and acknowledged themselves to be part of his clan, hailing him as their new leader. With their help he began contacting all the other Shiye communities of Norwold and established friendly relationships with all the druids living on the continent. The foundation of the Faith of the Ancestors is the last step in his path to unification and dates back to AY 2012 [AC 1012. Ed.].

It was only after the fall of Alfheim that he also began to work on the Project Evergrun: turning his dominion into a center of elven lore and magical research and creating a natural park where samples of all the vegetation types and animal species of the continent could live and be protected. This turned out to be a nice move from the political and economic point of view too, since some other minor Shiye clans living south of the Great Bay supported him and sent representatives to help and take part in this great project.

Lord Blackblade also achieved two great goals during the Great War that ravaged the continent. First of all, he was able to draw a small number of members of the Fairy Court to his dominion, creating a protected territory where they could live in peace. Later, via *teleport* spells he also transported a small clan of treants to this same magical place [called the Reserve. *Synthala*], saving them from another baron who wanted to exterminate them to annex their forest to his dominion. The Reserve is now one of the most protected and inaccessible places in Norwold, rumored to host many more inhabitants than one could presume from its rather small size (an 8 mile diameter area). However, Lord Blackblade is not really “in control” of this part of the forest: the fey folk probably consider him as a friend, maybe a hero, but they’ll never answer his commands. They have their own rules and rulers, as we all know from the old fairy tales.

After the end of the Great War, Lord Blackblade contacted Vyalians and Alfheimers to explain to them his project and many moved to Norwold to put at his disposal their invaluable knowledge about

magic, nature and history. After that, he declared his nation independent from King Ericall’s kingdom but he didn’t cut the diplomatic ties with Alpha, knowing he needs a powerful human ally in Norwold to found a demihuman nation. He is currently a loose ally of Ericall [*a treaty of mutual friendship exists between the two countries. Synthala.*], even though he is not obliged to send troops or money in case of need.

Around AY 2010 [AC 1010. Ed.] some shadow elves came to Norwold to ask for the elves’ help. Unfortunately there were already some Alfheimers living in Ironwood by that time (minor clans) and tensions erupted. A few native elves were found murdered and after a brief inspection a shadow elf was discovered while trying to penetrate the Tree of Magic to obtain magical knowledge. The shadow elves were exiled and ordered never to return. Contacts have not been re-established and the current relationship is tense. As soon as Zoltan heard about this fact, he came to Ironwood for the first and only time and gained an audience with the baron: when the two came out of the meeting room, they were both smiling and joking like old time friends, as the guards told me.

In Swiftmont of AY 2016 [AC 1016. Ed.], while Norwold underwent the last stages of the Norwold Wars, Lord Blackblade was surprised by Lord Zoltan the White, who accepted his proposal of uniting their dominions to form a new great elven empire. However, Zoltan made clear he wanted to become the new High Priest of the Faith of the Ancestors and Blackblade conceded to the albino’s request. Zoltan and Elarianthas Blackblade proceeded then to announce to the Shiye elves of all of the foresthomes as well as to the elves living in Ironwood that a new nation had been formed, the Kingdom of Nordalheim [*which in the Shiye dialect rather means home of the northern elves. Synthala.*], to which all elves of Mystara can come and live under the protection of the Immortals of the Nordalheim Pantheon [*the new name Zoltan gave to the Faith of the Ancestors. Synthala.*]. Zoltan crowned Lord Blackblade the new

King of Nordalfheim, recognizing his political authority, while King Blackblade in turn recognized Zoltan as the High Priest of the Nordalfheim Pantheon. Their nation was later joined by the Barony of the Elms, with Lord Quillan Elm-Grower chosen by the two elves as ambassador to the human lands. The news of the merger and the new religion were well received by the elves of Ironwood and the Elms, though the feelings were more mixed in the White Oak, while the Free Foresthomes elves did not recognize the new kingdom nor the new religion.

Don't Miss

There are at least two places to see if you're allowed to travel through Nordalfheim: Persimmon and the Tree of Magic.

Persimmon is the stronghold of the Blackblade clan, a mighty fortress built atop the giant trees of the Forest of Persimmon in perfect elven style. Lord Blackblade copied the Alfheim clan strongholds when he built it, with narrow catwalks and roped bridges swinging at an altitude of more than 80 meters, deeply concealed by lower tree branches always covered with thick foliage. The living quarters themselves have been carved out the tree trunks in most cases, while other structures have been built by the elves out of the trees (lookout places, fortified gates and laboratories being the most common). The stronghold is always teeming with life and you can see elves walking everywhere and gliding down the higher quarters using vines almost constantly. In fact this is not only the capital of the nation but also the center for all the magical studies sponsored by the baron and it boasts two of the main features of this land. The first one, which rises proudly at the center of the stronghold, is the fabled Tree of Life of the clan, a daughter oak tree of the Callarii clan, well tended and constantly guarded by its treekeeper and his assistants.

The second impressive feature of Persimmon is the repository of all the magical secrets of the kingdom: the Tree of

Magic, an ancient sequoia not very tall (about 70-80 meters high) but incredibly broad (diameter of 60 meters). Many elves say that actually Lord Blackblade has caused it to become that large with powerful magics and having witnessed His Lordship at work I may even believe it. The elves told me that the Tree of Magic is divided into ten different levels, nine for each level of power of the spells researched and another subterranean one for the research and experimentation of all kinds of elemental and nature-related magic. Some of the elves I met in Persimmon have even told me that many powerful human mages visit the tree from time to time, all of them trusted and invited by Lord Blackblade and that visitors from other planes sometimes pop up in the laboratories attracted by the energy released inside them. Another rumor has it that once a year the Tree of Magic is visited by none other than the spirits of the elven Immortals, who roam about it and talk with the higher elf-mages about the secrets of the universe and the lost lore of the elven race.

But the wonders of this small barony don't end here. If you're lucky or powerful enough you could also be allowed to enter the Reserve, that secluded patch of forest where the fairy folk and the sylvan races dwell unmolested. Only the animals, the druids and the clan leaders of the barony are allowed to enter it because of a pact between those beings and Lord Blackblade. The Reserve is small but many beings are said to live there, as if it existed in another larger dimension. Also, for unknown reasons, it seems that if you're not invited by those living in there, you won't be able to access it in any way: once you walk inside it you'll simply find yourself exiting at the other side of the area. Whatever it is, the Reserve surely contains many marvels to those who are allowed to visit it. However, if you are thinking of trying to visit it during the Day of Dread, know that it's useless, for during that day that part of the forest simply doesn't exist. As far as I know, it vanishes the night before, leaving a big empty valley in the middle of the forest, reappearing again the following dawn!

Do Miss

Well, if you're a dwarf or a shadow elf it's better not to enter this land altogether. And this applies to all the troublemakers of any other race, of course. But there's one place in the whole dominion I would advise you not to go too near and this is the Dragon's Spur. It lies at the western border of the dominion and is not exactly part of it, but being very near to the border (one mile) it is a constant threat. The Dragon's Spur is a jagged mountain on the foothills of the Final Range. It is home to a small number of orcs who serve a local clan of mountain giants, who in turn once followed an ancient black dragon by the name of S'hastarl. No elf has ever ventured there and the few adventurers who tried never showed up again on this part of the mountain. Lord Blackblade himself once tried to eradicate this menace by finding out the dragon's lair and killing him, but he was never able to locate it. S'hastarl has not been spotted for a hundred years and the humanoids have not ventured inside Ironwood so far, but the lords of the western dominions [*Stamtral, Vyolstograd and Moonland. Synthala.*] have had problems with them in the last year. Some elven sages in fact speculate that the dragon might be awakening from a decades long slumber and will soon be eager to reassert his dominance over the region.

STAMTRAL (*Duchy of*)

Location: Continent of Brun, southeast of Alpha, on the Final Range's northern tip. NW

Area: 998 sq. mi. (2,585 sq. km.).

Population: 2,200.

Languages: Heldannic, Traladaran.

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp); gems or barter commonly used.

Taxes: 25% income tax collected yearly.

Government Type: Independent duchy.

Industries: Agriculture, mining, hunting.

Important Figures: Stano (Duke, human, male, F6).

Flora and Fauna: The valleys of Stamtral are rich with woods of every kind as well as freshwater ponds and streams. Grasslands and farmlands are also a common sight in the duchy and vast forested areas have been cut down to make place to farmlands. Domestic animals and cattle are not abundant because of the wild predators present here, most notably wolves, wild boars and foxes. These animals are usually hunted, their furs sold and their meat eaten by the locals. Other more dangerous encounters include werewolves, displacer beasts, panthers, yowlers and humanoid tribes near the northern border.

Further Reading: CM4 *Earthsbaker*, previous almanacs.

No description this year. [*Adik and Arcadius provided us with basic dominion information, but no insight—watch for more next year. Ed.*]

VYOLSTAGRAD (*Duchy of*)

Location: Continent of Brun, southeast of Alpha, on the Final Range's northern tip. NW

Area: 998 sq. mi. (2,585 sq. km.).

Population: 3,800.

Languages: Heldannic, Traladaran.

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp); gems or barter commonly used.

Taxes: 20% income tax collected yearly.

Government Type: Independent duchy.

Industries: Agriculture, logging, hunting.

Important Figures: Nevik (Duke, human, male, F9).

Flora and Fauna: The valleys of Vyolstograd are rich with woods of every kind as well as freshwater ponds and streams. Farmlands are also a common sight in the duchy, even though forest is still the dominant terrain type. Wolves, wild boars, bears and weasels (giant and normal ones) are hunted in this region, their furs sold and

their meat eaten by the locals. Other more dangerous encounters include werewolves, werebears, displacer beasts, wood imps, panthers, wood decapuses and humanoid tribes near the northern border.

Further Reading: CM4 *Earthshaker*, previous almanacs.

No description this year. [*Adik and Arcadius provided us with basic dominion information, but no insight—watch for more next year. Ed.*]

TRANQUIL COAST

The Tranquil Coast's southern edge includes the small Bay of Oceansend and it goes northwards up to the Bay of the Hook, near the territory of Dag. It is called the Tranquil Coast because the sea has always been friendly to the sailors and the coasts offer no particular danger in this region. However, the dominions located in this region are far from being tranquil, since many of them are embroiled in a constant warfare and tension runs high. This area also includes the two main islands located off the eastern coasts of Norwold, the southern Isle of the Dogs and the northern Walrus Island.

DAG (Barony of)

Location: Continent of Brun, northeast of Oceansend, on the western shore of the New Alphatian Sea. NW

Area: 499 sq. mi. (1,290 sq. km.).

Population: 1,100 humans, 300 elves.

Languages: Heldannic, Alphatian, Elvish (Shiye dialect).

Coinage: *Heart* (gp), *blade* (sp), *wall* (cp).

Taxes: 25% income tax, collected yearly.

Government Type: Independent barony.

Industries: Logging, craft (woodworking), fishing.

Important Figures: Rutger Dag (Baron, human, male, F14).

Flora and Fauna: The most common terrain in Dag is woods, with clear pastures

only to be found along the coast. Woodland game is abundant and all the common wildlife living in northern woods can be found throughout Dag, a real pleasure for every nature lover. Untamed wild animals (especially great cats) and monsters also prowl the land and many werebeasts have caused problems for the woodsmen.

Further Reading: CM1 *Test of the Warlords*, previous almanacs.

No description this year. [*Synthala provided us with basic dominion information, but no insight—watch for more next year. Ed.*]

DIKHOFF (Barony of)

Location: Continent of Brun, northeast of Oceansend, on the western shore of the New Alphatian Sea. NW

Area: 499 sq. mi. (1,290 sq. km.).

Population: 1,600.

Languages: Heldannic, Traladaran.

Coinage: *Heart* (gp), *blade* (sp), *wall* (cp).

Taxes: 25% income tax, collected yearly.

Government Type: Independent barony.

Industries: Agriculture, mining (salt), craft (weaponsmithing).

Important Figures: Dimitri Dikhoff (Baron, human, male, F15).

Flora and Fauna: Dikhoff is mostly a flat land occupied by farms and cultivated fields and orchards. Woods have been progressively cut down with the slash and burn technique to encourage agriculture and the last patches of evergreen forest remain only alongside the northern border. Along the border with the swamp numerous salt pans exist. Common wildlife includes land predators such as hyenas, wolves, otters and foxes as well as hawks and vultures. Monstrous fauna consists of swamp dwellers (serpents, poisonous frogs, sirenflowers, amoebas and decapuses), displacer beasts and basilisks in the woods to the north and a few winged exotic predators like manticores, wyverns and the legendary Chimera of Doom.

Further Reading: CM1 *Test of the Warlords*, previous almanacs.

No description this year. [*Arcadius and Adik provided us with basic dominion information, but no insight—watch for more next year.* Ed.]

ERSENBAL (County of)

Location: Continent of Brun, Walrus Island, about 200 miles east and slightly north of Oceansend. NW

Area: Approximately 7,000 sq. mi. (18,130 sq. km.); there has been no official mapping of the island or county as of yet.

Population: 5,500.

Languages: Alphatian, Heldannic, Thyatian.

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp); other currencies can be found as well.

Taxes: 15% income tax.

Government Type: County, member of the Norwold Confederacy.

Industries: Fishing and logging.

Important Figures: Martigan Ersenbal (Count, human, male, F20—currently missing), Bethany Ersenbal (Countess, human, female, T17), Lord Gerwen (Mayor and Seneschal, human, male, F5), Laurida Tremaine (Captain, human, female, F8).

Flora and Fauna: Standard for its northern climate. The county is also home to a large population of walrus, from which the island takes its name.

Further Reading: CM1 *Test of the Warlords*, previous almanacs.

Description by Synthala of Aasla.

Ersenbal is one of the many lesser dominions that once dotted the landscape of Norwold. Unlike many of them, it has survived the unrest of the land over the past decades and as such is one of the few dominions where most people are worry free and not concerned about invasion or war.

The Land

Walrus Island is a lovely, untamed island located not too far from the City of the Sea [*Oceansend.* Ed.]. Except for the three small villages of Ersenbal, Gerwen and Larian, the land is mostly uninhabited. This makes it similar to The Recluse of our wonderful lord Zirchev [*an entire Outer Plane in D&D and a realm on the layer of Krigala in the Beastlands in AD&D (see TSR11361 Warriors of Heaven).* Ed.].

The island was first noted by colonist as a haven for walrus, a blessed animal that spends as much time in water as on land. These animals reside on the eastern shore of the island, far away from all three villages. Still, hunters find them regularly and because of a current hefty price for their parts as spell components, I fear that the population of walrus might soon go on the decline if no one starts watching over these poor children of Zirchev.

Most city-folk find the land rather plain. The island is covered with pine forests and is rather flat. Although flat, it is still several feet above sea level, giving the place a rocky shore all around. The only safe harbor is in a small bay on the east side and that is where the small village of Ersenbal is located.

Ersenbal is the largest town here, with a population of 3,000. The inhabitants make their living by fishing in the sea and occasionally trading with the City of the Sea. Larian has a population of 1,000 and is located on the southern tip of the island. Gerwen has only 500 inhabitants. Both of these towns are run by loggers. They bring their goods to Ersenbal by the two rivers that both end in the Ersenbal Bay and from there it is shipped to the rest of Norwold. It's not the most profitable employment, but it's enough for the locals to survive with the money made. Still, several of the inhabitants have started to hunt walrus, especially since wizards are now looking at alternate sources of spell components ever since Alphatia sank beneath the sea.

The People

In general, most of the island locals are polite and welcome strangers eagerly in exchange for courtesy and the occasional stories about your travels. Most will mind their own business and rarely will anyone try to interfere with your plans. They are content to simply do their work and not get involved in politics and “important” things.

However, in the town of Ersenbal, over half of the inhabitants were soldiers from the war against Thyatis several years ago. General Martigan, a hero of the war, managed to lead an entire army back to the safety of his county once Alphatia sank. These former soldiers make Ersenbal feel more like a city than the small village it really is. They're more boisterous, loud, eager to brawl and prefer gold to the simple life when compared to the other inhabitants. Still, as long as you don't mention that you hail from Thyatis or the City of Knights [*the Heldannic town of Forton. Ed.*], they won't make you feel unwelcome in their town.

Recent History

The Barony of Ersenbal was founded when King Ericall was granting titles of nobility to any warrior who would swear fealty to him. Martigan of Thyatis, a former slave gladiator, was the one who obtained a small barony on this island back in AY 1993 [*AC 993. Ed.*]. He found a few local inhabitants in the village of Ersenbal. Instead of renaming the village like most of the new petty nobles did throughout Norwold, Martigan took on the name Ersenbal as his own family name since, as a former slave, he never had one of his own.

However, Martigan wasn't an excellent ruler. He simply let his people be and only intervened when truly necessary. After all, according to his logic, the locals survived before he got there, so they could still survive now without him. Luckily, his adventuring days gave him a sizable fortune from which he paid for the construction of Castle Martigan just outside of the village. Also, since he left them pretty much to themselves, Martigan never tried to have the

land developed either. It seems he was wise enough to leave it as a pristine wilderness—may Zirchev bless him.

Through favors and missions performed for King Ericall, Ersenbal was increased into a county in AY 1997 [*AC 997. Ed.*]. The king also extended his land to include all of Walrus Island. Martigan then elevated two noble families, the Gerwens and Lerians and placed them in charge of the north and south ends of the island. Typical of city dwellers who crave importance, these two named the villages in their area after themselves.

Still, Martigan craved adventure and often left his barony, leaving either Lord Gerwen or Lord Lorian in charge during his absences. In fact, he was gone from AY 2004 to AY 2009 [*AC 1004–1009. Ed.*] when he decided to join the Alphatian war effort to destroy Thyatis [*the fact that Glantri was Alphatia's real target was of secondary consequence to the former Thyatian slave. Synthala.*]. Martigan was therefore outside of Norwold when King Ericall's nation fell apart to civil unrest and massive claims of independence.

Yet having Count Martigan go to war gave Ersenbal County a distinct advantage. First, he became a renowned Alphatian general responsible for the capture of Castle Redstone and the Duchy of Westrouke on the Isle of Dawn. Second, he came back with a wife, a certain Bethany of Aasla [*who rumors have is a trained spy working for the Empress of Alphatia herself. Synthala.*]. Third, when he came back in early AY 2010 [*AC 1010. Ed.*], he brought over 2,000 trained veterans who were fleeing from Thyatis because the Alphatian mainland sank.

At first, having as many soldiers as locals caused a lot of tension in the village of Ersenbal. But when the Heldannic Knights started invading Norwold, these troops kept the knights at bay. To this day, the Heldannic Knights have been unable to land on Walrus Island because of the sheer number of veterans present.

Martigan and his wife have disappeared again in AY 2013 [*AC 1013. Ed.*] and no

word has been heard of them since. Lord Gerwen, who has taken over the county in his absences, believes he is off adventuring again. Rumors claim that the famous warrior is off exploring the outer planes and many doubt he will return this time since it has already been 3 years. Because of this, Captain Laurida Tremaine has been slowly trying to get more power for herself and her men. She was willing to follow the famous General Martigan, but shows obvious disdain for Lord Gerwen. Still, she is loyal and doesn't seem to be interested in a takeover or rebellion.

Don't Miss

There's not much to see in Ersenbal. It's a small, underdeveloped county with simple fishermen and loggers. For those like me who enjoy the wilderness, Ersenbal is a nice place with plenty of pines and the fresh sea air.

As a final note, if there are any druids reading this almanac, I encourage you to send a member of your order to claim the eastern coast of Walrus Island as your land. Someone needs to protect the walrus located there. I have done my part, but I must move on to other areas.

Do Miss

Being a small and rather peaceful island, there are also not many dangerous places to avoid here. The only thing to avoid at all costs are Ersenbal's rocky shores, especially if you are an untrained sailor. I have seen wreckages testifying the doom of many ill-fated voyages scattered here and there on the western shores of the isle, so you'd better watch out for safe waters before you approach Ersenbal. Also, the fact that no lighthouse has ever been built doesn't help the sailors at all.

SERENITY (Barony of)

Location: Continent of Brun, northeast of Oceansend. NW

Area: 480 sq. mi. (1,245 sq. km.).

Population: 1,800.

Languages: Thyatian, Heldannic, Alphantian (the use of Alphantian has dropped at the court since Serenity has cut its ties with Alpha).

Coinage: *Heart* (gp), *blade* (sp), *wall* (cp).

Taxes: 25% income tax.

Government Type: Independent barony.

Industries: Horse, agriculture, some fishing.

Important Figures: Siegfried Sixx (Baron, human, male, F15).

Flora and Fauna: The lightly forested areas of Serenity are composed mainly of hardwood, especially oaks and birch. A native form of short corn grows rather well in the farmlands around the town of Serenity, which is used both to feed the populace and the horses that are bred here. Common game live in the woodlands, along with some carnivores that prey on horses on occasion, including wolves and great cats. Manticores in search of easy prey have wreaked havoc in the corrals several times, while dragons and wyverns are rarer (much to the herders' relief). Scavengers are often present near the border with the enemy Barony of Dikhoff, especially vultures.

Coats of arms: Baron Siegfried Sixx: Black human skull between two sets of crossed black daggers forming two Xs (right and left), white background; Barony of Serenity: Black castle between two sets of crossed black daggers forming two X (right and left), black human skull (upper left quadrant), white background; City of Serenity: Black castle between two sets of crossed black daggers forming two X (right and left), white background.

Further Reading: CM1 *Test of the Warlords*, previous almanacs.

Description by Adik de Chevas and Arcadius.

Independent from Alpha since the Great War, the petty Barony of Serenity is recognized as a regional power by its neighbors. Embroiled in a vicious war with long-time foe Dikhoff, a war in which most other local nobles were dragged into over

time, Serenity is definitely not a calm place by any means—despite its name.

The Land

The barony occupies a small area northeast of Oceansend, consisting mostly of rolling plains and light forest in the southwest. The woodlands are light enough so that cavalry can ride through them, albeit at a slower pace.

The City of Serenity is built around Castle Serenity, where peasants can get protection when the city is attacked by the Dikhoffians. The city itself is not protected by a wall or palisade, though it is constantly patrolled. The city has already been pillaged and burned on one occasion, when Baron Dimitri attacked Serenity at the beginning of the Great War, but it has since been rebuilt. Corn fields and ranches dot the plains around the city. Castle Serenity is a sturdy, defensible construction that once was the last place controlled by Baron Siegfried, but marked the end of the Dikhoffian forces' advance [*until the siege was broken by a rather brutal sortie of the heavy cavalry. Arcadius.*]. The castle has its back on the New Alphatian Sea, with access to wharves where fishermen unload their catches. In case of a siege, unless the enemy can afford a naval blockade [*which isn't the case for Baron Dimitri. Arcadius.*], the castle can be supplied with fresh fish and imported food. Besides, the castle houses granaries where corn is stocked and it can feed both humans and horses for long periods.

There is a swampy area on the southwestern border of the barony, where many attacks by Dikhoff come from. The Oceansenders call it simply "The Swamp," while in Alpha and other equally distant places it is referred to as "The Oceansend Swamp." Native Antalians call it "The Tranquil Swamp," a name that probably inspired Baron Siegfried Sixx in naming his dominion. The Tranquil Swamp is a big boggy area, but is not as full of monsters and other hazards as your typical swampy wilderness, hence its name.

The People

Most of Serenity's population are humans from various ethnic origins, mostly Alphatians, Thyatians and Heldanners. A good chunk of the population of Serenity is in the business of horse breeding, growing corn, raising or training horses, trading them, or riding them as the baron's elite cavalry. All those activities revolving around horses generally remain separate, with family-sized farms or ranches, though a few ranches have grown to larger proportions, with a large corral tended by several employees and often an adjacent farm dedicated solely to the production of food for the horses. Such ranches often are under contract with the baron and select the mates especially for the attributes the army is looking for. Oxen and other beasts of burden are rarely used in Serenity, as there are suitable horses aplenty. Indeed, not every horse, however carefully selected its parents were, becomes a sturdy war-horse. Thus lesser horses are used to pull every chariot, cart, caravan, plow, or water pump. This heavy use of horsepower has prompted the baron to ban slavery and servitude [*which is not the case in all the petty dominions across Normold. Arcadius.*] and even the servants and commoners have less exhausting work to do; this is the main reason why commoners do not flee this otherwise war-stricken dominion.

The bulk, if not all, of the Serenic army is made up of cavalry. Some of it consists of light cavalry, mounted on light war horses and equipped with light lances, short swords, light crossbows and leather armor. Their primary purpose is to patrol the barony and scout the buffer zone [*and occasionally enemy territory. Arcadius.*] for advance patrols belonging to enemy forces. They will apprehend trespassers, engage small enemy groups, or report to the castle any larger force. Another group consists of medium cavalry, mounted on medium war horses with leather barding, equipped with medium lances, long swords or maces, light crossbows and chain mail. They patrol around the castle and the large ranches and often engage enemy troops. When not on a

mission, they can be found drilling within the castle walls. Heavy cavalry constitutes a small elite group, the baron's guard. They are mounted on well-trained, much sought-after heavy war horses, protected by plate barding and are equipped with heavy lances, broad swords and plate mail. They generally train at the castle, only engaging the enemy when it strikes deep inside Serenity, or when the baron is leading a large-scale attack on Dikhoff. They never attack alone, though, relying on medium cavalry to protect their flanks while they charge the Dikhoffian grunts.

Today nobody lives in the buffer zone anymore: everybody has already migrated to one barony or the other, or occasionally to another country altogether, far from this war-plagued area. It is rumored however, that a lone old man still lives in his hut in the middle of the buffer zone, apparently not scared by the war. He must be a very powerful man to be still alive there, or a very mad one. Both barons have heard of this strange person and tried at some point to contact him—each one believes the hermit could be a precious ally against the other. However, scout patrols seem to have problems locating his hut, not to mention that the buffer zone is a hotbed for skirmishes and disputed ground. Some rumors have it that the man is only a deranged fool, while others think he's an insane yet absent-minded Alphatian wizard, who was stranded on Brun after the sinking of Alphatia.

Recent History

Serenity is a fairly recent dominion; until the dawn of the new millennium, it was but wilderness, with just the occasional settler. When King Ericall invited heroes from all lands to come in Norwold and gain nobility and dominion in return for pledging fealty to the crown of Alphatia and to himself, many worthy heroes came to carve out their own dominions; among them was Siegfried Sixx. He became a baron of Ericall's and settled in this region of Norwold founding the city of Serenity, where people would live under his

protection. But next door the baron's old nemesis, the treacherous Dimitri Dikhoff [*who a few years earlier took his life in a duel while he was already lying unconscious on the ground. Arcadius.*], boldly founded his own dominion too. Only a miles-wide buffer zone separated the two countries, where whole planes of existence would have been needed. Skirmishes between the two noblemen's forces were frequent and bloody, despite King Ericall's best efforts to prevent infighting between his vassals. Their role at court was not so much to assist their liege, but indeed to try and gain support from other lords, especially their close neighbors.

When mighty Alphatia declared war on Glantri and its allies, Baron Dimitri was quick to declare Baron Siegfried a traitor [*based solely on Siegfried's Thyatian origins and no actual evidence. Arcadius.*] and attacked Serenity. King Ericall, unable to keep his noblemen in line, could not prevent this from happening [*besides, other lords did betray him and it was hard at the time telling who was still loyal and who was not. Adik.*]. This initial attack was met with Baron Siegfried's well-prepared forces though and the assault could not break the defenses. The two dominions have been in an intermittent state of war ever since. Battles occur from time to time and there exists no more a clear line between them, as the buffer zone and the enemy's territory are regularly crossed as if they did not exist.

Both nobles have stopped answering to King Ericall's calls, as well as sending any tribute, as they estimated they have better to do with their time, troops and money. The situation has grown into a stalemate lately and each baron is trying to gain a decisive edge. The latest battles have been confined to skirmishes in the buffer zone, some settlements burnt and their inhabitants killed, but no major battle leading to significant land gain, until a truce was declared—but few believe it will last. Baron Fergus has been an ally of Baron Dimitri ever since Baron Siegfried was rumored to be a traitor in the Thyatians' pay and estranged Lord Maximus I has on occasion lent his minions as mercenaries to Serenity

to supplement their cavalry with some needed infantry. Baron Siegfried claims that his enemy is trying to forge an alliance with the Heldannic Knights to the south, but whether this is true or not remains to be seen.

Don't Miss

Horse lovers, come to Serenity! This is one of the rare places in Norwold where you can find horses for sale at a decent price. Of course, you won't find fine stallions as in Ylaruam or Ethengar and of course the baron gets the first pick to supply his troops with the best war horses. However, you may stumble on the rare overlooked fine stallion, or opt for a horse that is not suited for warfare but will do a great job as a riding horse or as a beast of burden. The annual horse fair takes place on T'slamir 15 [*Felmont 15. Ed.*].

Do Miss

Be especially careful when entering the Barony of Serenity—or even when roaming anywhere in the area—because of the war going on between the powers of the region. It is easy to find oneself right in the middle of a deadly skirmish between the Serenic cavalry and the Dikhoffian infantry [*though the wise look up at the sky regularly, watching for vultures. Adik.*]. Even then, you can hardly travel a few miles without being arrested by a heavily armed patrol, always on the lookout for enemy scouts, spies, or saboteurs. I recommend abiding by their directives and accepting their searches and many questions without complaining, because they are quick to consider the faintest opposition proof of your culpability.

SONNENFELD (Barony of)

Location: Continent of Brun, northeast of Oceansend, on the western shore of the New Alphatian Sea. NW

Area: 499 sq. mi. (1,290 sq. km.).

Population: 1,300.

Languages: Heldannic.

Coinage: *Heart* (gp), *blade* (sp), *wall* (cp).

Taxes: 25% income tax, collected yearly.

Government Type: Independent barony.

Industries: Horse, birds of prey, hunting, craft (fletchers & bowyers).

Important Figures: Fergus (Baron, human, male, F15).

Flora and Fauna: Sonnenfeld comprises a few bogs along the southern border with the Tranquil Swamp, but for the rest it consists of rolling hills, which are great pastures for horses tended here. Near the southern and eastern borders with the swamp many birches and willow trees grow and many flocks of birds also live in Sonnenfeld's territory. This game, the horses and the birds of prey (like hawks and sparrow hawks) raised and trained here are the main resources of the country, since the farmlands to the north produce barely enough food to support the needs of the populace. Wild monsters living in the swamp (like crocodiles, serpents, giant fish and carnivorous plants) prey on the hunters who venture there to catch ducks, hens, coots and such.

Further Reading: CM1 *Test of the Warlords*, previous almanacs.

No description this year. [*Arcadius and Adik provided us with basic dominion information, but no insight—watch for more next year. Ed.*]

SWORDCOAST (Barony of)

Location: Continent of Brun, northeast of Oceansend, on the western shore of the New Alphatian Sea. NW

Area: Approx. 998 sq. mi. (2,585 sq. km.).

Population: 3,000.

Languages: Heldannic, Thyatian.

Coinage: *Heart* (gp), *blade* (sp), *wall* (cp).

Taxes: 25% income tax, collected yearly.

Government Type: Independent barony.

Industries: Agriculture, brewing, fishing, craft (weaponsmithing).

Important Figures: Maximus I (Baron, human, male, F15).

Flora and Fauna: The plains of Swordcoast are mostly cultivated with wheat, hops and barley, leaving only the western low hills for pastures. As a result, most of Swordcoast is farmland, with trails and earthen roads crisscrossing the countryside. All of the trees have been cut down, killing and driving away the woodland creatures formerly living here. Common fauna now include livestock (pigs, hens, cows and chickens) and the occasional stone marten, weasel (both giant and normal) and otter. Since the majority of the people living in Swordcoast are able to wield a weapon effectively, not many wild monsters remain today in this country.

Further Reading: CM1 *Test of the Warlords*, previous almanacs.

No description this year. [*Arcadius and Adik provided us with basic dominion information, but no insight—watch for more next year. Ed.*]

WYRMSTEETH RANGE

The Wurmsteeth Range runs all along Norwold from Heldland to the northern Strait of Todstein parallel to the Final Range. Few humans live in this inhospitable territory, where jagged mountains and rocky outcroppings dominate the landscape. The peaks of the Wurmsteeth rival with those of the Icereach Mountains, reaching 20,000 feet at the highest points. Perpetual glaciers cover the mountains, providing the woods and vales inside the mountain range with fresh water year-long. Forests of pines, evergreens and huge sequoias house hundreds of beasts, from the small rodents to the swift deer and the daring ibexes, from the great grizzlies and the feral mountain lions to the voracious rocs and the deadly wyverns. At the top of this natural chain lie obviously the unchallenged masters of the Wurmsteeth range, the dragons, who have always lived here ever since mankind was but a thought in the Immortals' brains. Tribes of humanoids also dwell in the area, although they were subjugated by the wyrms

long ago. The real size of the draconic community is unknown to everyone but the great wyrms and rumors have it that they live in gargantuan subterranean cities that only dragons are able to locate. These same rumors also tell of great riches amassed in the heart of the mountains, but few of the adventurers who yearly brave the Wurmsteeth ever return with concrete proof of these tall tales.

HOPELAND (Protectorate of)

Location: Continent of Brun, southwest of Alpha and northwest of Oceansend, in the valley near the source of the Dragon River. NW

Area: 1,996 sq. mi. (5,170 sq. km.).

Population: 600 humans, 200 orcs.

Languages: Heldannic, Orcish.

Coinage: None.

Taxes: Half of the ore mined in the foothills and half of the crops harvested are given to the dragons and their orcish minions each year.

Government Type: Protectorate subject to the Draconic Kingdom of Wurmsteeth.

Industries: Agriculture, mining.

Important Figures: Jorkk (Chieftain and Overseer, half-orc, male, F10).

Flora and Fauna: The valley is famous for its good grasses and the fertile soil, which produces an abundant crop every year (if the dragons let the farmers harvest it, that is). Rivers with freshwater fish are also another common feature, while the foothills and mountains at the borders provide the dominion with rich ore deposits to mine (although few are precious ores). Common small game can be found in the valley, as well as monstrous species of canines and felines (both small and great). Humanoids and dragons are also a common enough sight.

Further Reading: CM1 *Test of the Warlords*, previous almanacs.

No description this year. [*Arcadius and Adik provided us with basic dominion information, but no insight—watch for more next year. Ed.*]

ODINIA (Plains of)

Location: Continent of Brun, east of Alpha, near the entrance to the Great Bay. NW

Area: 1,196 sq. mi. (3,095 sq. km.).

Population: Animals and beasts only. Some humanoids dwelling in the foothills near the southern border.

Languages: Goblin, Draconic.

Coinage: None.

Taxes: None.

Government Type: None.

Industries: Mining (gold).

Important Figures: None.

Flora and Fauna: Odinia has marshes on its western shores, while a great valley extends from the northern shores to the southern foothills. The southeastern borders touch the northern tip of the Wurmsteeth. No real herds exist in Odinia because of the frequent dragon and wyvern raids on cattle, although fish abound in the Great Bay. Great evergreen sequoias, pines and oaks rise mightily in the foothills and in the lower parts of the Wurmsteeth.

Further Reading: CM1 *Test of the Warlords*, previous almanacs.

Description by Adik de Chevas and Arcadius.

Once a proud and industrious nation, Odinia is now a deserted plain shadowed by the nearby Wurmsteeth Range, with all its draconic inhabitants. Odinia's territory now comprises the lowlands going from the foothills of the Wurmsteeth to the south to the shores of the Great Bay to the north. This vast valley, known as Wiudental, consists of many farmlands and a small tract of marshes and bogs in the western part of Odinia's coasts. This area has a unique feature found nowhere else throughout Norwold and the Old World: it's called *wattenmeer*. When the ebb comes, the water

retires leaving a big chunk of the Great Bay seafloor exposed. As long as the flow doesn't come, people can walk and ride in this area [*which stretches up to 8 miles from the coastline. Arcadius.*] freely and without danger. But one must know exactly when it's time to return to the safe land, since when flow comes, the sea returns to occupy its former position all of a sudden. *Wattenmeer* can be deadly if one doesn't reach the *koog* in time. *Koog* is an Heldannic word that indicates that part of the coast which has been wrested away from the *wattenmeer* and the bogs, separated from the sea by a dam and then reclaimed and cultivated. The Heldanners that used to live here used *koog* for hundred years, building dams with earth, rocks, sandbags and mud.

The southern border of Odinia consists of forested hills and mountains that belong to the Wurmsteeth Range. They are lush with evergreens and thick underbrush, a real paradise for every forest druid [*actually a druid's cove does exist somewhere in these woods. Adik.*]. However, the close proximity of the Wurmsteeth makes these foothills dangerous to live in. The few settlements here before disaster struck in AC 1016 were mining villages who dug out gold and precious gemstones from the Wurmsteeth's sides. The dragons of Wurmsteeth now rule over these slopes and mines and use some humanoid clans to mine out the gold for their personal hoards.

WYRMHART (Barony of)

Location: Continent of Brun, halfway between Oceansend and the *Baronie de Chevas*. NW

Area: 499 sq. mi. (1,290 sq. km.).

Population: 1,000 (90% humans, 10% dwarves).

Languages: Heldannic, Draconic.

Coinage: *Draco* (gp), *wolf* (sp); barter common.

Taxes: 40% income tax, collected yearly (half goes to the draconic earls and half to the baroness).

Government Type: Barony, member of the Draconic Kingdom of Wyrksteeth.

Industries: Mining (gold, gemstones), logging.

Important Figures: Lady Maximilian (Baroness, human, female, T12).

Flora and Fauna: The barony is nestled in a secluded vale surrounded by the high Wyrksteeth peaks in the middle of the mountain range. Great evergreen sequoias, pines and oaks rise mightily in the foothills and in the lower parts of the Wyrksteeth, while the vale comprises a freshwater lake and rolling grasslands, with fields of flowers dotting the landscape in spring and summer. Great birds of prey share the skies with the noble and fearsome dragons and wyverns, while packs of wolves, wild boars and foxes roam the hills hunting the deer and moose living here. Lycanthropes are also to be found occasionally (especially werewolves, wereboars and werebears), contesting the ownership of hunting grounds with the Wyrksteeth lords.

Further Reading: CM1 *Test of the Warlords*, previous almanacs.

No description this year. [*Arcadius and Adik provided us with basic dominion information, but no insight—watch for more next year. Ed.*]

WYRMSTEETH (Draconic Kingdom of)

Location: Continent of Brun, running from the northern Heldannic border to the peninsula near the Strait of Todstein. NW

Area: 146,374 sq. mi. (421,190 sq. km.).

Population: Unknown number of dragons and humanoids.

Languages: Heldannic, Draconic, Orcish, Goblin, Hobgoblin.

Coinage: None.

Taxes: Unknown.

Government Type: Triarchic Kingdom (kingdom divided into three earldoms, each ruled by the draconic earl representative of one of the three wyrms factions).

Industries: Mining, raiding, hunting.

Important Figures: Hessuarveem the Gold (Earl of the Lawful Dragons, ancient gold dragon, male, 22HD), Y'lorchaem the Lofty One (Earl of the Neutral Dragons, ancient blue dragon, male, 18HD), Renffeodagg the Doombringer (Earl of the Chaotic Dragons, ancient red dragon, male, 20HD).

Flora and Fauna: The Draconic Kingdom of Wyrksteeth encompasses the whole mountain range that bears the same name. For this reason, all of the animals, beasts, humanoids and monsters found throughout the region are equally represented in the lands of the dragons, together with all kinds of natural features that characterize the region. The intelligent humanoids serving the dragons include orcs, ogres, goblins and hobgoblins, while renegade lycanthropes refusing to submit to the wyrms' authority hide and prey in the woodland areas.

Further Reading: CM1 *Test of the Warlords*, previous almanacs.

No description this year. [*Arcadius and Adik provided us with basic dominion information, but no insight—watch for more next year. Ed.*]

KAMMINER BAY

Lying just north of the heartlands of the Heldannic Territories is the Kamminer Bay, named so in AC 1010 following the successful conquest of Landfall by the Heldannic Knights. Although technically part of the Heldannic region known as Heldland, the lands surrounding the port city of Landfall are quickly being converted into another part of the heartlands. Waves of settlers are pushing back the frontiers and bringing more of the land under the plow, while the military might of the knights entrenches itself deeper. It is a land on the fringes of civilization, both dangerous and placid; predictable, yet volatile.

HELDLAND (*Heldannic Territory of*)

Location: Continent of Brun, southern coast of Norwold. NW

Area: Approx. 23,450 sq. mi. (60,735 sq. km.) is controlled by the Heldannic Knights at present; a much larger territory is claimed.

Population: 28,000 (10,000 in Landfall, 5,000 in Forton, many more living in homesteads scattered throughout the territory); unknown number of native Antalian-descended peoples living in wilderness.

Languages: Thyatian (Hattian dialect, official), Heldannic, some Alphatian spoken in Landfall and vicinity.

Coinage: Heldannic Standard: *groschen* (5 gp), *gelder* (gp), *erzer* (ep), *markschen* (sp), *fenneg* (cp).

Taxation: 15% income tax collected 4 times a year. 10% tithe to the Heldannic Knights, collected once a year. Poll tax of 1 gp per year on those who refuse military service. Taxes are waived for the first 2 years for new immigrants. There is also a 5% sales tax on all items but food and clothing (these taxes are not waived).

Government Type: Military theocracy, member of the Heldannic Empire.

Industries: Agriculture (potatoes, wheat, other vegetables), cattle, mining, sheep, lumber, hunting, war.

Important Figures: Helga Schonberg (Landmeister, human, female, Pr12 of Vanya).

Flora and Fauna: Heldland is blessed with many natural resources. Along the coastal regions verdant stands of oak, evergreen, birch and pine predominate, mingled with dense patches of juniper bushes wherever the sunlight manages to filter down to the ground. Further inland and in the more settled regions, hardy long grasses, wildflowers and fruit-bearing shrubs predominate, such as dandelions, buttercups, strawberries, blueberries and not to mention scattered thistles and wild roses. Towards the foothills of the Mengul Mountains to the west, almost as though sensing the sinister

evil that seems to emanate from the forbidding Plateau of Denagoth, much of the plant life gives way to blighted briar patches, lichen, yellowed grasses and the like. It is also in this region that the monstrous species of plant life, such as vampire roses, grab grass and whipweed, are known to predominate.

The animal life of Heldland is similarly abundant. Here, one may find animal herds such as sheep, caribou and moose, as well as more solitary animals such as grizzly bears, lynxes and beavers. In the northern regions of Heldland live numerous wolf packs. Travelers have noted that, as with plant life, those animals living near the Mengul Mountains appear to be almost sickly—or corrupted—in appearance. In the foothills of those mountains and in the hilly country north of Landfall, can be found giants (mountain, hill, stone and the rare frost), goblinoids, lycanthropes, as well as the rare, reclusive sasquatch. Dragons also venture into the territory from the northern mountains; most of those few who have been spotted were identified as red dragons, though a few whites are known to live in the area.

Further reading: CM1 *Test of the Warlords*, *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Adik de Chevas.

It was with interest that I accepted the task of surveying this region of the growing “Heldannic Empire,” to see for myself what goes on here—beyond what the knights themselves decide to tell us. Surprisingly, what I had heard of the place turned out, in retrospect, to be fairly accurate. I had heard others call Heldland untamed, rugged and mysterious—and it certainly was! Of course, I learned much more than this and perhaps I shall note it down in book form for others to peruse at their leisure, but until then, let the following suffice as your guide to this land.

The Land

It is said by the Heldannic Knights that their homeland is a hard land—and its people are equally inured to life's trials. Whether or not this is true, Heldland makes the southerly Heldannic Territories seem as homey as the Streel Plain. The waters of the Kamminer Bucht to the south and the Alphatian Sea to the east, carry with them winds that are cool in the summer and frigid and damp in the winter. The waters themselves are very cold all year round; many a sailor has fallen overboard in this region and succumbed before any assistance could reach them. The weather, too, can be unforgiving. The lands bordering the Alphatian Sea are blasted mercilessly during the winter months by strong winds sweeping southwards from the arctic wastes to the far north, while in the summer months gentler breezes are carried from the southeast, making life far more bearable. In the interior, winter is a terrible time of year: during winter storms, icy gales blow down from the Wyrksteeth Mountains and during the summer, the moisture from rainstorms rarely dissipates in the forests, due to the extensive cover of foliage which blots out much of the sun's rays; in some regions it is almost impossible to stay dry.

As mentioned earlier, Heldland, for all its ruggedness, is a thickly-forested land, with trees of many types along the coasts, which, where they have not been interrupted by the ebb and flow of civilization, extend inland to the foothills of the Wyrksteeth Mountains themselves. Where civilization has gained a foothold in this relatively untouched land, it is a tentative one. Apart from the festering sore that is Landfall and the port of Oceansend, there is little in the way of settlements. There are a number of coastal villages, or partially-constructed keeps, lining the coast, but the interior, as before, is no one's land.

The People

As in Heldann proper to the south, the visitor to Heldland will find a mix of Hattian Thyatians and native Heldanners. In the

lands controlled by the knights, the majority of the population is of Hattian extraction—the knights probably wish to avoid the problems they encountered when they first arrived in Heldann decades ago [*AC 950. Ed.*], when they consisted of but a handful of men against thousands of indigenous Heldanners. Occasionally one will find a Heldanner or two, but these are most often those who have become assimilated into the dominant Hattian culture. Outside the few built-up areas, most people are farmers; they lay trap lines year round and till the fields in the warm months, sell what produce they can spare and wait out the winter in their homes. Most often, their homes are sod huts or wooden cabins.

In Landfall, Oceansend and a number of villages, the people conduct their lives with a little more certainty. There are shopkeepers, craftsmen, grocers, soldiers, fishermen and travelers—all that one would find in towns and cities further south, only on a much smaller scale (outside of Landfall and Oceansend, that is). In general attitude, however, I think the Heldlanders are definitely different from their countrymen in Heldann proper. Living on the edge of civilization, they seem to be more practical; they have little time for religious zealotry, as faith alone rarely puts food on the table and they are plainspoken. Still, many of the newer settlers were awarded generous grants to build their homes here and thus their loyalty to the regime seems secure for now.

Beyond the colonized areas, however, an unknown number of indigenous people inhabit the forests, living, I imagine, in crude huts and isolated villages and otherwise subsisting off of the land. I suspect that they are probably related to the native people of Heldann, though I have not met any of these native Heldlanders, so I could not say for certain.

Recent History

Nominally part of the Alphatian colony of Norwold, under the rule of King Ericall beginning in AC 992, the region now known as Heldland was sparsely settled, with

Landfall and Oceansend being the only significant settlements in the region. In AC 1010, the Heldannic Knights, capitalizing on the instabilities following the sinking of Alphatia, conquered Landfall and the surrounding region. In subsequent years, their forces advanced all the way to Oceansend, conquering that city after a protracted siege. In AC 1014, the order's knights lost their clerical powers, having suffered Vanya's disfavor over their increasingly cruel rulership over their lands (which did not bring glory to Her). Taking advantage of the situation, Oceansend regained its independence and the Heldannic Order's control over Heldland slackened greatly, being confined largely to Landfall and vicinity once more.

After the knights regained the graces of Vanya in late AC 1015, they embarked upon a drive to reconquer all of Heldland, including Oceansend, which fell once more to Heldannic forces in AC 1016. Since that time, the knights have been trying to strengthen their hold on Heldland, initiating a colonization drive to accomplish this.

Don't Miss

One place that should be visited if possible is Oceansend, if only for the fact that it is the largest urban area on the Heldland coast which offers anything close to the amenities of a proper city. Originally founded by Thyatians, Oceansend declared independence during the Alphatian Spike Assault [*AC 960. Ed.*] and maintained its independence until very recently, after which it fell to the Heldannic Knights. Although it has fallen somewhat on hard times due to the decline in commerce following the conquest, it is still a fairly nice city, so long as you can ignore the ever-present Heldannic garrison, the fluttering black lion banners and the tense atmosphere which hangs over the city.

Although there are other pleasant settlements to visit in Heldland, particularly along the coast, none of them are really large enough to be noteworthy, in my opinion.

Nice places to spend the night, but little more than that.

Do Miss

If there is any place in Heldland which the visitor should avoid at all costs, it is Landfall. This large town was, is and likely always will be a breeding ground of scum and moral decrepitude; why the Heldannic Knights allow such a corrupt place to thrive in the midst of its other dominions I shall perhaps never know, but I suspect something is going on behind the scenes. Needless to say, Landfall is filthy and filled with disease-ridden trollops, greedy merchants and untrustworthy, self-serving bureaucrats. Avoid it if you possibly can.

Another place I would strongly caution all visitors to avoid is the Finsterwald, which lies many days north of Landfall. Though I never visited the place myself, I have heard it said that the place is a trackless forest filled with swamps, bogs and ferocious animals. It is also controlled by a man named Helmut Jaschke, who, apparently a former Heldannic Knight himself, has appointed himself the Count of Wolkenberg—which seems to be the name of his purported dominion. The authorities describe him as a traitor, who refuses to submit to the might of the Heldannic Order, but I have heard others say that Helmut had something of an epiphany some time ago and that he fights against Heldannic supremacy in Heldland because he sees their rule as unjust. Regardless of the truth, travelers are just as likely to run afoul of the count's brigands as patrols of Heldannic Knights intent on crushing him. Best to stay clear until the whole matter blows over.

DENAGOTHIAN PLATEAU

The area known as the Denagothian Plateau encompasses the 7,000' high plateau that lies north of Wendar and west of Norwold. While the southern and eastern areas are covered with verdant evergreen trees that make up one of the oldest forests

of the whole continent, the heart of the plateau is a windswept grassy plain where animals roam free. The northern and western parts are the most dangerous and the least inviting, since they encompass a dead forest, a large swampy region and ancient badlands that hide numerous monstrosities. The sinister Kingdom of Denagoth claims most of the region, although some areas of the plateau are not directly under its influence.

DENAGOTH (Kingdom of)

Location: Continent of Brun, north of Wendar and west of Norwold and the Heldannic Territories. NW

Area: 125,000 sq. mi. (323,750 sq. km.).

Population: 272,000, roughly 25% human and 75% humanoid; estimated demihuman (elf) population: 3,000.

Languages: Denagothian (a human language not closely related to any other spoken in the Old World), Orcish, Gnoll, Goblin, Bugbear, Heldannic, Elvish (Geffronell, Genalleth and Alfheim dialects).

Coinage: *Gold* (gp), *silver* (sp); barter common.

Taxes: 30% income tax, collected yearly.

Government Type: Theocratic dictatorship.

Industries: Hunting, raiding, mining, agriculture (grows barely enough for its own use).

Important Figures: Landryn Teriak a.k.a. the Shadow Lord (Overlord, vassalich, male, M14), Grumann (General, human, male, F13/T10), Durifern Widefarer (Clanmaster, elf, male, R16), Beasthunter (Clanmaster, elf, male, F13/M13), Sylarion (Clanmaster, vampire elf, male, F9/Pr7 of Nyx).

Flora and Fauna: The area known as Denagoth comprises a great oak forest to the east that dates back to the old Blackmoor era and another forested region to the west mostly made of dead trees. Throughout the whole region the terrain is rocky and difficult to cultivate, if not

impossible. The Avien Plains, in the central part of Denagoth, is the only area where the soil is somewhat able to produce crops and where cattle can be tended without particular problems. The northern zone is basically a rocky waste that gives way to swamps and frozen tundra. The animals commonly encountered in Denagoth are moose, elk, bears (all species, especially grizzlies), wolves (even dire wolves), wild boars, snakes and mountain lions. The land is a haven for humanoid races and many tribes of orcs, hobgoblins, goblins, bugbears, gnolls and some ogres live in the foothills and on the highest peaks of the mountains, as well as in the forests. The Mengul Mountains are home to a vast variety of monstrous species, such as: snow apes, white apes, giant bats, dragons (white and blue), harpies, giant ferrets, sasquatches and unicorns. Black dragons abound in the swamps and forests of the entire region, unchallenged masters of the draconic race inhabiting Denagoth.

Further Reading: X11 *Saga of the Shadow Lord*, previous almanacs

Description by Christopher Dove.

I am writing this report not of my own free will, but because I have been charged by Denagoth's high priestess to let you, dear readers, know of Denagoth's magnificent landscapes and shed some light on its inhabitants. I have been told to reassure all of you, who live in the southern nations, that Denagoth has no will to cause mischief in the Old World, but that it is a land with an ancient and proud history that only deserves to be acknowledged by the other important nations of the world.

In this brief commentary I will thereby describe the western region of Denagoth, what is commonly referred to as the Lothenar Forest, where I have been allowed to travel escorted by a small group of soldiers gladly provided for my own sake by the Most High Priest of the Church of Idris.

[Even this year the report arrived in perfect shape, even though persistent rumors coming from the north say that Professor Dove is in the hands of the

dangerous forces of the Shadow Lord. We do not know how much of this has been written by his quill and how much has been later added or modified for propaganda by the Church of Idris. We only advise you, dear readers, to take everything written here with the benefit of doubt until we find out more. For more information on the Forest of Geffron, the Avien Plains and the overall region, please refer to the previous Mystaran Almanacs, AC 1015 and AC 1016. Ed.]

The Land

If you enter Denagoth following the road that goes from Gylharen's Pass in Wendar up to the Denagothian Plateau, you will find yourself in the middle of the verdant Forest of Geffron, now fallen back into the hands of the Shadow Lord's troops. Going north from this spot, the forest gives way to a huge grassland that is called the Avien Plains after the tribe that settled it a long time ago. It is here that the great majority of the Denagothians live, humans and humanoids alike. Here the soil is good enough to plant a few crops and breed different species of animals. Venturing further westwards, after some days of traveling the windswept grasslands give way to a different landscape of ash gray twisted trees and tall shrubs: the Lothenar Forest.

This is more a wood than a forest, but the Denagothians kept the elven name of this area in sad tribute to the fate of the thousands of souls who once lived here. The forest is made of high twisted trees whose bark has strangely turned ash gray. Birches, ash trees, firs and a few oaks (now deprived of their former majesty) grow in the area, but their number and size is not as imposing as those of the trees of the Great Forest of Geffron. The paths across the forest are hindered by the thick underbrush of thorny bushes that grow lush, thanks to the bleak sun's rays. In fact, the canopy of trees that tower above the forest floor is not so thick to block out the sunrays, allowing the underbrush to grow and spread, like the coils of a mighty snake slithering on the ground. The atmosphere inside the forest is that of a dreary albeit sunny place, with the

gray bark and the dull white sunrays enveloping the landscape in a dead shroud. Mist usually rolls in during the first hours of the day and fog banks are constantly present in the northern tip of the forest, near the Malor Swamp, lowering the temperature and the morale of every traveler not used to the place.

Animals do not abound in the Lothenar Forest, as if to testify this is a place where death holds sway. The few specimens I encountered during my travel included common rodents, some wild boars, the ever present packs of wolves [*although these were sickly, lithe and ravenous. C. Dove.*] and many nocturnal avians such as owls, white owls, bats, woodpeckers and hoopoes. I also noticed that insects and arachnids abound in these environs, both normal and large species, while I saw no signs of snakes or reptiles [*probably due to the cold temperatures of the area, which is however quite humid. C. Dove.*].

As much as the settlements are numerous in the Avien Plains, so they are rare inside Lothenar. I have visited a couple of villages in the south, both military garrisons manned by the Denagothian army and with the usual civilians living nearby, but no other significant settlement exists to my knowledge [*and this only adds to my idea that the Lothenar Forest is indeed the largest open air mausoleum in the Known World. C. Dove.*]. The only place of note is the seat of the political and religious power of Denagoth, Idris Tower, a fortified keep in the northeastern corner of the forest. Idris Tower comprises a stone walled keep, the tower itself and a ring of buildings that surround the walls around the keep and that house the families of the soldiers and priests living in the compound. The tower proper is the holy cathedral of Idris, where only the priestess of the goddess and her most trusted servants have access. Here lives the High Priestess of Idris, a woman whose real name is never spoken [*as the priests have told me, once the new High Priest is chosen, he or she simply becomes referred with this title, his or her former name and life becoming irrelevant. C. Dove.*] and who rules the theocracy with an enlightened spirit. Those who serve her, the bureaucrats and

the officers of the army, also live in this keep, although not in the tower itself, so they can consult and report to the High Priestess when desired. Idris Tower is garrisoned by more than a thousand of the best Denagothian elite soldiers, as well as by a cadre of warlocks (battle wizards) faithful to the Church of Idris. To my knowledge, the only place I could compare it to would be the faraway capital of Hule, the exotic temple-city of Greatrealm.

The People

Not much to say about the people living in Lothenar Forest, since next to nobody lives here. The soldiers manning the two villages in the south are typical Denagothians, deeply loyal to Idris and always following the orders of their leaders and priests. They have a strong sense of duty and of national unity that borders on fanaticism. They are not hostile towards strangers, although they are always suspicious of them and frequently ask questions to determine whether they are a possible threat or an ally. They share the same written and spoken language, which uses the old Essurian alphabet [*Essuria was an ancient kingdom that encompassed the whole Denagothian Plateau in the last five centuries. C. Dove.*] and also have old traditions and habits that reinforces their sense of unity and greatness. They know they are the descendants of a proud race of conquerors and great warriors, of honorable fighters and true believers and that the humanoids living alongside represent what they were in their early ages [*although I have spotted next to no humanoids in these villages. C. Dove.*]. The inhabitants of Idris Tower are another lot, however. Racially they belong to the same Denagothian stock, but they are all literate and many are fluent in at least three languages [*usually Denagothian, Heldannic and a humanoid dialect. C. Dove.*]. They possess a dignity that borders on haughtiness and the sages and bureaucrats are pedantic to the extreme in showing off their vast knowledge. It is said the Church of Idris has amassed a huge library with thousand of tomes coming from the southern nations as well as from the fallen kingdoms that once

lay to the north [*particularly the Kingdoms of Essuria and Ghyr and the Principality of Alinor, these last two unknown to me. C. Dove.*] and this explains the great deal of information the high-ranking followers of Idris possess. Were it not for the constant presence of the army, one could easily assume by walking the streets of Idris Tower that he was in the core of an enlightened nation like Thyatis or Darokin.

A final note about the former inhabitants of this forest is due. The rumors about the fate of the Lothenar elves that circulate in Wendar and in Denagoth as well are many and contrasting. Some say they were slaughtered by the Shadow Lord in his attempt to conquer the whole of Denagoth. Others say they were killed by the priests of Idris because they refused to embrace Idris's perfect faith. Others still insist they abandoned the place once the Essurian troops came down from the north, cursing the forest out of spite. Whatever the truth, no living elf today remains inside the Lothenar Forest, which is far from being a woodland paradise.

Recent History

The Church of Idris is responsible for rebuilding the nation after the fall of the Essurian Kingdom at the beginning of the 10th century. The rumors that portrayed the Shadow Lord as the sole ruler of Denagoth are false, since it is in fact a perfect theocracy ruled by the most wise High Priestess of Idris. The Shadow Lord is only the commander of the Denagothian army and the rumors about his violence and ruthlessness have been exaggerated by the nearby Wendarians, since they still remember the wars made in the past centuries with the Kingdom of Essuria and blame the current Denagothian Kingdom for those. Aside from defending itself from the elven invasion of last year, Denagoth didn't attempt any invasion of the nearby lands during all these decades and only now it's trying to end its isolation by sending emissaries and ambassadors to its

neighboring countries to establish political and economic ties.

Don't Miss

Idris Tower is a jewel in the heart of a dead forest that really deserves a visit in order to truly understand the wisdom and power of Idris's teachings. However, in order to access the inner streets one must first get the army's authorization and this means every weapon must be left behind to the guards at the keep's gates and no spell can be uttered unless you are a disciple of Idris. These are not unbearable terms after all, since many southern cities enforce the same law.

Do Miss

The northern area of Lothenar, at the border with the dreary Malor Swamp [*which will probably be the topic of my next report, together with the northern Denagothian Wastes. C. Dove.*], is a fog enclosed woodland that harbors many dangers in the form of quicksand and unseen entities. You are advised to keep away from it if you value your life.

Atlas Of The Savage Coast

Introduction to the Savage Coast

The Savage Coast is a frontier land, with continuous goblinoid invasions and squabbles between the local lords. Most of the land is in ruins and is mainly unexplored. Colonized over the centuries by the riff-raff of the Old World, most people are unscrupulous and the law of the jungle often prevails. The natives who lived there (goblinoids, savage rakasta and lupins, etc.) are none too friendly either and are often hostile towards humans and demihumans.

Some of the natives are more civilized, such as the rakasta of Bellayne or the lupins of Renardie. In fact, along the Savage Coast, race is often ignored and non-humans can fit in easily to human society. Instead, nationality is the main source of pride and several nations have had century long feuds in which there appears to be no end in sight.

In this land, the local lords make the rules and others are poor and uneducated peasants who must follow their whim. Many an adventurer has broken free of this feudalism and wanders the land, without a home, in search of fortune and fame. There are more adventurers without loyalties on the Savage Coast than anywhere else on Mystara.

Unique to this land is a strange metal called *red steel*. This metal is as strong as normal steel, but much lighter, making it a prized possession by all warriors. *Red steel* is more precious than gold and rulers have sacrificed entire armies to try and control its trade. Many grand quests have the goal of finding *red steel* and many wars still go on because of it.

Finally, the entire land is falls under the sway of the dreaded *Red Curse*. This affliction deforms all those it affects, transforming them into hideous beasts. Even stranger, some of the inhabitants seem to have learned how to control this curse, gaining wondrous magical powers known as legacies. It is rumored that once you are

affected by the *Red Curse*, you cannot leave the Savage Coast otherwise the curse will destroy you.

Adventure can be found by exploring the many ruins and searching for ancient artifacts. But on the Savage Coast, *red steel* and the mastery of legacies are the true keys to power and fame!

Located to the west of the Old World, the Savage Coast stretches almost 2,000 miles in length. Its southern shores lie against the Western Sea of Dread, while the west is blocked by Yalu Bay. To the east, the Great Waste separates the Savage Coast from the Old World. Finally, the north is bordered by the Yazak Steppes, home of the endless hordes of goblinoids.

Correspondents for the Savage Coast

Here is our list of correspondents that give us detailed information on the nations, places and events of the Savage Coast:

Marina Takanitas

At 23, Marina Takanitas is one of the youngest on our team and she brings us news from the Serpent Peninsula and the Savage Coast. Marina is a trader who hails from Kastelios, one of the biggest and fastest-growing, port cities in the region.

A cheerful person, her laughing brown eyes and bouncing golden curls are hard to miss in a crowd, but this exterior also serves to shield a very capable correspondent who will stop at nothing to get you, the reader, the ground-breaking stories of the Serpent Peninsula and the Savage Coast as they happen. No danger is too much for her and, believe me, she knows how to use that short sword she carries!

Hernando Cagliostro

Hernando is a refugee who fled Narvaez, apparently because of something to do with the inquisition there. He now studies magic in Ciudad Real and has mastered several

cold-related magic spells. He enjoys scholastic research and has a dislike toward the priests of Narvaez whom he claims hide the truth.

Hernando talks about his native Narvaez, as well as the baronies of Garguña and Saragón.

Piotr Drobnjak

Adventurer and part-time merchant, Piotr is our correspondent for Slagovich and nearby states. A devout follower of Halav, the young Piotr has a deep knowledge of city-states' affairs.

Piotr describes us his hometown, Slagovich and the mysterious land of Hule (this one just from bibliographic research).

Gnighmen Lodestar

Gnighmen is a wicca [*mage. Ed.*] of Clan Lodestar from the flying city of Serraine. He is a minor member of the clan who is greatly interested in the cultures of the areas over which the city flies. Gnighmen is an inquisitive young skygnome who is, whilst practical by gnome standards, still fond of sarcastic humor.

Gnighmen makes a report of the kingdoms of Gombar and Suma'a during a trip he made there incognito during Flaurmont, AC 1015. [*The report was passed on to the editors of this article through Matazumi, a resident we have contact with from the flying city. Ed.*]

Rikard Prospero

Former owner of the *Poor Wizard's Almanac* (property of TSR, the Thyatian Services and Reviews), the book that started the *Mystaran Almanac* series, Prospero now travels the lands of the Savage Coast, describing to us all the wonders he discovers.

This year, the mysterious yet meticulous wizard once more describes to us a few of the Savage Baronies along the Gulf of Hule.

Atlas

ALMARRÓN (Estado de)

Location: East of Gulf of Hule, north of Cimarron, south of Gargaña, west of El Grande Carrascal. SC

Area: 6,450 sq. mi. (16,705 sq. km.).

Population: 7,000, including 4,200 in the capital Ciudad Tejillas. Roughly 92% human, 5% elven, 3% half-elven.

Languages: Espa.

Coinage: *Oro* (gp), *díes* (sp), *centa* (cp).

Taxes: 20% income tax, 5% sales tax.

Government Type: Independent barony part of the Treaty of Tampicos and Signatory Council.

Industries: Mining (silver), coffee, tobacco, furniture, jewelry.

Important Figures: Maximiliano de Almarrón y Escudor (*Barón*, human, male, F9 Noble), Esteban “El Salvador” (Former Tyrant, human, male, F13).

Flora and Fauna: Standard for its warm temperate/subtropical climate, including kudzu, tomatoes, potatoes, maize, plains grasses, deer, alligators, armadillos, prairie dogs, turkeys and eagles. Dangerous monsters include gnoll raiders from El Grande Carrascal. Normal animals or plants with Legacies can also be very dangerous.

Further Reading: *The Savage Coast* online document, previous almanacs.

Description by Rikard Prospero.

Almarrón is a small nation that is part of Savage Baronies. Collectively called Los Guardianos, because they guard the rest of the Savage Coast from Hule, the people of the baronies are well respected by the other nations, even though there is hardly any contact between them.

The Land

The western half of Almarrón’s territory is a rocky, inhospitable hill country. If it wasn’t

for the presence of the large silver mines at *Sierra del Plata*, the land would be almost useless.

A large fertile plain, fed by the *Sierra Borgosa*, occupies the heart of the nation. This is where the majority of the population lives, in three main villages (Costella, Paso Dorado and Ciudad Tejillas) and several scattered homesteads.

Forested slopes and cliffs guard Almarrón’s shores, protecting the nation from pirates and sea raiders.

Located at the mouth of the *Sierra Borgosa*, Ciudad Tejillas, the capital, is a center for commerce and education for the nation. This town is rather lively thanks to the numerous celebrations thrown by the *barón*. It is filled with good taverns and inns and even has a theater and a museum. While the hardworking attitude of the commoners gives quiet and peaceful days, the boisterous lifestyles of the local swashbucklers makes for an exciting nightlife. Despite this, the town is fairly safe—adventurers who live in Ciudad Tejillas are protective of its people and its reputation.

The People

The humans of Almarrón, like the rest of the baronies, tend to be moderately dark-skinned. The *Red Curse* also gives them red overtones. Most humans have straight, black or deep red hair. A few elves and dwarves live in Almarrón, but they are very rare.

Afflicted within Almarrón are well treated by friends and families and they suffer little prejudice from others. Most Almarrónians view the *Red Curse* as something that will affect others and simply ignore it in their everyday lives.

The people of Almarrón have gone through so many forms of government that they no longer care about politics and would rather be left alone and leave running the nation to the *barón*. So far, the current *barón* seems to have won their respect and has slowly begun to enlighten his nation into a cultural center.

More so than elsewhere, Almarróñans enjoy their freedom, having lost it several times. Swashbucklers and local heroes who fought against the tyrant Esteban are very common amongst them. The continuous wars and revolts have left most families relatively poor. Luckily, *Barón* Maximiliano provides priests and *cinnabryl* for those who cannot afford it, keeping the number of afflicted very low.

Finally, the use of Torreóner mercenaries by *Don* Esteban during the war has left a bad feeling toward Torreóners among most of the populace.

Recent History

Founded in AC 936, Almarrón was another barony led by its noble family. Corruption among the nobles led to a period of expansionism and conquest. Soon enough, Almarrón started losing its battles and most conquered lands declared independence. With the separation of Cimarron in AC 980, the people of Almarrón have had enough and overthrew their *barón*. They installed a democratic system inspired by ancient Traldar forms of government. In AC 994, a dictator name *Don* Esteban “El Salvador” took control of the nation and began collecting the nation’s wealth for himself.

In AC 1006, Almarrón sided against Narvaez during the Inquisition Wars. The wars ended when the baronies unite to fight off Hule. The next year, the gnolls of El Grande Carrascal took advantage of Almarrón’s weakened state and invaded. They were routed by the end of the year, but only after destroying *Castillo de Tordegena*.

By next year, AC 1008, rebels finally ousted *Don* Esteban thanks to many troubles the land had during the past few years. The people decided to return to the traditional nobility rulership rather than allow another tyrant to take power. Hence, Maximiliano, the only living descendant of the former noble rulers from long ago, was name *Barón* Maximiliano de Almarrón y Escudor.

In AC 1009, the *Red Curse*, which was centered in a few locations just outside the

Savage Baronies, mysterious spread during the Week Without Magic and covered most of the Savage Coast, including all the Savage Baronies. The people soon had to learn to cope with outbreaks of the *Red Curse* and the creation of new afflicted. Most nobles scrambled to find priests or *cinnabryl* to help their people and inheritors made themselves public to better spread their stored *cinnabryl*.

In AC 1010, many believed that miners had discovered the *Mannequin of Ixion*, the legendary Oltec artifact that would prevent any army in the world from invading the nation. It turned out to be nothing more than a black vessel for a deadly creature. Still, events during this time caused the death of Maximiliano’s honorbound leader, as well as the resignation of Costa, the honorbound who would have replaced him. *[Those desiring more information are referred to the novel The Black Vessel. Ed.]*

Since then, rumors of an impending attack from *Don* Esteban’s forces have been running rampant, but no such attack has yet occurred.

BELLAYNE (*Kingdom of*)

Location: East of Herath and Shazak, West of Renardie. SC

Area: Approx. 25,000 sq. mi. (64,750 sq. km.).

Population: Approx. 475,000 (roughly 75% rakasta, with some dwarves and humans concentrated mainly in the north).

Languages: Rakastayne (official), Slag (Savage Coast trade tongue).

Coinage: *Crown* (5 gp), *pound sterling* (gp), *quid* (ep), *shilling* (sp), *penny* (cp).

Taxes: An income tax of 20% is paid by every subject, plus a 10% sales tax on all items considered to be luxuries (i.e. not food, clothing, or *cinnabryl*).

Government Type: Monarchy advised by a parliament made up of elected commoners and the Bellaynish nobility.

Industries: Coal mining, wool, tea, fishing, metal working, news, liquor.

Important Figures: James II (King of Bellayne, Son of Queen Catherine I, rakasta, male, F5 Noble), Humphrey the Exalted (Archbishop of Kittings, rakasta, male, Pr14 of Belbion), Marston the Just (Archbishop of Leominster, rakasta, male, Pr14 of Pax Bellanica), Perceval the Iron Clawed (Duke of Pawcester, rakasta, male, F10 Noble), Mortimer the Defiant (Earl of Penwick, rakasta, male, F11 Noble), Rodney the Intrepid (Earl of Theeds, rakasta, male, F13 Noble), Meghan the Gaunt (Viscountess of Furfield, rakasta, female, F8 Honorbound), Francis Blythe-Jackson (Leader of the Wyndham Party in the House of Commons, rakasta, male, T5 Local Hero), Benjamin Treeby (Leader of the Royal Party in the House of Commons, rakasta, male, F6 Honorbound), Mewsbury Fitzbagpuss (Knight of the Bath, Guild Master, rakasta, male, T13 Swashbuckler).

Flora and Fauna: Bellayne shows the marks of five hundred years of civilization and so until recently was relatively devoid of interesting creatures. More recently nearly successful goblinoid invasions have led to groups of goblinoids roaming the northern fringes of Bellayne, while the *Red Curse* has spawned a number of degenerate beasts. Creatures commonly found in Bellayne include animal herds (sheep, cows), bears, wolves, boars, giant rats, giant weasels, feliquines, various goblinoids and dragons. Being a relatively temperate land, Bellayne hosts a wide variety of deciduous trees (including oak, birch and yew) and various types of shrubbery; the kingdom is well known for its roses and some aristocrats have been known to spend vast sums of money to cultivate the most expansive and luxurious rose gardens.

Further Reading: *Red Steel* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Marina Takanitas.

For this year's contributions to the almanac (thankfully far away from Mivoshia for the most part!), my journeys took me to the western reaches of Brun. When I heard that I would be going to Bellayne, I thought

I would faint! The stories one hears of the place! It always rains. The people are insufferably stuffy and rigid. The food is terrible and bland. The list goes on. Fortunately, my experiences in this kingdom have proven many of the rumors to be just that—false. The Bellaynish, however, have nothing to teach the Kastelians about seafood, but I digress...

The Land

Bellayne is a small but heavily populated kingdom, forming the westernmost of the kingdoms of the central Savage Coast. The countryside consists of a mixture of rolling hills, open grasslands and forests, blanketed by farms and dotted with settlements ranging from tiny hamlets to fairly sizable cities.

The People

The native rakasta of Bellayne form a curious double society—nomadic rakasta who range throughout the kingdom and the Yazak Steppes to the north preserve the traditional rakasta culture, shared with other rakasta in the rest of Mystara and beyond, while the city and town dwellers have borrowed the culture of a race of humans who once lived in the area now covered by Bellayne. In recent years there has been some tension between the two factions as the ever-expanding settlements force the nomads to range further north into goblinoid territory.

Present day Bellayne has a feudal system of government, as well as a fine system of justice and law. But this is somewhat misleading, as even the city moggies remain warriors at heart—they have simply managed to gain control over their emotions.

Recent History

The rakasta of Bellayne, like the lupins of neighboring Renardie, were pushed out of the northern wilderness towards the coast by the goblinoids of the steppes. Here the rakasta discovered Bellayne, a nation of mostly humans with some dwarves and elves

who were just beginning to develop a system of national laws and justice. Some rakasta settled here while most remained wanderers—not long after most of the humans and many demihumans were slain by a mysterious plague. Those that remained invited the rakasta into Bellayne, which began the modern history of the kingdom.

While the kingdom has had some perilous times in the past, the strong warrior tradition of the rakasta have kept the goblinoids at bay, while a disciplined and loyal citizenry have enabled the kingdom to prosper. Lupins and rakasta competed in the past for territory and this has caused a certain degree of suspicion and rivalry between the two peoples. However, they are in the main united against the common threat of the northern goblinoids—and in the years of peace rakasta have developed a taste for fine Renardois wines, while the lupins have come to appreciate Bellaynish wool, tea and liquor.

The Kingdom of Bellayne only recently gained a new monarch, King James II. James makes no secret of his longings to make Bellayne more traditional, in the vein of what he sees to be true rakasta culture and has succeeded in irritating his parliament to the point which there have been clashes of arms. Is this the opening shot of a civil war, or will James succeed in cooling the situation?

Don't Miss

The capital city of Leominster (pop. 30,300, mostly rakasta, many elves, some humans, demihumans and turtles) contains the headquarters of many companies of honorbound, as well as the famed heralds of Bellayne. These illustrious bards provide the traditional Bellaynish entertainment—they gather information and relay it to the common people, often using illusions and magic. The heraldic guilds are so eager to find news that they will often organize spectacular events or send some of their best adventurers on amazing quests around the world. The guilds also write colorful manuscripts detailing their stories and sell them to the nobility in Bellayne and

elsewhere. Different guilds have different styles of work; for example, the Company of the Times consider themselves defenders of the public right to be informed, while the Company of the Sun members search for secrets and share them with the guild, selling them for a price and perhaps seeking favors by letting involved parties know that the information has leaked. Needless to say, such activities ensure that the politics of Bellayne are particularly lively. Heralds all carry writs of identification or even a guild uniform and enjoy certain privileges under Bellaynish law.

The word of the monarch of Bellayne is considered law, but the monarch works with both a council of nobles and religious leaders and a council of rakasta elected from the common people. There is a strong code of national laws, but the various dominions of Bellayne are responsible for the enforcement of those laws. This is, of course, not nearly as egalitarian as the Kastelian political system, but I suppose what works for the locals is good enough.

Other areas of note include the port city of Theeds, home of the Bellaynish navy as well as the Royal University of Theeds; the city of Norchester, which is populated mainly by dwarven coal miners; and the Forest Marches of Wyndham, which form the westernmost border of the kingdom and are home to various longbow-equipped bandits who have in the past repeatedly revolted against the monarch's autocratic rule. Wyndham is thought of as a dangerous bandit haven by the common Bellaynish folk.

Do Miss

As mentioned above, the main place I suggest you avoid in Bellayne is the area surrounding the Forest Marches of Wyndham, but more specifically the western reaches, where it borders the Bayou (where lizard-kin live, or so I am told) and the dark forests of Herath.

CIMARRON (County)

Location: West of Gulf of Hule, southern edge of the coast, south of Almarrón. SC

Area: 7,984 sq. mi. (20,680 sq. km.).

Population: 18,000, including 11,500 in Smokestone City. Roughly 60% human, 25% dwarven, 10% hin (stouts) and 5% turtle.

Languages: Slag.

Coinage: *Oro* (gp), *medio* (ep), *dies* (sp), *centa* (cp).

Taxes: 15% income tax, 10% sales tax in taverns and 10% inheritance tax which includes money made gambling.

Government Type: Independent “barony” part of the Treaty of Tampicos and Signatory Council.

Industries: Mining (*cinnabryl*), production of *smokepowder* and wheellocks (and flintlocks), ale, saloons, gambling.

Important Figures: John of the Wain (“Duke” of Cimarron, human, male, Pa15 Honorbound).

Flora and Fauna: Standard for its warm temperate/subtropical climate, including kudzu, tomatoes, potatoes, maize, plains grasses, deer, armadillos, prairie dogs, turkeys and eagles. Dangerous monsters include goblin and gnoll hordes found scattered throughout the Bushwack Prairie and El Grande Carrascal. Normal animals with Legacies can also be very dangerous.

Further Reading: *The Savage Coast* online document, previous almanacs.

Description by Rikard Prospero.

Cimarron is a small county that is part of Savage Baronies, despite the fact that they call their ruler a duke. Collectively called Los Guardianos, because they guard the rest of the Savage Coast from Hule, the people of the baronies are well respected by the other nations, even though there is hardly any contact between them.

The Land

Cimarron is mostly dry grasslands and farmland with the occasional forest and hilly area. The soil is not very fertile and compared to the other baronies, could almost be considered a desert. The flora that does manage to survive is stunted compared to most other plants.

Smokestone City is known for its saloons and gambling halls, as well as the rowdy crowds such establishments attract. Most hin of Cimarron live in Smokestone City. Old Fort is a town built atop an old Thyatian colonial fort from long ago.

The People

The humans of Cimarron, like the rest of the baronies, tend to be moderately dark-skinned. The *Red Curse* also gives them red overtones. Most humans have straight, black or deep red hair. Cimarron has several hill dwarves living among them and this is the only barony in which hin (of the stout variety) are known to live.

Afflicted in Cimarron are often ignored by the upper class who can afford *cinnabryl* or priestly protection. Because of this, they tend to form their own little enclaves isolated from the normal people.

Cimarron is well known for its rowdy gauchos and the fact that almost everyone carries a wheellock pistol. The inhabitants are fiercely independent and prefer to let everyone to take care of themselves and not get involved in other people’s business.

Cimarrons are proud of their national trade guild, known as the LB Trading Company. Although there is no relation between the LB Trading Company and the government of Cimarron, most people, especially non-Cimarrons, think the two are indeed working together. This company is responsible for exporting the nation’s *smokepowder* and wheellocks, while importing much-needed food. The LB Trading Company has made several outposts throughout the Savage Coast, including the towns of Dunwick (near Renardie) and Richland (near the Orc Head’s Peninsula) and most other nations consider these

outpost cities as colonies of Cimarron, which is a logical conclusion since most humans in these towns are Cimarrons.

Recent History

In AC 900, Thyatian colonists created the nation of Narvaez, including the town of Nueva Esperanza. In AC 905, Nueva Esperanza declared independence from Narvaez, along with many other baronies. This lasted until Almarrón conquered the town in AC 939 and absorbed the surrounding territory.

Finally, in AC 980, the rebel General Cimarron led his people to victory and Nueva Esperanza declared independence from Almarrón. His success was due mainly to the secret production of wheellock pistols and *smokepowder*, as well as Almarrón's preoccupation with trying to invade Gargaña. The new nation called itself Cimarron County and Nueva Esperanza was renamed to Smokestone City. In AC 990, Cimarron ratified the Treaty of Tampicos and was accepted by the other nations.

Cimarron fought against Narvaez during the Inquisition Wars that started in AC 1006. This war ended when Hule attacked the baronies, forcing them to unite together to throw out the invader. The gnolls of El Grande Carrascal took advantage of their weakened state and invaded Cimarron as well as other baronies in AC 1007. They were eventually routed by the end of the year, but at the cost of General Cimarron's life. His son John "The Duke" Cimarron inherited the county.

In AC 1009, the *Red Curse*, which was centered in a few locations just outside the Savage Baronies, mysterious spreads during the Week Without Magic and covers most of the Savage Coast, including all the Savage Baronies. The people soon had to learn to cope with outbreaks of the *Red Curse* and the creation of new afflicted. Most nobles scrambled to find priests or *cinnabryl* to help their people and inheritors made themselves public to better spread their stored *cinnabryl*.

AC 1010 brought the invasion of goblinoids from the Bushwack Prairies, but

again "The Duke" chased them away. In AC 1013, Cimarron agreed to sanction Narvaez and forbid its merchants or the LB Trading Company from selling *smokepowder* to that barony. In AC 1016 Cimarrons rode to the help of the gnolls of El Grande Carrascal and have been fighting the goblins of the Bushwack Prairie ever since. Cimarron also lost its colony of Richland to the Zuyevans and their Renardois allies in 1016.

Don't Miss

The most popular establishment of Cimarron County is the Red Steel Saloon, located in Smokestone City. This is a rowdy tavern with dancers, gambling and many brawls. People claim that at least one showdown (duel with wheellocks or the new flintlocks) occurs in front of the saloon every day. The Red Steel Saloon is the place to be if you want to make a quick reputation in Cimarron; or earn a quick death. Either way, people will learn your name.

GARGOÑA (Baronía de)

Location: West of Gulf of Hule, north of Almarrón, south of Narvaez and east of Saragón. SC

Area: 7,468 sq. mi. (19,340 sq. km.).

Population: 14,000, including 11,700 in Ciudad Real.

Languages: Espa.

Coinage: *Real* (pp), *oro* (gp), *dies* (sp), *centa* (cp).

Taxes: 20% income tax, 5% sales tax.

Government Type: Independent barony part of the Treaty of Tampicos and Signatory Council, partially occupied by Narvaez.

Industries: Arts (music, poems, painting and sculptures), diplomats and political advisers.

Important Figures: None.

Flora and Fauna: Standard for its warm temperate climate, including kudzu, tomatoes, potatoes, maize, alligators, plains grasses, deer, armadillos, prairie dogs,

turkeys and eagles. Dangerous monsters include various giant lizards and undead found in the swamps of *la Delta de Pozaverde*. Normal animals with Legacies can also be very dangerous.

Further Reading: *The Savage Coast* online document, previous almanacs.

Description by Hernando Cagliostro.

Gargoña is recognized as the center of culture in the Savage Baronies, a fact affirmed by the location of the unique university of the coast within its borders. Admission to this grand university is free in return for a promise of future tithes to the nation of Gargoña for the rest of your working life. Since Gargoña is generally viewed as politically neutral, its renowned scholars and graduates are found throughout most of the nations of the Savage Coast as advisers or teachers.

The Land

Although about the same size as any other *baronía*, Gargoña actually has little land for its people to live on. Almost a third of *la baronía* is inhospitable swampland located at *la Delta de Pozaverde*, the mouth of the famous *Río Copos*. On the bright side, this swamp makes approaching the towns of Gargoña from the sea very difficult, preventing attacks from the sea baronies.

The *Río Copos* crosses *la baronía* from west to east and most of the towns and homes of the people can be found along its shores. After about 15 kilometers (10 miles) from the shores, dense forests dominate and they are sparsely inhabited by any locals. These *bosques* cover about one half of *la baronía* and serve as borders with friendly Almarrón and the religious fanatics of Narvaez.

Ciudad Real is the capital of *la baronía* and is located just after *la Delta de Pozaverde*, where *Río Guadiana* merges with *Río Copos*. Skiffs powered by oar ply the waterways of the delta, ferrying commerce to and from seagoing ships, allowing access to the lucrative sea trade.

The People

Gargoñans are typically poets, artists and scholars. Many dream of adventure and excitement, but only a few actually give it a try (and most give it up after their first). Those that do adventure are some of the most swashbuckling souls in the baronies. They are easily offended when people claim that Gargoñans cannot fight and are eager to prove them wrong.

To Gargoñans, the *Red Curse* is a dreaded disease that must be stopped. Many, especially those with an afflicted in the family, try to raise money to fund research into the curse. Luckily, the few priests found in Gargoña are devoted to stopping it and they use their spells to keep the number of afflicted very low within the nation.

Recent History

The history of Gargoña, like so many of the other baronies, is sad and bloody. Originally part of *la Baronía de Narvaez*, the southern half of that nation separated and formed a new *Baronía de Sotto* in AC 913. Cities of this *Baronía de Sotto* soon declared their own independence, causing a civil war. Rivera (which included Ciudad Real) won its bid for independence in AC 926. Gargoña (which only included *la Castillo de Pardoalupe*) finally declared its independence in AC 934. Sotto retaliated and invaded Gargoña. By AC 936, Sotto was soundly defeated and Gargoña had conquered its parent *baronía*. Gargoña released its claim on Sotto and the population reorganized themselves into *la Estado de Almarrón*. In AC 977, Almarrón again went on a spree of conquest. Gargoña merged with the nation of Rivera, keeping the name Gargoña and was able to repulse the invaders in AC 979. *Baronesa Esperanza* was crucial in negotiating a peace treaty with Narvaez during the war of AC 1006 so that the baronies could fight off Hule. The fact that her daughter is married to the son of the racist *Don Hugo* of Narvaez helped in the negotiations.

As with the entire Savage Coast, the *Red Curse* spread through Gargoña in AC 1009 during the dreaded Week Without Magic.

Gargoña has thankfully agreed to the sanction of selling *smokepowder* to Narvaez, until Narvaez invaded Gargoña in AC 1016 and executed *Baronesa Esperanza*.

GUADALANTE (Estado de)

Location: West of Saragón, north of El Grande Carrascal, south and east of the Yazak Steppes. SC

Area: 11,300 sq. mi. (25,265 sq. km.).

Population: 7,500, including 6,300 in Ciudad Huelca.

Languages: Espa.

Coinage: *Oro* (gp), *dies* (sp), *centa* (cp).

Taxes: 25% income tax.

Government Type: Independent barony part of the Treaty of Tampicos and Signatory Council.

Industries: Cattle and horses.

Important Figures: Cristobal “El Barbudo” Bigotillos y Copetez (*Señor*, human, male, R10 Local Hero).

Flora and Fauna: Standard for its warm temperate climate, including kudzu, tomatoes, potatoes, maize, plains grasses, deer, armadillos, prairie dogs, turkeys and eagles. Dangerous monsters include the vast number of goblinoids that raid from the Yazak Steppes. Normal animals with Legacies can also be very dangerous.

Further Reading: *The Savage Coast* online document, previous almanacs.

Description by Rikard Prospero.

Guadalante is a small nation that is part of Savage Baronies. Collectively called Los Guardianos, because they guard the rest of the Savage Coast from Hule, the people of the baronies are well respected by the other nations, even though there is hardly any contact between them.

The Land

Guadalante is nothing more than a large expanse of grassland that serves as grazing land for the numerous cattle and horses

found in the barony. Only the *Rio Copos* and *Rio Negro* break the monotonous terrain. The land along these rivers is fertile farmlands that produce food for the nation.

Scattered throughout this land are the *haciendas* (household) of the various rich cattle-trading families. Only two communities exist in Guadalante, most families preferring to stay in their own fortified *hacienda*. Ciudad Huelca is the capital, boasting a population of just over 6,000, while Dos Cabezas Hacienda is a small village of about 300. The few crafters, merchants and laborers of the barony come from these two communities.

The People

The humans of Guadalante, like the rest of the baronies, tend to be moderately dark-skinned. The *Red Curse* also gives them red overtones. Most humans have straight, black or deep red hair. Other races are rare in Guadalante and goblinoids, rakasta and lupins are disliked. If any other race is present enough to be called Guadalantan, it would be the occasional turtle who works in the *haciendas* of the wealthy merchants.

Guadalantans are crude ruffians who simply cannot appreciate the finer things in life. Most would rather sleep on the ground, outside beneath the stars than in a warm, comfortable bed at a local inn.

Guadalantans are proud of their freedom and will do anything to keep it. They are individualistic and most take care of themselves. The gauchos are the respected heroes here; they are warriors of the ranges who ride horse and wield wheellock pistols with skill. They are by far the roughest, crudest and rowdiest bunch in the entire Savage Baronies.

Guadalantans ignore the *Red Curse* until it affects them directly. Since *cinnabryl* is rare and expensive, most keep the *Red Curse* at bay by visiting the local clergy for a *maintain* spell. Afflicted are treated as less than human in Guadalante, so they often live in their own houses far away from any human community. Some *haciendas* are composed entirely of afflicted.

Recent History

Guadalante has had a very peaceful past when compared with the other baronies. Guadalante was founded in AC 985 when the Baronies of Copetez and Bigotillos united together when their respective heirs were married.

In AC 992, Guadalante fought with Saragón over watering rights, but after one quick battle the two nations came to an agreement with the Treaty of Cortesillas.

Guadalante remained quiet until AC 1006 when it joined forces with the other southern baronies to defend against Narvaez and its allies. It then joined all the baronies to repulse the invading forces of Hule.

In AC 1007, goblinoids invaded the land and caused much damage to numerous *haciendas* of Guadalante. Finally, in AC 1009, a week without magic release the *Red Curse* into the area and people were forced to adapt to the curse by finding *cinnabryl* or begging priests to cast a *maintain* spell on them.

Since then, Guadalante has minded its own business and been left alone by the other baronies, just as it prefers.

NARVAEZ (Baronía de)

Location: Northwest of Saragón, north of Gargoña, south of Torreón. SC

Area: 15,477 sq. mi. (40,085 sq. km.).

Population: 16,000, including 12,300 in Puerto Morillos.

Languages: Espa.

Coinage: *Oro* (gp), *dies* (sp), *centa* (cp).

Taxes: 35% income tax.

Government Type: Independent barony part of the Treaty of Tampicos and Signatory Council.

Industries: Agriculture, mercenaries.

Important Figures: Hugo “El Despiadado” de Narvaez y Montoya (*Barón*, human, male, Pr(cr)15 of Ixion War Priest).

Flora and Fauna: Standard for its warm temperate climate, including kudzu,

tomatoes, potatoes, maize, plains grasses, deer, armadillos, prairie dogs, turkeys and eagles. Dangerous monsters include the vast number of goblinoids that raid from the Yazak Steppes and from an unnamed swamp on the coast of the gulf. Normal animals with Legacies can also be very dangerous.

Further Reading: *The Savage Coast* online document, previous almanacs.

Description by Hernando Cagliostro.

Narvaez. The name of this *baronía* alone is enough to cause fear in most people and with reason. Narvaezans have always be intent on conquest of all the Savage Baronies and they intend for everyone to worship the flames of Ixion and his Inquisitor.

The Land

Narvaez is the largest *baronía* of the Gulf of Hule. It is mostly fertile farmland situated in the valley of *Río Guadiana*. Forested hills mark the borders on either side of the valley. Many villages can be found along the river, but most have been destroyed and are nothing more than ruins thanks to the holy war Narvaez embarked upon a decade ago. Only two main towns are still left in that region: Paz del Sol and Punto-Eseobar.

The southern part of Narvaez turns eastward and goes all the way to the sea, where Puerto Morillos stands. This is the capital of the nation, where *Barón* Hugo rules with an iron fist and his Matónes thugs enforce his laws. Life in Puerto Morillos is very subdued, as to try and be lively and entertaining marks one out for the dreaded inquisitors, who will most assuredly come and visit.

North of this stretch of land and east of *Río Guadiana*, lies *las Colinas Grutescas* and an unnamed swamp. Bandits and religious refugees have made many a hideout in this area and it is rumored to be filled with ruins and ancient treasures.

The People

Narvaezans are an oppressed people who have no freedom to do as they please. The dreaded inquisitors and their goddess, aptly named the Inquisitor, make sure that everyone is extremely devoted to Ixion. Those believed to have performed the slightest heresy are burned at the stake.

The populace is heavily taxed so the *barón* can afford to build his military forces. With these, he insures that there are no revolts in his nation and enforces the worship of Ixion. Many such mercenaries even serve abroad, although most other countries are afraid to hire them because of their religious convictions. Those that do serve outside of Narvaez must still pay taxes to the *barón* or they will be declared heretics.

The *barón* even exports the food of the commoners to other nations for money, often leaving them starving in his own *baronía*. Then El Despiadado [*The Despised. Ed.*] wonders why he has so many revolts and has to pay for so many soldiers. The famous Matónes, the elite guards of Narvaez, are nothing more than thugs who take pleasure in bullying those weaker than they are. And any who complain to the officials are soon found burning at the stakes; the inquisitors find their devotion in Ixion to be lacking merely days afterwards.

Narvaezans view afflicted as those punished by the Immortals, in particular by Ixion. Since *cinnabryl* is rare in Narvaez, only the clerics of Ixion can keep the *Red Curse* at bay with their *maintain* spells. Those who become afflicted are therefore viewed as those who have not been faithful to the church and therefore suffer the punishment they deserve. What I believe is even worse is that the afflicted themselves, so caught up in the religion of Ixion, believe that they are to blame for their curse. What kind of religion puts such false and destructive ideas into the heads of its own people?

These days afflicted are automatically viewed as heretics and are to be killed on sight. Also, druids and mages are equally viewed as heretics, since they obviously worship other sources of powers for their

spells. It is because of my arcane studies that I was forced to flee my own homeland.

Recent History

Narvaez was the first *baronía* along the Savage Coast, created many years ago by Ispan [*a group of Thyatians. Ed.*] colonists at the turn of the last century. They claimed the entire coast of the Gulf of Hule where almost all the other baronies now lie.

Soon after its creation, several towns declared their independence and formed their own baronies. Then, in AC 913, the first *barón* died and the nation was divided in two by his two heirs. The northern *baronía* remained Narvaez while the southern one became *la Baronía de Sotto*. Over the next decades, Sotto fell apart to numerous civil wars and eventually became what are known as Gargoña, Almarrón and Cimarron.

Meanwhile, Narvaez itself was facing many revolts and declarations of independence as well. Tired of these secessions, the *barón* started building his forces and attacked the rebellious towns. By AC 937, Narvaez had reclaimed all its lands, not including those that were given to Sotto. *El barón* continued to build his forces to prevent any other uprisings. Narvaez became known for its infantry and military throughout the baronies. They held their land and remained peaceful until the next century.

Then in AC 1005, Narvaez fell into civil war over their religion. *El barón* managed to unite his people in AC 1006 by claiming that it was the other nations which were heretics, uniting the factions into a holy war against the rest of the baronies. Torreón, Texeiras and Vilaverde joined Narvaez against the other baronies. This war ended when Hule invaded, forcing the barons to work together or lose all their lands.

Near the end of AC 1009, the *Red Curse* spread throughout the land and many Narvaezans became afflicted. This has begun causing many troubles within *la baronía* and many believe that another religious civil war is inevitable. In AC 1014, *Barón* Hugo began stockpiling *smokepowder* and many feared that *la baronía* would again

start a spree of conquests and expansion. In consequence, they have created sanctions that thankfully forbade the export of *smokepowder* to Narvaez. Unfortunately this hasn't stopped *Barón* Hugo, who attacked and conquered most of Gargoña in AC 1016.

Don't Miss

The one thing I enjoy in Narvaez is to see the daring swashbucklers in Puerto Morillos. They wear masks and go about taunting the inquisitors, the priests of Ixion, Los Matónes and even *el barón*. Sadly, many of them have been killed and burned at the stake, but just as many always manage to escape and harass the fanatical Narvaezans even more.

Do Miss

Unless you are willing to become a near-slave to the whims of the Matónes and the inquisitors, I recommend avoiding Narvaez as much as possible. If you must go, stay in small villages where you will be harder to find.

SARAGÓN (Baronía de)

Location: East of Guadalante, north of El Grande Carrascal, west of Gargoña and Narvaez. SC

Area: 8,757 sq. mi. (22,680 sq. km.).

Population: 8,000, including 6,600 in Ciudad Matacán.

Languages: Espa.

Coinage: *Oro* (gp), *dies* (sp), *centa* (cp).

Taxes: 20% income tax.

Government Type: Independent barony part of the Treaty of Tampicos and Signatory Council.

Industries: Sages and knowledge.

Important Figures: Balthazar de Montejo y Aranjuez (*Barón*, human, male, M12).

Flora and Fauna: Standard for its warm temperate climate, including kudzu, tomatoes, potatoes, maize, plains grasses, deer, armadillos, prairie dogs, turkeys and

eagles. Dangerous monsters include goblinoids that raid from the Yazak Steppes. Normal animals with Legacies can also be very dangerous.

Further Reading: *The Savage Coast* online document, previous almanacs.

Description by Hernando Cagliostro.

Saragón is one of the three enlightened states of the baronies. Along with Gargoña and Almarrón, its rulers promote philosophy, arts and education among its people. Saragón is also famous in its role of defending the baronies from invasions from the Yazak Steppes thanks to *la Careta de la Barrera* [The Barrier Mask. *Ed.*], an artifact of the Immortal Ixion that repulses enemy forces that approach it. A second artifact, the *Bracers of Forbiddance*, enhances the *Barrier Mask's* already great powers.

The Land

Saragón is mostly composed of prairies that lie along *Rio Maldito* and *Rio Copos*. The western borders run along *la Bosque de las Sombras* (the Forest of Phantoms), woods rumored to be haunted by the legions of soldiers who died fighting the gnolls who once inhabited to forest.

Saragón has three baronets, minor lords who represent each one region of *la baronía*. The Baronet of Aranjuez represents the north, while the baronet of Montejo hails from the southern parts. The Baronet of Saragón comes from the central area of the nation.

The People

Saragóners are an enlightened people, much like Gargoñans, due mainly to the good education they receive from the nobles. Mages and scientists are very common here and are in fact renowned throughout the baronies as the wisest sages of the Savage Coast. Many here study the *Red Curse* and are trying to understand it better and possibly defeat it if possible.

Also common in Saragón are the inheritors. This is due to the fact that the

original inheritors all came from this nation. In fact, Baronet *Don Luis de Manzanás* is one of those original inheritors. Because of this longer use of Legacies in the area, Saragón has more *red steel* and *cinnabryl* than most other nations.

Despite this high concentration of *cinnabryl*, most people use the priestly *maintain* spell to keep the *Red Curse* at bay. This is partially because of *cinnabryl's* high price and partially because they have well thought about the consequences of running out of *cinnabryl*. Afflicted are therefore rare as even the children of the land understand the properties of the dreaded *Red Curse*. Those that are afflicted are treated no differently than someone with any other disease or wound; say someone missing a leg or an arm.

Recent History

Saragón has had a relatively peaceful history and this is perhaps one of the reasons it is an enlightened state. The nation was formed in AC 966 when the Baronies of Montejo and Aranjuez united after several years of working together to defeat encroaching goblinoids and gnolls. Saragón remained peaceful except for a small dispute over watering rights with Guadalante throughout most of its history.

In AC 993, adventurers found the *Barrier Mask* that has helped keep the nation safe since then. AC 1006 brought the holy wars in which Saragón united with other baronies to fight against Narvaez. As is well known, this battle ended when all the baronies united to fight off Hule. Then, in AC 1007, goblinoids from the steppes invaded, but were subsequently repulsed as well.

At the end of AC 1009, magic failed for a week and there was much commotion in the nation. Goblinoids took advantage of the failure of the *Barrier Mask* to attack Manzanás's tower and destroyed it. Also, this is when the dreaded *Red Curse* spread throughout the land.

In AC 1010, Luis de Manzanás had a new *castillo* constructed, but was then challenged by the inheritor Balazar. The troubles caused

by this challenge eventually led to the discovery of the *Bracers of Forbiddance*, which helped repulse another goblinoid invasion led by Balazar. This new artifact, along with the *Barrier Mask*, are in the possession of *Don Luis de Manzanás*, where he keeps the borders safe from goblinoids and Narvaezans.

Since then, Saragón has remained out of most of the politics of the region, except for its demand to increase the sanctions on Narvaez.

SLAGOVICH (*City-State of*)

Location: West of Gulf of Hule, northern region of Serpent's Peninsula. SC

Area: 1,232 sq. mi. (3,190 sq. km.).

Population: 17,000 (mostly humans and a few demihumans).

Languages: Slag, Slagich (dialect of Traladaran).

Coinage: *Bright* (90% silver, 10% undepleted *cinnabryl*), *fair* (98% copper, 2% undepleted *cinnabryl*), *dim* (depleted *bright*), *dark* (depleted *fair*). Value: 1 *bright* = 5 *fairs* = 50 *dims* = 500 *darkes*. Silver ingots are used in merchant trades.

Taxes: Unknown.

Government Type: Independent monarchy ruled by a *margrave*.

Industries: Trade, mining (*cinnabryl*).

Important Figures: Miosz II (Margrave, human, male, F5 Noble), Stavro (Leader of the Knights of Halav, human, male, F14).

Further Reading: *The Savage Coast* online document, previous almanacs.

Description by Piotr Drobnjak.

It's a great pleasure for me to describe my home city in such a precious book published in the same land that gave birth to the Mighty Halav. May He protect us all and help me in the use of Thyatian.

The Land

Slagovich proper is just a five centuries old small stronghold built high atop a plateau, next to a cliff overlooking the Gulf of Hule. The city-state also controls a tiny stretch of hilly land between the village of Kastr to the south and the ruins of Grabana to the north.

High and well-defended walls surround the city's mortar and stonework houses, but the nobles and the richest families live inside the walls. Most of the population lives in badly maintained dwellings, outside the protection of the walls. A few scattered farms dot the countryside.

Almost all buildings have a faint reddish-brown color, due to the presence of *cinnabryl* in the area.

The People

The inhabitants of Slagovich, mostly humans of mixed Yavdlom and Traladaran stocks, sport dark hairs and reddish-brown skin (probably due to the *Red Curse*). A few demihumans inhabit the city too. Despite the many adventurers and the bustling trade business, most of the population consists in poor miners who work in the rich *cinnabryl* mines.

Worship of Halav is the main faith in the area, especially since the brotherhood known as the Knights of Halav has helped Slagovich resist the Hulean attempts at seizing the city.

Recent History

In the last decade or so the whole area suffered from continuous war. Slagovich is an important trading post and the gate to the east, moreover it has an important mine of *cinnabryl*, so the evil Master of Hule has tried to conquer it several times. He almost managed to do it in AC 1000, when *Margrave Miosz II*, then a child, was able to keep his throne thanks to the intervention of the Knights of Halav and an Alphatian adventurer named Haldemar.

In the following years Hule invaded Sind and attempted to conquer all the city-states,

but the alliance of the five cities managed to repel the Hulean evil bands.

Recently, as the Hulean threat loosened, Slagovich has been attacked by joint forces of Zvornik and Hojah and tension is still high in the area.

Don't Miss

Slagovich's most famous features, except the Black Samovar Inn, are the hydraulic mechanism designed by excellent Slagovian engineers and present everywhere in the city.

Located in a huge natural cavern connected by a natural shaft to the city, the harbor is a masterpiece of engineering. For a high fee the cavern can be sealed and filled with water, thus allowing a ship to move deep into the city along a series of canals to unload her goods.

Due to the high number of canals, drawbridges and water locks, the city of Slagovich is also known among eastern travelers as "Glantri of the West."

SUMA'A (Kingdom of) and GOMBAR (Kingdom of)

Suma'a:

Location: Western edge of the Arm of the Immortals, continent of Brun. WB

Area: 19,240 sq. mi. (49,830 sq. km.).

Population: 60,000, including 25,000 in the capital Sumag.

Languages: Ak'an (a language descended from Tanagoro and ogre).

Coinage: Pesawa (ep), cedi (gp).

Taxes: 10% export tax, 15% import tax (except on food), 5% mineral tax.

Government Type: Monarchy moderately influenced by mercantile interests. The king must be a shaman.

Industries: Mining (gold, iron, diamonds, electrum, platinum), jewelry.

Important Figures: Aw'ar (Chief Priest of Sumag, ogre-kin, female, Pr(shaman)15).

Flora and Fauna: Unknown.

Further Reading: Previous almanacs.

Gombar:

Location: Western edge of the Arm of the Immortals, continent of Brun. WB

Area: 28,120 sq. mi. (72,830 sq. km.).

Population: 72,000, including 30,000 in the capital Emdur.

Languages: Ak'an (a language descended from Tanagoro and ogre).

Coinage: Pesawa (ep), cedi (gp).

Taxes: 10% export tax, 15% import tax (except on food), 5% mineral tax.

Government Type: Monarchy heavily influenced by mercantile interests. The king must be a shaman.

Industries: Mining (gold, rubies, diamonds, electrum, platinum), jewelry.

Important Figures: Droog (Chief Priest of Gombar, ogre-kin, male, Pr(shaman)10), Opatuo (Head of the Mining Exchange of Emdur, ogre-kin, female, Merchant14).

Flora and Fauna: Unknown.

Further Reading: Previous almanacs.

Description by Gnighmen Lodestar.

I traveled briefly in these two kingdoms when Serraine was passing nearby. Matazumi had piqued my interest in this area with tales of land ruled by giant civilized ogre-like beings. These beings, he informed me, rule two huge mercantile kingdoms led by shamans. These kingdoms are rich in mineral wealth with gold, electrum and iron being mined extensively from the hills and mountains of the Arm of Immortals that form the eastern extent of the two kingdoms. Numerous types of precious stones are also mined from these areas and these along with the gold are crafted by the artisans of the land. The jewelry and mineral wealth, however, is not what has made the area rich. It is the overseas trade that the people conduct with countries up and down the western shores of Brun and Davania as well as the eastern extents of Skothar that

has made the kingdoms what they are. Both kingdoms possess extensive merchant and naval fleets with which they maintain their control over the water.

Once Matazumi had given me this briefing of the land that I would travel in I affected a magical disguise to help me pass unnoticed during my brief sojourn through the land. I decided to borrow a cloud-clipper for my journey and land near the city of Emdur, the capital of Gombar.

The Land

I was unable to visit any area outside the city of Emdur during my stay and therefore do not know anything about it. I hope to visit the two kingdoms again soon and describe the area with more detail on the Kingdom of Suma'a and the lands surrounding the city of Emdur.

However, in my travel from the area where I landed my plane into the city, I noted some things. Primarily the lack of people living outside the city: I passed no one on my short journey and there were no farms—not that the land seemed very arable. Why there are no people living on the land is a mystery to me and how the populace can eat is truly an enigma. During my short trip I did notice the sounds of drumbeats. From where and why these drumbeats were beating was also a bit of a source of puzzlement for me—one that I was unable to answer during my stay.

The People

The people of Gombar and Suma'a are twofold in their interests. Firstly, there are the merchants and miners who are interested in furthering their mercantile aims. Then there are the religious groups who lead the populace.

The interactions between the religious and mercantile members of the people are very interesting. The mercantile members of the people seem to have control over the religious group by virtue of the money and jobs that they generate. However, it is the religious groups that lead the people. It is true that the leaders are heavily influenced

by mercantile interests, but a similar influence of the shamans over the merchants was evident to me, as proved by the respect that shamans visiting the Mining Exchange were given. They were not feared, as those who are religious seem to be in other areas but actually treated with respect.

Don't Miss

The Mining Exchange in Emdur is the tallest and most opulent building in the city. In fact the height of the building is astounding. Over 25 stories high, the building is truly massive, especially considering that because the inhabitants are so tall each story is fifteen feet high; why a building should have so many stories is, however, beyond me. Though seeing the building I have an idea for a weight and pulley mechanism that could be attached to the outside of the building which would move people up and down floors without the need for stairs—I think I'd call it a mechanical-levitator.

The exchange is a hive of activity during the day and throughout the night. Within the exchange miners come in and sell their goods. In the same place merchants buy the minerals to trade with other countries. Artisans also frequent the building buying gold and gemstones and selling their crafts to merchants.

The most amazing sight within the exchange is a large room, known as the Floor, which exists over three stories, within which the prices of the cargoes of ships as well as the standings of the mineral finds from the mines are traded and reassessed on a continual basis. The room is very confusing, with ogre-kin screaming prices and names at the young ogre-kin standing above them at large boards, who write the new prices and standings in the relevant places. How anyone can hear anything in this place is an amazement to me. I was here the day after the platinum from a new mine was being traded in the exchange—I was informed that on this day the Floor was more active than usual—how this can be is beyond me.

YADVLOM (Most Serene Divinarchy of)

Location: Continent of Brun, southern half of Serpent Peninsula (including Thanegia Island). DV

Area: Approx. 240,000 sq. mi. (621,600 sq. km).

Population: 1,000,000.

Language: Yavdlom.

Coinage: Yavdlom does not mint its own coins, but foreign currencies are accepted at face value.

Government Type: Divinarchy (rule by sages and soothsayers), nation is divided into numerous dominions.

Industries: Trade, agriculture (mostly fruits, nuts and vegetables), fishing.

Important Figures: Msiba Jahi (*Bwana Ramla* (Great Prophet), human, female, Pr18 of Yav), Kondu Paka (*Bwana Gwaride* (Great Guardian), human, male, F16), Jibada Yavswano (*Mokuba* (Ruler), human, male, F7).

Flora and Fauna: Covering much of the southern portion of the Serpent Peninsula and Thanegia Island, Yavdlom is filled with thick jungles and foul swamps. The coasts are dominated by vast mangrove swamps, fed by the thousands of nutrient-laden rivers, flowing from the central highlands of Thanegia Island and the Nakakande Rain Forest on the mainland. Further inland, sunlight is almost completely blocked out by the dense canopy of vegetation high overhead and where light does filter to the jungle floor, a great profusion of bushes, vines and thorns makes overland travel extremely difficult. The Okwonga Lowlands, along the southernmost portion of the peninsula, are a vast swamp, choked with mangroves and mud.

Just as Yavdlom is blessed with rich vegetation, it is also teeming with animal life. Deep in the interior jungles one can find herds of triceratops and packs of tyrannosaurus rex. Also present are hundreds of varieties of snakes and birds, as well as various types of wild boar, deer, elephants and predatory cats - including

displacer beasts. Also known to inhabit the Nakakande Rain Forest are several tribes of trolls and jungle orcs and some tales are told of green dragons making their homes far from prying eyes. The great swamps of the Okwonga Lowlands are no less populated—here, one can find tribes of lizard men and orcs, as well as scattered gatherings of Mugumba mud-dwellers. It has also been said that a great black dragon makes its home somewhere deep within the swamps, feeding off of anything so foolish as to venture near its lair. Among the less sentient inhabitants are water termites, hydrae, giant leeches, purple worms, snakes and crocodiles.

Further Reading: *Champions of Mystara* boxed set, *Voyage of the Princess Ark* series, previous almanacs.

Description by Marina Takanitas.

I have traveled the byways of the Serpent Strait, that narrow body of water separating the Serpent Peninsula from Davania, for only a few years, but visiting the odd yet wonderful realm of Yavdlom has always been full of new experiences. Whether one seeks high adventure, bustling ports, or relaxation, Yavdlom has much to offer the visitor. I shall try to do it some justice in my description of this exotic nation, but I feel one must go and see its rare beauty for themselves, in order to fully appreciate the simplicity and complexity of this land and its people.

The Land

Ask any person living around the western Sea or Dread what comes to mind when they picture an untamed, fearsome wilderness and they will likely say “Yavdlom.” It is not by coincidence that this is so. Few other lands in the region contain so much diversity and density in life. Much of the country that is not swampland is rugged and hilly, covered by dense foliage. One would think that such a land could not be inhabited by civilized folk, but it is indeed. Scattered throughout the jungles of Thanegia Island and along the coast of the

peninsula, lie the towns and cities of the people of Yavdlom.

As mentioned earlier, Yavdlom is spread across two landmasses—Thanegia Island in the south, upon which most of the populace lives and the southern portion of the Serpent Peninsula. Separating the Sea of Dread from the Izondian Deep, Yavdlom receives a large amount of stormy weather, particularly in the summer months, when monsoons sweep in from the seas to batter the coasts. The three-month long wet season, during which a drenching downpour is almost guaranteed every day, combines with the tropical climate to produce a land of dense jungles and seemingly endless swamps. So fertile are the soils here, that more than one harvest per year can be coaxed from them.

The People

If the land of Yavdlom appears unique, the people who inhabit it are doubly so. They are generally tall and slim, with very dark skin and tight, curly hair. Veteran merchants and explorers, who claim to have plied all the major seas of Mystara, say that in the far east there are many such dark-skinned people, just as the Pearl Islands are home to them as well. Almost all of them possess slightly pointed ears—a clear sign that, at some point in their past, extensive contact with elves occurred. The one thing that stands out the most among the people of Yavdlom is that a high proportion of them appear to be gifted with mental powers of precognition to some degree. Those who have the strongest powers are placed in the *ramla* class—a class of seers and advisors who use their abilities to guide the people along the best path, yet ensuring that the fundamental balance between light and dark is not disturbed. At least, this is how I understood it.

Those whose abilities are very weak or nonexistent are largely relegated to the layman class. These are the commoners, if you will. Among these people, however, are drawn the nobility of Yavdlom. Those of the *ramla* class are forbidden from interfering in

the affairs of the nation, lest, according to the Precepts of Yav, they use their powers to further their own ambitions. Instead, the *ramlas* go out among the populace, searching for those laymen who, according to their predictions, will make a difference. Thus, there is a clear division among the laymen—the *tukufu* (those who matter) and the *ogwambe* (those who do not). *Tukufu* candidates are sought out whenever a prominent post becomes available and indeed they are strongly encouraged by society to fill those posts—they would otherwise be denying their own fate, it seems. There they remain in their position, until the *ramlas* determine that whatever purpose, for which the *tukufu* had been chosen, has finally been fulfilled. Thereafter, they lose their status and become what is known as *swetanga*, which appears to have the same level of prestige as a knight in other realms.

Even after my time in Yavdlom, I still find I cannot quite accept the cold logic of such a system. Certainly, it produces the best candidate for the task at hand, but I find it unpalatable that so many people—the *ogwambe*—are simply written off as being of no significance. It is said that the *ramlas* are as unfathomable as they are wise. This I believe.

If there is one word I would use to describe the People of Yav (as the folk of this nation call themselves), it would be “serene.” Guided by the members of their *ramla* class, the commoners go about their lives, secure in the knowledge that all will happen as it is fated to be. This confidence gives them the air of being content, as though, compared to those of other nations, they have few cares in the world. I do not know the truth of this, but many of them do appear to have a certain degree of fatalism. Very often I heard such phrases as “It was meant to be” or “Fate has decreed that this should be so” while walking the streets of Tanakumba. For all that, however, the People of Yav are not an idle folk, nor are the commoners the slaves of the *ramla* class.

Recent History

The precise details of Yavdlom’s history are lost to us today, but it is known that the people who call themselves the People of Yav have lived in this region for a very long time—at least a thousand years or more. This ancient period of settlement is largely a mystery to Yavdlom scholars today, though there is evidence of widespread settlement—perhaps over a larger area than currently controlled by the nation. This, in addition to the discovery of underwater ruins, has led some people to conclude that there was once a great civilization on the Serpent Peninsula, but a disaster of some sort brought it to an end.

Much of recorded history in Yavdlom—at least, that history which is studied most often—dates from the legendary time of Yav, the first great leader. It is said that some great disaster, perhaps the one that produced those ancient ruins, forced the ancestors of the modern People of Yav to flee westwards to a new land, where they sheltered until their leader, Yav, determined it was safe to return. Upon returning, he issued his people a set of rules, known as the Precepts of Yav, to govern their behavior. All this was said to happen many centuries ago. The time before the introduction of the precepts is viewed by many, especially those of the *ramla* class, as a dark age, where the People of Yav fought as common beasts and did not aspire to anything.

Yavdlom’s contact with the nations of the Old World officially began in AC 852, when Minrothaddan explorers discovered the “most limpid city of Thanopolis,” which we know today as Tanakumba. In those days, when the city had only just been founded, there was little more than the *Azizi Berungi* and a collection of houseboats and huts on stilts. Since that time, Tanakumba and the rest of Yavdlom with it, has grown into a prosperous place, with traders from Kastelios, Sind, Minrothad, Ierendi and other lands vying for a share of the lucrative trade in sugar, coffee, cocoa and other exotic goods.

Don't Miss

Perhaps the one thing that stands out most in Yavdlom is its capital city—Tanakumba! Home to over 25,000 people, this is a city that never sleeps, as people constantly go about their business. Founded some 200 years ago, during the birth of the modern nation of Yavdlom, Tanakumba is a unique city, representing the past and future of these people. Spread among roughly 50 islands and nestled in the midst of a great delta, modern Tanakumba is built atop the half-sunken ruins of a much older city, whose inhabitants remain largely unknown to this day. Some of the ancient stone buildings have been restored, however and these tend to dominate the city's islands, surrounded by more modern wooden ones. Visitors will also notice the graceful bridges that connect most of these islands and many of these have sections that can be raised or lowered magically to allow tall ships to pass through them.

What visitors will notice most, of course, is the *Azizi Berungi*, the dwelling place of the great prophet. It is truly a miraculous building, dominating the center of Tanakumba through its sheer size and wonder. Standing 200 feet tall and made from one giant conch shell, this great palace contains twenty floors—enough room for the great prophet and a host of administrators and servants. The fact that it is one giant conch shell, however, is what astounds all who see it. At its very tip—indeed, at the tip of all shell towers in Tanakumba—is a small chamber known as the *Nuru wa Ukweli*, or “fire chamber.” Here, a flame is kept burning at all times, symbolizing wisdom. On a clear night from on high, it is an impressive sight to look down into the city and see these fires burning in unison—like hundreds of tiny stars twinkling above the water, their light reflected in the canals and waterways.

Do Miss

Just as Tanakumba is well worth the visit, one would do well to avoid the under-city that lays beneath it. When the city was

constructed some 200 years ago, great petrified wooden platforms were laid out, along with the numerous islands, as the ground upon which all buildings would be constructed. What lies beneath is a foul underworld, reputedly inhabited by the desperate, the shunned and the criminal. I learned from a talkative local that the underworld is said to be a vast warren of tunnels, containing building foundations, sewers and even the half-buried ruins of the ancient city that was said to have existed here long ago! No one appears to question whether or not such a place truly exists, though I have heard that few who venture into the bowels of Tanakumba ever return.

Another place to avoid, but one that is not acknowledged for a different reason, is the town of Gwondoya. Situated on the western coast of Yavdlom, on the Serpent Peninsula, Gwondoya was founded circa AC 920 by a large group of Yavdlom settlers and traders, eager to carve out a new domain for themselves and to open a convenient port to attract merchants from Slagovich. This is where all official mention of Gwondoya ends; within ten years of its founding, so I am told, nothing was heard from the town or its inhabitants. Over the ensuing years, parties have ventured there to determine Gwondoya's fate, but few have returned. Those that did so reported that the town is strangely intact, with no signs of damage. They uncovered no signs of neglect; everything had the appearance of being untended only for a few moments. What was missing where the inhabitants. So sinister is the tale and so strong is the feeling of evil in the area, that no native of Yavdlom will willingly go there; nor will they speak of it. A perplexing tale, to be sure, but perhaps one would do well to heed the words of the natives.

Atlas of Western Brun

Introduction to Western Brun

Continuing with its effort to expand its presence in lesser-known areas of the world, the *Mystaran Almanac* introduces this year a new region to its atlas section: Western Brun. Western Brun is not a well-defined region, but rather encompasses the Empire of Hule and its surrounding region, some of which are satellites, while others are independent nations—sometimes even empires. Western Brun is the area west of the Great Waste and north of the Yazak Steppes and south of Hyborea (though pending our extending to cover Hyborea, events and places from these northern reaches are tagged as part of Western Brun).

Labeled as evil by our Old-World standards, the empire of the Master is little known in eastern Brun, where Thyatis and Alphatia have been traditionally casting their shadows. Up to the invasion of Darokin by the Desert Nomads in the wake of the Great War that ravaged the Old World a decade ago and the spectacular meteor impact that concluded that epic, Hule was a far, evil hagiarchy ruled by the Master and his holy men in the name of the treacherous Immortal Bozdogan. The rare accounts of its grandeur, evilness and expansionism were tales told second-hand by Minrothaddan merchant princes who traded with Slagovich merchants. Little did we know.

In this almanac, you will at last learn from our correspondents about the holy land and its mysterious Master. You will also find out about the nations that lay to the west of Hule and that have gone even more unknown by us than the mysterious Hule. We will also recount the recent—and occasionally no so recent—events, hopefully shading a new light upon the events that happened right here in the Old World and for which we were not prepared as we had had so little prior contact with the western empire and other the distant nations of the west. Hule is indeed a big player, however

far and forgotten it is, in the international field and it is certainly not the city-states and baronies of the Savage Coast that will contradict me on that point. We hope that by introducing it to the almanac we will help this otherwise ignored empire come into full light, so that it won't ever have to introduce itself the hard way again.

Correspondents for Western Brun

Here is our list of correspondents that give us detailed information on the nations, places and events of Western Brun:

Giulio di Sergio-Orsini

The only correspondent from the Klagorst region is the Thyatian Giulio diSergio. Descendant of a fallen aristocratic family and born in Kerendas, Giulio was a Thyatian diplomat, formerly in Karameikos. After the war of 1005-09, due to his obvious diplomatic incapacity at the court of King Stefan, he was given the doubtful honor of exploring the western parts of Brun in 1010 for the empire. Giulio has traveled westwards for years and has now settled down in Valeryistadt. His reports on regions not covered by our almanac before has been given to us by the Thyatian government thanks to the intercession of Vivianna Romanones.

Marina Takanitas

At 23, Marina Takanitas is one of the youngest on our team and she brings us news from the empires west of Hule. Marina is a trader who hails from Kastelios, one of the biggest and fastest-growing, port cities in the region.

A cheerful person, her laughing brown eyes and bouncing golden curls are hard to miss in a crowd, but this exterior also serves to shield a very capable correspondent who will stop at nothing to get you, the reader, the ground-breaking stories of western Brun as they happen. No danger is too much for

her and, believe me, she knows how to use that short sword she carries!

Piotr Drobnjak

Adventurer and part-time merchant, Piotr is our correspondent for Slagovich and nearby states. A devout follower of Halav, the young Piotr has a deep knowledge of city-states' affairs.

Piotr describes us his hometown, Slagovich and the mysterious land of Hule (this one just from bibliographic research).

Atlas

BYLOT HILLS

[The following information was obtained, at great risk and personal expense, from confidential documentation found in the DDC offices in Sayr Ulan. Our source believed that the information was originally obtained over the course of several years, through intensive field observations and intelligence gathering. The staff of the *Mystaran Almanac* are, of course, not at liberty to divulge the identity of the individual in question. Ed.]

Location: Continent of Brun, west of the Dark Wood, east of the Yalu River. WB

Area: 82,000 sq. mi. (212,380 sq. km.), including 28,220 sq. mi. (73,090 sq. km.) occupied by Hule, 9,800 sq. mi. (25,380 sq. km.) occupied by Zuyevo; the remainder is contested between the two empires.

Population: 175,000 (160,000 humans, 15,000 mixed humanoids).

Languages: Hulean, Zuyevan, Sendaryan.

Coinage: Various, barter is also common.

Government Type: None, except within the imperial territories.

Industries: Gold, platinum, tin, iron, copper, electrum and silver can all be found in abundance here. At the moment there are only a handful of mines. Two are operated by Hule (copper and iron), one by Zuyevo (silver) and one is independently operated in no-man's land (platinum).

Important Figures: Whoever has the most troops and the best weapons rules!

Flora and Fauna: Not included in report.

Further Reading: None.

Description by Marina Takanitas.

The Bylot Hills are a flashpoint region. They are sandwiched between the great empires of Hule and Zuyevo and are rich in mineral wealth. Thus, they have been a contested border region for many years—Talmavs and Hulean settlers have recently begun migrating to the area in large numbers

to seek their fortune. Prior to this however, before the mineral wealth of the area was known, the Bylot Hills were a sanctuary for various monster races; humans did not penetrate the center of the hills and lived primarily on the periphery. Olgarians and Huleans lived to the east, Talmavs to the west and Sendaryan tribesmen to the north. However, the balance has changed in the last twenty years—the humanoids that used to live in the area have left for employment in the Master’s armies or have been hunted to virtual extinction by Talmav riders.

The Land

The Bylot Hills encompass a large area of central Brun, located east of the northern Yazak Steppes and west of Hule’s Converted Lands. The terrain mostly consists of rough, weathered hills with sparse vegetation. However, the northeastern stretches of hills are moderately forested and tough Yazak grasslands make up a substantial part of the southwest and western portions.

The area is very rich in a number of valuable ores, although this has only been discovered in the last decade by Hulean and Talmav prospectors. The most common ore by far is copper, which can be found in quite large deposits in the eastern part of the hills. Iron and tin also form a large part of the mineral resources of the region and are located mainly in the northern and central hills. Electrum and silver veins are rarer, being located mostly in the southern and southwestern hills. Gold is not as common as silver, but tends to be scattered all over the region, especially in the eastern and southern hills. Platinum, as one would expect, is the rarest of the ores. Only one vein exists and it is only a small one at that, located in the northeastern hills. It is currently the subject of an independent mining operation—the miners are Sendaryan and are doing their best to keep their strike secret—although that is becoming difficult with rival armies dashing all over the place.

The People

The Bylot Hills include the following notable sites:

Bagvar (pop. 6,000): Bagvar is the only town of any note in the Bylot Hills. It is the principal Hulean outpost in the hills and as such is home to a Hulean garrison of 400 troops. Located 110 miles west of Leqan it is a cosmopolitan place, home to traders and miners. The population of the town swells to quadruple its size for two weeks every year when the Bagvar Trade Festival is held. About seven miles south of Bagvar is a profitable iron mine that produces high grade ore suitable for weapons and tool manufacturing. The ore is normally transported to Bagvar where it is refined and then shipped to Hule.

Laika Fortress: Laika is a superb defensive fortress almost impenetrable to conventional assault. Garrisoned by 250 troops it is the deepest foothold of Zuyevan power that has so far been built in the Bylot Hills. Laika provides protection to local Talmav and Zuyevan miners and settlers and also acts as a distribution point and market for goods, mined metals, weapons and supplies entering and exiting the Bylot Hills.

Andropov Fortress: Located on a large cliff-like hill overlooking the intersection of the Nyezhin and Yalu Rivers andropov is a strongly-built river port and fortress. It is home to 400 troops and designed to anchor the trinity of Zuyevan fortresses in the Bylot Hills. The military commander of the fortress is under orders to send patrols north along the Yalu River to deter Kazmen tribesmen from southern incursions, as well as sending patrols into the Zdredanyan Forest to assist Sendaryan tribesmen against occasional raids from the Kazmens and Huleans. Covert patrols are also sent along the Nyezhin River into the Bylot Hills, although these are careful to avoid large scale confrontations with patrolling Hulean forces.

Rzev Fortress: Located in an isolated section of the Bylot Hills region known as the Iron Hills, this area is home to a major silver mine and hence the reason for the

Zuyevan presence. The fort is surrounded by wide grasslands and a garrison of 150 troops is present to secure the northern route from Kulikovo to Andropov and to prevent incursions from the humanoids of the Yazak Steppes (although they are of little threat now—the Zuyevans are being cautious against their inevitable return).

Recent History

Fall, AC 1003: The Zuyevan crusade has driven out or slaughtered many of the humanoids that inhabit the northernmost part of the Yazak Steppes. Unlike the tribes that threaten the Savage Coast (like the Dankut, Hupkur and Kuttai) the northern Yazak tribes are relatively disorganized and weak; they have proved unable to stand against the might of the Zuyevan war machine. Of those who survive, many flee eastwards to Hule and into the welcoming arms of the Master.

Summer, AC 1004: A detachment of Talmav settlers arrives in the northern Bylot Hills from the Empire of Zuyevo. They settle among the local colonists and are rapidly integrated in the multicultural society of the Bylot Hills. However, they secretly remain loyal to the distant *tsar*.

Spring, AC 1006: Consolidating their control of the eastern bank of the Yalu River, Zuyevan troops begin constructing a defensive corridor to allow easy and safe access to the northern Bylot Hills. The construction of three major fortresses that anchor this corridor—Laika, Rzev and Andropov—begins. They will eventually provide Zuyevo with the ability to maintain large garrisons in the northern Yazak Steppes and northwestern Bylot Hills. The fortresses are situated in a manner that makes them easy to resupply both by land from Kulikovo and directly from the Yalu River via Magnitogrod and Sharya.

Summer, AC 1011: Contacts are made between the Zuyevans and the exiled Olgarian Church of Traladara. The Olgarian Church and the Zuyevan Orthodox Church share many sympathies so the Empire of Zuyevo pledges to support the rebels in their

struggle against Hule. This support soon materializes in the form of gold and experienced Talmav mercenaries.

Fall, AC 1012: Relieved of some of the military pressure put on them by the humanoids of the Janizary Lands, the Olgarian population rebels wholesale in what seems to be a carefully planned operation. The Hulean governor is ousted and Dimitur Yotov, head of the Church of Traladara is liberated with the aid of Talmav mercenaries. The church's clergy proclaims Rahil Venevanova Queen of Olgar. Meanwhile, Zuyevo dispatches some of its Talmav troops to take control of the mineral-rich Freelands of the Northern Bylot Hills, a region nominally under the control of Hule. The Master is furious, but winter is too close for him to retaliate against his new big neighbor.

Spring, AC 1013: A massive Hulean counterattack is mounted against the Talmav troops of the Empire of Zuyevo in the northern Bylot Hills. They are met with strong resistance from the Zuyevans and are also harassed by the Sendaryan tribes from the Zanova River valley. Also, further south, troops are sent to quell the rebellion in Olgar. However, the entrenched Olgarians are able to hold them in the eastern part of the country and the two groups seem to be locked into a static position.

Summer, AC 1013: More troops from the northern part of the Hulean Empire are sent into the Bylot Hills and against the Olgar rebels. Seeing that the Master is weakening his northern position and that he won't be able to supply support to Sardjikjian, the northern nomads head for Kiteng in order to be in a better position to threaten Hule. Under the weight of the Hulean onslaught, the Zuyevans retreat from the Bylot Hills to their possessions on the Yalu River. The Zuyevan *Tsar* officially apologizes to the Master for the involvement of some "loose catapult" subjects in Hulean-held lands. Meanwhile, under the guise of humanitarian assistance, the Zuyevans continue to send supplies and mercenaries to help the Olgarians in their fight against the Master.

Spring, AC 1014: The Master's troops in Olgar finish cleansing the area of the last obviously rebellious groups. Hulean control of the region is reinstated; however, the rebellion is far from defeated. Instead it has just gone underground and some rebels have moved to the Zuyevan outposts in the Yazak Steppes, where they get resupplied and benefit from free military training courtesy of the Zuyevans. Agents of the Master are sent to the Yazak Steppes goblinoid tribes in order to create an interference with the Empire of Zuyevo's plans to extend its influence in the Converted Lands.

Fall, AC 1015: With some of his troops recalled from the Bylot Hills region, *Tsar* Andrei channels more reinforcements into the effort to secure the southwestern reaches of the Hyborean Steppes. Also, he masses a number of regiments at Zablin for a push south to the independent dominion of Richland. For the time being the *tsar* decides to keep his imperial troops out of the Bylot Hills. However, his interference in the region will continue—he sends a party of high-level adventurers to infiltrate Greatrealm.

BRASOV (Kingdom of)

Location: Continent of Brun, western side of the Endworld Line, north of Zuyevo, south of Klagorst. WB

Area: 26,700 sq. mi. (69,155 sq. km.).

Population: 19,000 (94% human, 6% elven).

Languages: Brasovian (85% Visneskayan, 15% Elvish), Elvish (Belfadil dialect).

Coinage: Florin (gp), peszy (sp), markwi (cp).

Taxes: 10% income tax, to be paid on the 1st day of spring and 1st day of autumn, plus a special “death tax” that goes to the clergy of Azrael and is paid by the wealthy families (consisting of approximately another 1% of yearly income), which must be paid to the temple of Azrael on the day of the Winter

Solstice. No taxation system exists among the Belfadil elves of Eadil.

Government Type: Senatorial monarchy.

Industries: Textiles, agriculture (wheat, corn, apples), farming (sheep, goats).

Important Figures: Szabo II (King, human, male, F13), Daunidel Belfadil (Elven King, elf, male F11/M11).

Flora and Fauna: Brasov was originally a steppe, dotted with woodlands, but in the last centuries most parts of the steppe have been converted into farmlands. The woods are of pine in the north, but oaks become more common southwards.

Common animals in the region are wolves, bears, deer, foxes, horse, cattle, rats and sometimes an elk or some reindeer that have crossed the northern mountains from Klagorst.

Further Reading: None.

Description by Giulio diSergio-Orsini.

The Land

Brasov is a small coastal kingdom south of Klagorst, inhabited by humans of Visneskayan ancestry, although their tongue is a little different from that and is called Brasovian. The capital city of this land is Kronstadt, renowned for its textile industries. The land is good for agriculture, producing wheat and corn and in the southern regions apples are grown, while in the colder, more mountainous region of the east sheep and goats are free to graze.

Brasov is not a bad place to live in. Its winters are milder than those in Klagorst and the sea enjoys the last stretches of warmer currents that arrive from the south and is thus free from the ice in all but the hardest winters. At the same time the northern regions and their cold winds are blocked by an extension of the Endworld Line, which bows in a 90 degree angle towards the coast, just on the border with Klagorst, where the passes are controlled by two military fortresses.

The People

Brasovians are much like the people of Klagorst in appearance, but some of them possess some elven ancestry that gives them some unique features: they have slightly pointed ears and tend to be a little lighter and shorter than their relatives to the north.

They are generally more open-minded than the Klagorstans are; maybe this is connected with the fact that their land enjoys a warmer climate that protects them from the periodic famines that harass the northern lands. Brasovians are very proud of their military strength, that has allowed them to win the three wars fought with the Klagorstans. It is to be noted that there is a small elven community, the Belfadil Clan. Although some of the elves mixed with the Brasovians, there is still a strong group of Belfadil elves, 800 of whom live in the town of Eadil and are led by King Daunidel Belfadil. These elves are formally independent but have always helped the Brasovians since their arrival in the region, even with military support.

An interesting aspect of Brasov is the incredibly high rate of infant mortality, which is well above the average mortality rate of Klagorst. It is really difficult to find a family who has not suffered the presence of a spontaneous abortion or stillbirth. The reason for this is not known, however the elves are not affected (as far as I know). A stillborn child is brought to the clerics of Azrael, Lord of the Dead, the second most important divinity of Brasov, after Pavan.

History

The Brasovians are descendants of the people of Visneskaya who left that kingdom around AC 400, when the first conflicts with the Zuyevans begun to arise. Led by Lord Ivan Brasv, 4,000 Visneskayans arrived in the region in AC 412, when they built the city of Kronstadt. Here they grew in number and slowly colonized the region and many of them mixed with the elven clan of Belfadil, composed of about one thousand elves; this caused the slight changes of language and physical features that distinguish them from the Klagorstans. Another aspect borrowed

from the elven culture was the peaceful attitude of its people: the Brasovians managed to live without internal conflicts and remained always united against external threats. The first of these were the Visneskayans fleeing from their conquered homeland, in the first half of the 6th century and then their descendants in the 8th and 9th and then, finally, in the Sixth Brasovian War, when Brasov was allied with Stygia and Chevalle. The Brasovians were always victorious in all of the wars in which they participated (they fought defensively) and have never engaged in conquest of the northern lands, especially since there is no real reason to do so.

Don't Miss

The goulash, a fantastic dish that can be served in every single inn of Brasov. The Brasovian cuisine is rustic and spicy, but very good!

CHEVALLE (Kingdom of)

Location: Continent of Brun, forests on the west side of the Endworld Line. WB

Area: 29,300 sq. mi. (75,885 sq. km.).

Population: Approximately 11,000 forest folk (centaurs, pixies, dryads, etc.).

Languages: Fairy, Centaur, others.

Coinage: Barter; money from the Heartlands may be used.

Taxes: No normal taxation per se; druids and forest creatures tend the forest and perform similar tasks in service to nature and the centaur king, who also serves as official protector of the forest.

Government type: Loose clan federation, ruled by a clan council led by the centaur clan king.

Industries: Woodcutting, hunting.

Important Figures: Dessai (Centaur King, centaur, male, F14).

Flora and Fauna: Apart from the intelligent sylvan creatures, wolves, bears, foxes, many species of bird (among which are eagles, hawks and owls) and other forest-

dwelling creatures are easily encountered in the forests of Chevalle.

Further Reading: None.

Description by Giulio diSergio-Orsini.

The Land

The centaurs and satyrs of Chevalle live in the forests that grow in the shadow of the massive mountains of the Endworld Line. Their society is rather chaotic and they are a problem to the Confederacy of Klagorst, from which they have separated (and subsequently rejoined) several times. Many factions exist among the centaurs, although the different groups have never fought a civil war and many small groups are present at the clan council, thus creating much confusion in the administration of the land. The centaurs are fierce enemies of Vrancea (they accuse that nation of kidnapping forest creatures for their experiments) and Tcheltar.

The People

Apart from the centaurs and satyrs, who live together, the forests of Chevalle are home to a great number of sylvan creatures: chevalls (who often travel to Brasov and Klagorst), werebears, pixies, nixies, human rangers, druids and similar friendly elves and humans and nearly all representatives of the fairy folk. A small human community of woodcutters is located towards the south, near the Brasovian border. They have a representative on the clan council.

History

The fairy folk have been living in the area at least for a millennium. The exact date of their arrival here is uncertain, because the history of the centaurs and the other sylvan creatures is an oral one and reports were not written before rangers and druids came from Brasov and Klagorst. The history of the centaurs has always been troublesome. They warred for a long time among themselves before the Visneskayans arrived, after which conflicts soon emerged, especially along the northern borders with Klagorst, but there

were also several territorial disputes with Brasov concerning woodcutting. In the following centuries, Chevalle's relationships with the surrounding nations were fluid and several bloody wars took place between it and Klagorst and Brasov, until in AC 902 they joined the Confederation of Klagorst. After this, Chevalle fought at the side of Stygia and Valeryistadt against the other Klagorst nations. In the 10th century, Chevalle left the confederation twice and then rejoined it, based on conflicts with the human nations. Then they left a third time in AC 1005, in the last war fought in Klagorst, which they won with the help of Brasov and Stygia.

Don't Miss

The Stone of Years is a sacred place within the Chevalle Forest. It is an area of barren land, roughly 100 square meters, totally devoid of vegetation, like a dot of rocky desert in the middle of the forest. A Chevallian legend says that the day a lost clan of elves comes from the south, the Stone of Years will sprout life once again and from there, forests will grow all over the west and overrun all the surrounding lands and the forest folk will rule all they survey. I have wondered whether the Belfadil elves could be this lost clan, but I must confess they don't seem aware of this, or they pretend so, if they are.

GOURNZEE (Duchy of)

Location: Continent of Brun, near Endworld Line. WB

Area: 17,600 sq. mi. (45,585 sq. km.).

Population: 9,600 (95% varkha, 5% Djikarti).

Languages: Varkhan (80% similarity with common lizard man tongue), Klagorst.

Coinage: *Gsbar* (gp), *n'kai* (sp).

Taxes: Gournzeean tax rates are unknown at this time.

Government type: Monarchy.

Industries: Mining (silver, iron), farming (giant lizards, cattle, giant rats).

Important Figures: Naarn Dvorcic (Warlord, varkha, male, F14).

Flora and Fauna: The Gournzee region is completely free of humanoid monsters. The few that dare enter from the Endworld Line mountains are rapidly dealt with by the varkhas. White and green dragons are known to inhabit the region and the surrounding mountains, but normally they do not attack the lizard men; other creatures are deer, wolves and several species of woodland creatures.

Further Reading: None.

Description by Giulio diSergio-Orsini.

The Land

The Duchy of Gournzee is a mountain kingdom of a race called Varkha, underground lizard men. Most of the towns are built on the mountainside and stretch underground. The capital Eel Gaur is completely underground.

The People

The varkhas are smaller than their more common lizard man cousins, being four to five feet tall, but they possess similar physical characteristics. The varkhas can hardly be regarded as a friendly race and they do not like humans, or any humanoid race for that matter. They have purged their land of all humanoids and are among the stronger military powers of the region... but unfortunately their race has a very, very slow rate of population growth. Many varkhas are born sterile and the child mortality is very high. Normally a female lays two to four fertile eggs during her long lifespan (nearly 400 years), but only one is in general lucky enough to survive. The varkhas are, incredibly, friendly toward the Djikarti. They do not actively discourage visitors to their nation, but are quick to avenge any perceived offenses and the local laws do not protect strangers in any way.

A small community of Djikarti gnomes from Szekesh live and work in the region,

mostly providing their expertise in engineering. This often seems strange to outsiders, especially since Gournzee is ruled by a harsh militaristic regime, supervised by the Church of Pearl.

[Note: Mystaran varkhas are not totally like the AD&D ones found in Dragon Annual #1. For more information on Mystaran varkhas see The Wyrksteeth Gazetteer by Giulio Caroletti.]

History

The varkhas arrived in the Klagorst region in AC 434. Their traditional history says that they were guided there by Pearl, after the destruction of their northern homeland, located in a system of underground caverns in northern Hyborea. The reasons for the destruction have never been revealed to strangers. Anyway, their patron Immortal Pearl told them of a land where they could settle. Their high priest at the time, Jesska, led them to Szekesh, where they were told to kill the troglodytes and free the gnomes of the country, which they succeeded in doing over the following years. Although the Djikarti feared that the varkhas would turn out to be new oppressors, their liberators let them be free and asked them to help build a cave system under the Endworld Line that would eventually constitute the Duchy of Gournzee.

The varkhas remained fierce enemies of the Stygian troglodytes during the following years. Avoiding as much as possible any contact with the human populations that settled down in Brasov and Klagorst, the varkhas were able to lead several raids, called crusades by the varkhas, against the Stygians. Ten such crusades were carried out, some successful, some not, but the conflict has remained limited to these occasions due to the distance involved and the presence of Vrancea. During the same time, the varkhas wiped out all the humanoid tribes of the region.

More recently, three more crusades were led in the last fifteen years (AC 1002, 1007 and 1014) thanks to Duke Nhorg of Vrancea, who allowed the varkhas passage through his lands to reach Stygia, much to

the indignation of the troglodyte representatives of the Confederacy of Klagorst.

Do Miss

Well, just the thought of coming here is a bad idea for anyone who doesn't have a good reason to do so. The varkhas do not care for strangers and when I say "don't care," I mean it: no inns, no taverns, a total indifference toward you, apart from guards that forbid anything to anyone... I didn't have a pleasant stay. However, I think there are potentials for the empire to [censored by the Central Diplomatic Office, Foreign Department, Thyatis. Ed.].

HULE (Hagiarchy of)

Location: North of the Savage Baronies and the Gulf of Hule, continent of Brun. WB, SC

Area: 256,000 sq. mi. (663,040 sq. km.).

Population: 1,000,000 (roughly 65% human, 35% goblinoids—mainly bugbears, gnolls, kobolds, orcs and ogres—and 5% demihuman—dwarves, elves and hin).

Languages: Hulean (several dialects).

Coinage: *Lira* (gp), *kuru* (sp), *piastre* (cp).

Taxes: Net worth tax of 5% assessed every two years and an annual 10% tithe to the Holy Men of Hule. Hule's major roads also have tollgates every 24 miles charging 1 *piastre* per person and 2 *piastres* per large animal.

Government Type: Hagiarchy (ruled by holy men).

Industries: Agriculture, textile (fine cloth, wool), glasswork, trade, conquest.

Important Figures: The Master (The Master of Hule, presumed to be a human, male, Pr20 of Bozdogan).

Flora and Fauna: Nearly every creature native to the continent of Brun can be found in the large territories owned by Hule.

Further Reading: *The Savage Coast* online document, X5 *The Temple of Death*, previous almanacs.

Description by Piotr Drobnjak.

Hule: the land of mischief. I've not actually visited Hule yet, so this report is just the results of several weeks of research at the libraries and inns of Slagovich. I intend to visit Hule (as well as the other city-states) soon, so that I may offer you a complete report in the future.

The Land

Hule, also known as Great Hule and the Sanctified Land, is a large nation northwest of the Black Mountains and north of the Savage Coast's city-states and Savage Baronies. It stretches from the edge of the Black Mountains to the Risilvar Escarpment in the south and the Dravish Steppes in the west. Its southern border includes a tiny slice of the coastline, just north of Slagovich, giving the nation access to sea trade. Much of Hule consists of low, rolling hills blanketed by farms and pastures. The farmlands are dotted by small and simple villages and farming communities. There are also several larger towns that serve as bustling centers of trade.

Western Hule encompasses roughly half of Niwhelm, the Dark Wood—a great oak forest still mostly primeval. The woods contain Lake Tros, also known as the Lake of the Deeps, a large (4,500 sq. mi.) and seemingly bottomless freshwater lake.

The People

Hule is a melting pot of races and species. Only humans have an active role in government, although non-humans may act as advisers to the human officials.

Hule is a hagiarchy, a government run by "holy men" and clergy. Any person that has been shown to be especially favored by Bozdogan may have an important role in the government, not just His priests.

The people of Hule are divided into many classes: holy men, diviners, hermits, prophets, clergy and commoners. Holy men

are the rulers; holy men who have someone been touched by the Immortals. Diviners are a sort of law enforcers who travel the land searching for criminals; they wear a red robe and black mask. Hermits are people who claim to have had a vision from Bozdogan, telling them to lead secluded lives in the wilderness. Prophets are people recognized for their wisdom; they travel the land and act as judges. Clerics operate the local temples and shrines; their task is to guide and instruct the people. Commoners are farmers, soldiers, crafters, merchants and so on. They're looked down upon but are considered necessary for the nation to survive.

Priests of any religion other than the official religion of Bozdogan, as well as bandits, troublemakers and mages, are considered outlaws and traitors.

The goblinoids of Hule do not fit into the above-mentioned class system. All goblinoid tribes are nominally independent and treated with care and respect mainly out of fear. These tribes, however, find it very profitable to ally with the Master of Hule, the highest and most powerful of the holy men.

Demihumans are quite rare and are objects of curiosity to the humans of Hule.

Recent History

The Master, a mysterious individual, is currently in control of Hule. Much of his army relies on goblinoids, in particular goblins, though a vast corps of dervishes defend the city-temples. Among these dervishes are a number of elite troops with *red steel* scimitars. These dervishes have regularly repulsed barbarian invasions from the north, thanks mostly to their *red steel* equipment.

Recently, the Master of Hule sent his minions to the Great Waste to conquer the eastern lands. He gained control of Sind in AC 1005. From there, his goblinoids, *janissaries* [*Hulean cavalry. Ed.*] and desert nomads drove into Darokin. The armies of Darokin, Karameikos and the Five Shires managed to drive the desert nomads out in

AC 1006, but the Master's forces still held on to Sind.

Hule also attempted to conquer the Savage Baronies at the same time, but the baronies ended the wars between themselves and united against this common threat, forcing the Hulean forces to retreat as well.

In AC 1014 Hulean forces, mostly goblinoids, invaded and conquered the City-State of Nova Svoga. Hule is currently at peace with the nations of the Savage Coast, recovering from the last set of wars. Huleans still plot and spy, however and minor events related to Hule occur all the time, especially in the city-states and Savage Baronies.

Do Miss

Hule is probably worth missing as a whole, but if you really need to go there, please avoid entering goblinoid reserves and don't go too far from the coastal cities.

The Temple of Death, also known as Greatrealm, is the Master's capital city: a huge temple complex lying on the shore of Lake Tros. It lies away from the cities and people seldom visit it. From here the Master watches his county and the progress of all his military forces. His desires are made known to the people by the diviners or other messengers. This is a place to avoid at all costs.

KERMINHAE (Land of)

Location: Hyborean Sea, west of the Klagorst region, Continent of Brun. WB

Area: Islands approximately 1,300 sq. mi. (3,367 sq. km.), size of undersea regions controlled unknown.

Population: Unknown number of hresha-rhak; some human merchants live in the Kerminhae surface cities.

Languages: Ub (official), Visneskayan.

Coinage: No official coinage; all currencies of the Klagorst region can be used.

Taxes: Unknown; resident human merchants are subject to a residency tax,

assessed at 5% of their yearly earnings and collected on Ka. 1 each year.

Government Type: Unknown.

Industries: Unknown.

Important Figures: Unknown.

Flora and Fauna: The animals found in the region are seals, crabs, sharks and whales. Very few land animals, mostly birds and seals, live on the small islands.

Further Reading: None.

Description by Giulio diSergio-Orsini.

The Land

This territory is inhabited by the hresha-rhak, a strange aquatic race. It consists of a small archipelago of five islands, on which stand small cities inhabited by these creatures, plus the few human merchants who live here. A couple of islands cannot be visited and the seas around them are patrolled by these mysterious sea creatures. Supposedly their rulers and main cities are located under the ocean, but very little information can be gained on them. They are fierce enemies of the hydrax and seem to have a sort of alliance with the Stygians, but have only marginal interest in the humanoid politics of Klagorst, apart from some commercial ties, carried on by agents or by themselves in the human ports of the Heart Coast.

The People

The hresha-rhak are an aquatic race who worship an elemental water deity known as Hub Eth, Spawn of the Deep; they are man-sized, fish-like creatures, whose bodies are covered with mottled, lumpy green and gray scales. Their hands and feet are webbed and clawed and their wide mouths are filled with hundreds of needle-like teeth, surrounded by thick, rubbery lips. Protruding from the base of their spines is a vestigial tail, measuring roughly one foot long. An interesting fact is that many specimens seem to have a much reduced tail and less monstrous appearances overall. These are the only members of the race who travel outside the borders of Kerminhae and who live in the surface cities

of the nation, so sages speculate that maybe these could be younger specimen of this race, that have not yet adapted fully to oceanic life. But who knows really?

History

Nothing is known about hresha-rhak history. Klagorst people have known of these creatures since the first human settlements were established and so do the other older races of the region.

Do Miss

Kerminhae is really not a place to be visited. The islands are barren, the cities horrendous mockeries of human ones, built with strange and disturbing perspectives, as if they used different geometric principles upon which to base their architecture and the race is a horrible, fish-like parody of earth-dwelling humanoids. Stay away from the nation itself, if you don't want to be haunted in your nightmares by the horrific things you could see here.

KLAGORST *(Confederated Kingdoms of)*

Location: Continent of Brun, western side of the Endworld Line, south of Hyborea. WB

Area: 61,000 sq. mi. (157,990 sq. km.), not including Stygia and Chevalle.

Population: 29,000 humans.

Languages: Klagorst (80% Visneskayan, 15% Traldar).

Coinage: *Zeur* (gp), *klag* (sp), *enak* (cp).

Taxes: Individual kingdoms have their own taxation; generally taxes consist of services for those who earn less than a certain amount each year, while others (mostly citizens, wealthy landowners, etc.) pay around 10% throughout the year in various forms. Additional taxes are levied for special reasons, such as tournaments and wars.

Government Type: Confederation of autonomous kingdoms, mostly holding the status of baronies and counties.

Industries: Agriculture (predominantly subsistence), animal herding, fishing, horse breeding, trade.

Important Figures: See individual dominion entries below.

Flora and Fauna: A mixed land of forests and poor farmlands, the region is home to deer, elk, wolves, bears; the shores are rich with fish and seals live on the northern coasts. The mountains of the Endworld Line are inhabited by a great number of humanoids: Hyborean goblins, gnolls, hobgoblins, orcs and trolls.

Further Reading: None.

Description by Giulio diSergio-Orsini.

The Land

The Klagorst region is an inhospitable taiga forest bordering, in the northern regions, with the tundra. The few settlements of the region are built near rivers that are always frozen during the long winters and the agricultural yields here are only barely capable of sustaining the population. The frequent conflicts have not helped the region develop economically and have often led to mass murders of farm animals, like goats and sheep. Famines happen commonly a couple of times per century, although things are looking better now, because in the last 20 years there have not been one—yet.

The People

The Klagorst themselves are descendants of the Visneskayans and resemble greatly their ancestors, who were of Traladaran extraction, with some Oltec influences. They are tall and mostly pale-skinned, though darker skin is not uncommon; they have dark brown or blond hair and blue or green eyes, but black and brown are not at all uncommon. They tend to be massively-built, but due to famines and wars many of them are slim.

[See also specific entries for *Stygia* and *Chevalle*]

The human confederated kingdoms, also called the Heartlands or the Heart Coast, are:

Barony of Fewalskij (pop. 2,500): This seaport is inhabited mostly by humans, though some hresha-rhak live here occasionally. Port Fewalskij is the principal port that connects the Heartlands with the hydrax settlement to the north and the hresha-rhak dominion to the west. Hydrax are normally never seen here; they prefer to rely on human agents, who are all members of the Blue Wind, an order whose base is in the city center. Nearly insignificant is the little land owned by the city's baron, Sir Markus Achresk (Baron, human, male, M12), not even enough to sustain the need for food, that must be mostly imported from the southern Heartlands.

Duchy of Vrancea (pop. 3,000): Vrancea is a mountainous realm; it is probably the poorest state of the confederated kingdoms. Some of the human villages here try to farm goats and grow potatoes, with meager results. Duke Nhorg (Duke, human, male, Pr14 of Nyx) is rumored to be a vampire or a lich, because he has never been seen for years, though orders and other proclamations continue to arrive from the Castle of Aknar.

County of Valeryia (pop. 9,000): Valeryia is a human territory and the most civilized of the Heartlands. It is ruled by the just Count Janick Essecki (Count, human, male, F12), who has recently reformed the army. Valeryia is an agricultural nation, but is also renowned for its horses and is possibly the richest territory of the Heartlands—probably due to its geographical position. The capital of the county is Valerystadt (pop. approximately 6,300); other important settlements are the city of Grawyz (pop. 2,100), which is administered by the local Guild of Adventurers ruled by Andrzej Vatacek (Guild Master, human, male, Pr20 of Aurial (Sinbad)) and the town of Cahen.

County of Gask (pop 7,500): The County of Gask is another quite civilized territory and is named after its capital, that also hosts

the confederative palace, where representatives of the seven nations debate pointlessly on every single question of some relevance to the confederation. The president of the confederation is the current Count of Gask, Nilas Dowalski (Count, human, male, F14). The soil of the county is quite poor, but the waters of Gask are rich of fish and the good administration of the Dowalski family has saved it from civil wars during the last century. Also important is the seaport of Gdansk, which in the past was a source of several conflicts with Valeryia.

Territories of the Knighthood of Tcheltar (pop. 7,000): Tcheltar is the homeland of a troubled population of bandits and is harassed by lycanthropes and monsters. This prevents it from rising to prominence in the Heartlands, because the soil is good for farming, it is not too far north geographically and the territory is quite big. Tcheltar has experienced many changes of government and leaders since its foundation and is now in the hands of Sir Georgi Thorowsk (Knight, human, male, F12), Master of the Knights of Tcheltar. Tcheltar was invaded by centaurs twenty years ago, because Chevalle accused it of helping Duke Nhorq of Vrancea in his dark practices. The Tchelarians are in fact good allies of the Vranceans. The capital of the nation is Tcheltar; other important settlements are Pracova and Nowy Sacz.

History

Klagorst's history is only five centuries long, but it is nonetheless extremely bloody. When in AC 502 the Kingdom of Visneskaya engaged itself in a major war with the Zuyevan Kingdom of the south, the Talmav horde, an ally of the Visneskayans, sided with the enemy. This being the case, Lord Voniek Klagorst, ruler of a minor city of Visneskaya, thinking that the war was going to end with a loss for his people and fearing a life of slavery or death for them, decided to leave the country with his followers. When he actually did so, the Visneskayans were too busy facing their external enemies to care about him. Lord Voniek had with him only 4,000 men and was intending to follow the route of Ivan

Brasv to the west, towards the Endworld Line, hoping to find the descendants of Brasv's migration. After a very long march, Voniek managed to lead 2,700 men to Brasov in AC 506, after severe losses due to the inhospitable weather conditions, raiding humanoids from the mountains and internal struggles.

But when the 2,700 Visneskayans arrived in Brasov, the citizens of that kingdom saw them as savages and possible conquerors and did not care about their common origin. King Szabo I of Brasov led a crushing attack on the surprised Visneskayans, who were ultimately shattered and fled to the colder lands north of Brasov. There, Lord Voniek and his 1,400 surviving men built the city of Gask and tried to survive in the harsh environment.

Around AC 530, after the end of the war with Zuyevo, three other Visneskayan migrations followed Brasv's and Voniek's route and finally arrived in the Brasovian region. After a few skirmishes with the Brasovians, the Visneskayans turned to the north, where Voniek's people had already settled and each of the groups built the cities of Fewalskij, Vrancea and Tcheltar. Their relationships within each other and with the surrounding states were always troublesome. Three wars were fought (AC 589-92, 723-24, 811-12) between a confederation of Gask, Vrancea and Tcheltar against the Brasovians, but the latter always triumphed. Other wars were that of the human nations as a group against the Stygian troglodytes (AC 841-54), which persisted for fifteen years with several interruptions and treaties, before a final armistice, which resulted in the creation of the Confederation of the Heartlands. About the same time, the city of Valeryistadt was built (AC 856).

The relations with the centaurs of the eastern forests claimed by the people of the Heartlands, who had by now begun to call themselves the Klagorst, in honor of Lord Voniek, had always been troublesome. Trying to avoid needless bloodshed, the new Baron of Valeryistadt, Ianus Essecki, proposed to accept the centaurs as equal

members of the confederation. When the other confederated kingdoms refused, Essecki declared war and with the help of the Stygians and the centaurs, imposed through military strength their entrance into the confederation and proclaimed himself count (AC 902).

The conflicts did not stop here and in the last century, many other smaller wars and conflicts were fought, until the last one in the years AC 1005-1008 between Brasov, Chevalle and Stygia against the human Heartlands, a war that ended with a peace treaty that settled the current borders of the region. Subsequent to this were the raids of AC 1011 and 1014 against Stygia by the varkhas of Gournzee, who were allowed to pass through Vrancea, against confederated laws, by Duke Nhorg.

GREENKHLAAWDAA (a.k.a. *Land of the Closed Society*)

Location: Continent of Brun, western side of the Endworld Line, south of Hyborea. WB

Area: 46,870 sq. mi. (121,390 sq. km.).

Population: Unknown.

Languages: Hydrax (official), Visneskayan.

Coinage: *Aa* (pp), *ghwal* (gp), *habker* (sp).

Government Type: Hierarchical monarchy.

Taxes: Unknown.

Industries: Unknown.

Important Figures: Awkaraal (King, hydrax, male).

Flora and Fauna: The cold tundra of the region, when it does not give way to arctic mountains and glaciers, is inhabited by small-sized animals, such as arctic foxes, rodents, as well as wolves, deer and elk. In the northern part of the land some polar bears can be found. Monsters of the region include white dragons, frost giants and frost salamanders.

Further Reading: None.

Description by Giulio diSergio-Orsini.

The Land

This territory is known to its inhabitants as Greenkhlaawdaa, but everybody outside the territory calls it the Closed Society, though nobody would say it in front of one of the hydrax who inhabit the country.

The People

The hydrax have a heavily hierarchical society, at the top of which is a supreme king. The hydrax are believed to guard two entrances to the Elemental Plane of Water, one of which is supposedly located in the capital city, whose common name is Grez (actually Grezasaaldakwerytasz). The Land of the Closed Society is nearly impossible to visit; and inside the country there is a lot of bureaucracy; lower class members of society must deal with the few foreign visitors and ensure they do not learn too much about this nation or its inhabitants. The hydrax write on ice cubes with their claws, in an unknown writing style resembling hieroglyphic, which the hydrax will not allow foreigners to learn. No one has ever tried to rob the hydrax of their secrets. Or, if somebody has, they have not managed to escape from the Closed Society's land.

Hydrax are second in nastiness only to hresha-rhak. Although they are not ugly creatures (they are a sort of intelligent giant crabs made of a substance quite similar to ice), they are an impossibly hierarchical society. Every single action is controlled by the government and visitors receive the same treatment. It's not that they want to be nasty, just that even the most lawful, understanding creature on Mystara would eventually go crazy here, if they tried to understand why things are done the way there are here. It is also quite disturbing to see the members of the Blue Wind move freely about the country; they seem to be freer than the hydrax themselves.

History

The hydrax have a long and detailed history of their presence on Mystara. They originally lived on Mystara at the time of the Great Rain of Fire, in a region that would

later become the Sea of Dread, at the time completely covered with ice. When the Blackmoor explosion shifted the axis of the planet, the region became gradually warmer and the hydrax found it impossible to survive, so they used their magical powers and their scientific knowledge and calculated what would become the new polar region. They then left for that area and retired in deep caverns of the region, to fall into a magical slumber that would last until the region became cold enough for them to flourish. Even if their calculations were not completely right, since they arrived in Hyborea instead of the north pole, the region became cold enough to be hospitable to the elemental race.

Their history in Hyborea is long, but few events happened in the last 3,000 years. The hydrax remained isolated and had little contact with the Djikarti gnomes to the south, although their different philosophies led to hatred, but never to open war. When humans arrived in what is now Klagorst, the hydrax decided to make contact with them to find out if any of the newcomers would be impressionable enough to further their unknown projects, thus leading to the creation of the Blue Wind, a league whose center is in Port Fewalskij.

Don't Miss

The only reason a fellow has to come and visit this land could be its marvelous mountains and glaciers. The capital city of the hydrax and the smaller ones, are built in the glaciers and are marvelous crystalline buildings, constructed to resemble prisms, which then reflect light and colors in such a way as to illuminate the area in which they stand, even when the light is dim. This can prove a blinding experience to common human eyes when the sun is shining, but nevertheless, once in a lifetime, an adventurer should see this!

SZEKESH (Land of)

Location: Continent of Brun, western side of the Endworld Line, south of Hyborea.
WB

Area: 10,430 sq. mi. (27,014 sq. km.).

Population: 8,000 (95% Djikarti gnomes).

Languages: Djikarti.

Coinage: *Drake* (pp), *ink* (gp), *sue* (sp), *jul* (cp).

Government Type: Anarchy.

Taxes: No system of taxation exists in Szekesh.

Industries: Agriculture (mostly potatoes), farming (reindeer, goats, sheep).

Important Figures: Wyrht (General of the Blessed of Szek, gnome, male, F8/T12).

Flora and Fauna: Many plants and animals naturally resident of a northern, mountainous realm may be found here. In the scattered secluded valleys and meadows of the region can be found isolated juniper shrubs, evergreens and hardy grasses. Much of the country is too rugged to support much in the way of plant life and one may easily find various species of moss and lichen clinging to the mountainsides. In terms of animal life, herds of mountain goats may be found in the southern valleys and reindeer are known to pass through the region during their migrations. The more dangerous creatures include frost giants, ice wolves and scattered yeti tribes. Rumor has it that a particularly large and reclusive, white dragon has her lair in one of the tallest mountains of the region, though no one has found its location.

Further Reading: None.

Description by Giulio diSergio-Orsini.

The Land

The Djikarti live in small villages made of stone houses or carved in the mountains and the people are equally divided between the ones which live underground and the ones above. There are only two major settlements in the land: Hrektizaga and Fort Swaag. Hrektizaga is the capital and only city of the nation. It is home to 1,200 Djikarti gnomes,

300 humans and the Academy of Ice Sciences. Fort Swaag is the military center, where 1,000 well-equipped Blessed of Szek gnomes patrol the southern mountains.

The People

The Djikarti gnomes are a merry, anarchical gnomish sub-race. They have no king or organized associations and the only institution they have is the small army of Blessed of Szek in Fort Swaag. Djikarti are apparently unrelated to other Mystaran specimens. Their love for chaos has made them a fierce enemy of the Closed Society, but friendly towards most other people of the Klagorst region, although they do not understand the humans' apparent need for order. Djikarti are free spirits that can be found anywhere in Klagorst; many are adventurers or mercenaries and they have often volunteered in armies that tried to cause the downfall of tyrants and despots in the Heartlands. This makes Szekesh a good place to visit. The gnomes are hospitable and friendly, but unfortunately their chaotic nature results in the absence of the concept of property. Many Djikarti are in this respect equal to thieves and it is incomprehensible to them, that when they travel in Klagorst, they are often charged of thievery. Perhaps the fact that they do not feel the least respect for any institution makes any form of understanding or agreement with this otherwise pleasant race all the more difficult.

History

According to their traditions, the gnomes arrived in the region of Szekesh around AC 150, guided by their Immortal Szek, Patron of Freedom. The gnomes tell that they once witnessed the decline and self-destruction of an ancient society and decided therefore to avoid any social organization thereafter. Unfortunately, this decision weakened their race and exposed them to the aggression of their neighbors, so Szek led His proteges to a new land that eventually became Szekesh. The Djikarti faced few problems, because there were no other civilized races in the vicinity; or so they believed, because Djikarti

scouts eventually discovered the hydrax at the north around AC 230. The two races have never liked each other, but never came to war because of the isolationistic nature of the hydrax and the peaceful and disorganized nature of the Djikarti.

The major threat to the Djikarti came much later. First, around AC 430, the Stygians began to invade from the south and nearly conquered all the land. Facing a troglodyte-dictated truce without the possibility of defending themselves, other than with sparse guerilla activities, the Djikarti would probably have faced a destiny of slavery. Amazingly, a new race arrived from the east, succeeding in the impossible task of crossing the mountains: it was the varkhas, who attacked the troglodytes and freed the country from the invaders (AC 434-437). Even if, at first, the Djikarti feared that the varkhas were simply going to be new oppressors, they left Szekesh when the last troglodyte did so, then departed southwards to forge their kingdom, Gournzee. After that, the Djikarti lived free, but decided to organize a stable military force, guided mostly by Blessed of Szek, self-styled crusaders of Szek, who are born with an innate sense of lawfulness. These are the police and military of the country, but are also not at all oppressive and although they differ greatly in behavior and mannerisms from their other kin, they know that they were born for the sole purpose of ensuring a completely free way of life for the Djikarti.

When the Visneskayan and Brasovian humans came from southeast and attempted to take over the country, the Blessed of Szek managed to oust the aggressive human settlers and founded Fort Swaag to discourage future invasions, but did not face any more trouble.

Don't Miss

Szekesh is a very good country to visit if you are an anarchist, but otherwise it can be a frustrating experience, maybe more so than the Land of the Closed Society, outside Hrektizaga. In this city lives a small

community of humans and the Djikarti who live here try to cope with the needs of order other races have... so there one may enjoy a near-paradise of semi-anarchy, even if most Djikarti feel that the city's atmosphere is too restrictive to them!

STYGIA (Grand Duchy of)

Location: Continent of Brun, southern edge of the Klagorst territories. WB

Area: 21,300 sq. mi. (55,167 sq. km.).

Population: 12,000 troglodytes.

Languages: Eywan (60% commonality with the troglodyte language spoken elsewhere on Mystara).

Coinage: *Yegb* (pp), *ehra* (gp), *syd* (sp); Klagorst and Brasovian coinage also accepted.

Taxes: 15% income tax, 5% of which goes to the clergy.

Government Type: Monarchy, heavily influenced by the Church of Yeg Shuta.

Industries: Mining (mainly platinum), animal herding (cattle, giant lizards).

Important Figures: Xagash (Archduke, troglodyte, male, F12); Zar'nag (High *Kai* (Priest), troglodyte, male, Pr13 of Yeg Shuta).

Flora and Fauna: The swamplands of the region are home to giant lizards, some of which have been domesticated by the troglodytes as draft animals and a source of food and by all sorts of nasty creatures like giant slugs and a race (that I have never heard of outside of Stygia) of giant albino crocodiles. Some human outlaws and bandits call the southern hills home.

Further Reading: None.

Description by Giulio diSergio-Orsini.

The Land

Stygia is mainly a giant swamp inhabited by troglodytes and dotted with islands of dry land where giant lizards are raised by some farmer. The towns are all built deep inside the swamp, most of them near the shore,

where the troglodytes have ports where goods from the north arrive and others leave, mostly toward the Kerminhae Archipelago. In the southern hills there are several platinum mines. Stygia maintains a truce with the Confederacy of Klagorst, especially due to the power of the Church of Yegh Shuta, which fiercely opposes Archduke Xagash, who is trying to reinforce the monarchy as well as keep his realm loyal to the confederacy.

The land of Stygia is quite barren and cold, but troglodytes like it; they are not so brutal, savage and vicious like their cousins of other parts of Mystara, but they are xenophobic and some of them are more than a little over the edge of madness, for reasons I cannot yet fathom. The troglodytes speak a strange language that is similar only in part to the troglodyte language of other parts of Mystara; probably the differences derive from the higher level of culture the Stygians have gained and thus their language is more elaborate.

History

The Stygian troglodytes arrived in the region they now call home some centuries before the crowning of Zendrolion I as Emperor of Thyatis, probably around the 3rd century BC. The troglodytes were apparently of a much lower cultural level then, but they profited greatly from the contact with the Kerminhae. The region was not particularly suited to the troglodytes, being then just a cold steppe much similar to Klagorst, but eventually the troglodytes learned magical techniques that allowed them to change the surrounding environment into a cool swamp. The magics also prevented the waters from freezing during the cold winters, although its temperature is actually below freezing. In the following years (1st century BC) the troglodytes begun to worship an arch-devil known as Charun, Demon Lord of Stygia and the country took its name from Him. The priesthood of Charun guided the troglodytes in wars against Kerminhae, the first of those being fought in the then unsettled Klagorst region,

where the Kerminhae outpost F'ww'aa was destroyed (AC 12). On that spot, several centuries later the human city of Port Fewalskij would be built.

The success of this war, which wiped out the Kerminhae from the mainland, encouraged the priests of Charun, who engaged themselves in other major wars. On the mainland, the hresha-rhak were repeatedly beaten, but the troglodytes never managed to defeat their enemies at sea, so the two nations signed a treaty in AC 276, after which the troglodytes began to look with interest towards the northern arrival of the gnomes in Szekesh. They could find a use for a race of slaves—to settle and exploit the uninhabited Klagorst region, thus barring the coastal lands from the hresha-rhak indefinitely. After some minor skirmishes that tested the strength of the anarchical Djikarti (AC 343 being the first of them), the troglodytes prepared themselves and marched toward the north, seizing most of Szekesh in AC 429. After that, unfortunately for them, the varkhas arrived from the east and began to force them out of the region. Internal disorder, instigated by the minority followers of Yeg Shuta and aided by the hresha-rhak, led to the hasty retreat of the Charun priests and their armies, the relinquishing of their claim on Szekesh, a civil war that ended with the destruction of Charun's priesthood and the foundation a new theological monarchy in AC 443, with the main divinity now being Yeg Shuta. Followers of Charun, their faith declared illegal, are still present in Stygia and comprise the Horned Skull, a secret society that wants to take power once more and begin a new war against Kerminhae.

Stygia was now in the hands of the Shutan faction, who established a strong alliance with the Kerminhae and decided to turn their attention inwards, avoiding conflicts with the surrounding nations, including the Klagorst humans who had begun to occupy that region while they were abandoning Szekesh. The exception to the rule were the varkhan crusades against them, that resulted in several wars, most fought along the borders, although sometimes their enemy

lizardkin managed to enter and sack the country. Other important events in Stygian history were its joining the Klagorst Confederacy and its participation in some of the region's wars.

Don't Miss

In the capital city of Kragm'aanle the wonderful Temple of Yeg Shuta must be seen! It is completely covered with platinum and has a strange alien geometric shape, although very different from the hresha-rhak architecture and not so disturbing to one's senses. It is to be noted, though, that most other Stygian buildings follow more regular and normal architectural concepts, but this temple is really a marvelous feat of engineering, to be counted among the best on the planet.

THE WHITE ORCS OF THE NORTH

Location: Continent of Brun, Hyborean Steppes, north of the Zuyevan Empire and the Midlands. WB

Area: 6,000 sq. mi. (15,540 sq. km.)

Population: 155,000 white orcs with a number of other monsters including a particularly nasty ice demon (Kazukarash). The white orcs are also allied with local dire wolves, which they train as hunting companions. There are perhaps 50,000 dire wolves in white orc territory. Roughly 50,000 humans live in white orc territory in a besieged river valley known as Azganizband. These Azganiz people are descendants of an offshoot of the great Yevo Antalian migration of the second millennium BC.

Languages: Orcish (Graktur dialect).

Coinage: None. Barter is the norm.

Taxes: None, presumably. Whatever the *ashakturs* exact in tribute from their vassals would probably count as taxation of a sort.

Government Type: There are six principal clans, each led by a war leader called an *ashaktur*.

Industries: Iron mining, basic crop farming, warfare and weapons production.

Important Figures: Each clan is led by an *ashaktur* (war chieftain). Occasionally, if the white orcs feel it necessary to band together to face a major threat, or if they just want to engage in widespread destruction and looting of human settlements, they will meet at Furkash to elect an *angrashaktur* (supreme war chieftain) to lead the armies.

Flora and Fauna: In the southern steppes, tall, hardy grasses predominate, which, in the short summer months, provide the white orcs with marginal croplands (primarily wheat and barley). As one progresses northwards, or towards the foothills of the Endworld Line, the plains give way to hilly country, dotted with stunted shrubs and coniferous trees. Here, blueberries and raspberries manage to grow during the brief summer. Towards the east of the white orc territories, forests begin to predominate, though these are still conifers.

In terms of animal life, this region is home to several herds of elk and deer, as well as caribou towards the north. In the eastern woodlands, the occasional moose can be found. On the open steppes, many varieties of hare, lemming and fox make their home, as well as ptarmigans. In addition to dire wolves, larger forms of animal life include polar bears (in the far north of this region), grizzly and black bears (in the eastern forests) and lynxes. More exotic animals include white dragons in the far north and atop the higher peaks of the Endworld Line in this region and small herds of woolly mammoths, again in the far north.

Further Reading: None.

Description by an unknown author.

[The information contained herein was provided anonymously to the editorial staff of the almanac, contained in a battered leather scroll case. It is not known at this time whether the author of this report is still alive, or how he or she managed to obtain such detailed information. Ed.]

The Land

The lower Hyborean Steppes, which are home to the confederation of white orcs, is an inhospitable place. Snowfalls are regular for the coldest half of the year and only the most rudimentary crops can be farmed by the orcs to supplement their diet. Most of their diet is however provided by hunting—mainly of deer and elk, which are common, but also of humans from the Midlands or Zuyevo.

The People

The white orcs have adapted to the harshness of the icy frozen wastes of the Hyborean Steppes. They live primarily in fortified tribal settlements, owing allegiance to a central clan authority. The only real permanent settlement is the partly subterranean town of Furkash (pop. 6,000) comprised mainly of White Death Clan orcs. This is the meeting place of the supreme orcish war council.

The white orcs are divided into six principal tribes:

Blizzard Clan (28,000 members): This clan is the westernmost of the clans, with their tribal territory comprising the foothills of the Endworld Chain. The Blizzard Clan members are excellent climbers and cavers and also make good slingers for the white orc armies. They possess few dire wolf cavalry, although they have trained some black and polar bears for combat.

Black Storm Clan (18,000 members): This clan is located just east of the Blizzard Clan territories and is the smallest of the six clans. It is a relatively new grouping, having broken away from the Endless Winter Clan a century ago. This clan is however one of the most powerful. It has a high proportion of orc wokani and shamans who specialize in reanimation, darkness and ice magics.

Endless Winter Clan (25,000 members): This clan is located in the southern central part of the Hyborean Steppes. Thus, they have the most contact with the humans of the Midlands and as a result they are an extremely warlike clan and have large contingents of heavily armored dire wolf

cavalry. They are extremely hostile to humans and will kill them on sight rather than take them prisoner.

North Wind Clan (22,000 members): This clan occupies the northern central part of the lower Hyborean Steppes. Much of the tribe lives underground to ward against the more hostile environment in this part of the steppes. They are the principal miners of the confederation and extract considerable quantities of iron ore that they manufacture into weapons and armor to equip the white orc armies.

White Death Clan (35,000 members): This clan occupies the area directly to the east of that occupied by the Endless Winter and North Wind clans. This area is largely formed of wooded steppes and so these orcs have become expert woodsorcs and bowmen. This is the largest of all the clans—principally because of the iron discipline enforced by successive White Death *ashakturs*.

Ice Fist Clan (24,000 members): This clan occupies the easternmost stretches of white orc territory. They are the most decentralized of the clans, with some tribal outposts situated as far southeast as the Borean River. Raiding parties from this clan pose a considerable threat to travelers in the northeastern Midlands and northern Adri Varma Plateau areas.

There is another denizen of white orc territory that is worth mentioning, Kazukarzash as he is known to the white orcs. Kazukarzash is an extraordinarily powerful ice demon who lives in the mountains to the north of the lower Hyborean Steppes. This demon is responsible for the harsher than normal weather conditions that prevail in the white orcs' domain. The demon is possessed of great powers, with mastery over all types of weather magic and is worshipped by the orcs as a god. They often bring tribute to the demon (although no orc has ever actually seen him), which pleases the demon considerably. He particularly likes human sacrifices.

Recent History

The white orcs grew from the remnants of the great hordes of the north that chose not to accompany Wogar on his epic journey of destruction in BC 1270. Since that time, with the flourishing of human civilizations in the Yalu River valley and the Midlands, as well as human migrations from the east (particularly the Talmav and Yevo), the orcs were forced northwards. Around BC 100, however, an evil presence moved into the northern mountains of the lower Hyborean Steppes. This was the ice demon Kazukarzash. Soon the weather took a turn for the worse and this allowed the white orcs, who by now had adapted to the extreme cold of the northern Hyborean Steppes, to multiply and move southwards. In AC 175 the resurgence of their civilization was complete when Kazukarzash engineered an extreme blizzard that lasted for a whole year. This allowed the white orcs to splinter the burgeoning Yevo civilization that was growing north of the Tunguska Forest and destroy many other human settlements including those of the Douzbaks and Talmavs. The weather of the steppes grew increasingly inhospitable and soon all humans were driven east or south. Since that time, the white orcs have thrived on raiding human settlements in winter and mining, farming and hunting in the short summer period.

Recently, in AC 1009, the white orcs have discovered an isolated outpost of the Yevo civilization that they had thought they had destroyed some 800 years previously. Located in a mountainous canyon region on the Borean River, the small civilization is known as Azganizband. Comprising some 50,000 people, the Azganiz people have been put under siege for eight years now by 30,000 warriors from the Ice Fist and White Death clans. The entrance to the Azganiz River valley is along a single steep mountain pass (the Jainur Pass) that the Azganiz have heavily fortified (the cataracts on the Borean River make the river impassable). However, as each year goes by, the Azganiz lose some more of their fighting troops and slowly this unique civilization (which dates back to BC

1150 as an offshoot of the Yevo Antalian migration from Norwold to present day Zuyevo) is being bled to death. The Azganiz have tried on numerous occasions to send riders for help to the Midlands but without any success, the white orcs always seem to capture them and return their heads on pikes to line white orc-held section of Jainur Pass.

YEZCHAMENID EMPIRE

Location: Continent of Brun, northern Arm of the Immortals, between the Yalu Bay and the Sea of Brun. WB

Area: 508,500 sq. miles (1,317,015 sq. km.).

Population: 1,600,000 (80% humans, 10% pegataurs, 5% dwarves, some elves and demi-ogres).

Language: Dars, Hatti, Yivj, Mebir, Churan, Pegataur, Midannite and Dremen.

Coinage: *Talen* (pp), *darik* (gp), *sicles* (sp), *sabzi* (cp).

Taxes: 10% property tax, assessed every Fy. 1 (sometimes this is paid with produce or crafted goods, in the case of farmers or artisans); once every five years, on Nu. 1, a special army tax is levied, for 5% of a person's net worth (calculated based on property taxes paid the previous year).

Government Type: Hereditary monarchy. Divided into nine *Zatrapies*, each headed by an hereditary family or relative of the *shab-an-shab* (emperor).

Industries: Trade, textiles, silk, spice, herding (sheep, ox, goats), fishing, rare woods, oil, mining (gold, copper, iron), arts and literature, magic.

Important Figures: Zhoher Yezcham (*Shab-an-shab*, human, male, M1), Quymier Yezcham (Imperial Regent, human, male, Pr16 of Mizara-Idan (Ixion)), Parsan Zhemenieh (*Zatrap* of Darsi, human, male, F13), Gulbuddin Marzik (*Zatrap* of Uvaraz, human, male, F10), Mursillis Labinitas (*Zatrap* of Zrakan, human, male, M12), Azartan Cemirtus (*Zatrap* of Hattas, human, male, T9), Zholodeer Yemilcataur (*Zatrap* of Yivja, pegataur, male, F13), Nisir Suun

(*Zatrap* of Pazarkan, human, male, F5), Eratkar Kasusu (*Zatrap* of Mebirush, human, male, Pr11 of Edad (Thor)), Odarit Muztasir (*Zatrap* of Chura, human, male, F14), Djomel Tirruk (*Zatrap* of Midan, human, male, M11).

Flora and Fauna: The Yezchamenid Empire is a large and geographically diverse nation. In its central regions, much of which are occupied by the Endworld Line, the hilly and mountainous country is covered by a blanket of lush deciduous growth, including redwoods, sequoias, as well as sturdy stands of oak and birch. Further inland, towards the mountain range itself, the trees begin to give way to dense shrubbery, though the occasional pine tree juts above the surrounding vegetation—particularly in the higher elevations. In the many coastal river valleys, however, is where one will find the most lush plant life. Amidst farmland one will see carefully tended stands of mahogany and teak, as well as vast tracts of various spices. The more exotic plant life includes strangle vines and whip weed (deep in the forests) and some open fields are known to host grab grass.

The empire's animal life is just as varied. In the uplands can be found many species of mountain goat, preyed upon by the occasional wolf. Towards sea level, in the forests, can be found wolves, bears, wild cats of various sizes (including reclusive tigers), deer, assorted rodents and many species of bird. The forests are also home to humanoids of various types (primarily orcs and hobgoblins), as well as owlbears, decapuses, araneas and displacer beasts. The mountains are known to house a number of hill and mountain giants, as well as griffons.

Further Reading: None.

Description by Marina Takanitas.

Following my exploration of the region around Bellayne, I decided to head further west, as was suggested to me by Joshuan. It seems the far west of Brun is home to many nations only known in passing in the Old World. The journey was long, but I did manage to make some contacts and have a

good look at some of the Yezchamenid Empire's more important settlements. What follows is the information I was able to glean from my travels—though my fellow Kastelians would be far more interested in the exotic goods to be found here!

The Land

The Yezchamenid Empire stretches along the two coasts of the Arm of the Immortals from the southern foothills of the Resht Zanbaar (southern Endworld Line) to the Resht Kazit (Northern Shield of the Immortals). Most of the empire's population is concentrated on two major plains: the fluvial plain of the Zebris Valley, between the Northern Shield of the Immortals and Dzemayaut Range and the Jyar Plain, northwest of the Yalu Bay. The rest of the population is concentrated along the coastal plains and in the higher valleys, only the pegataurs dwell in the highest regions.

The weather of the empire varies widely from one region to the other. Overall, the climate is mild and temperate, with the western coast being slightly dryer than the eastern, although this changes at the latitude of Attasar, where the colder currents coming from the northern Sea of Brun meet with the warmer waters of the western coast of the Arm of the Immortals. Inland, the weather varies according with the altitude; the Zebris Valley shares a similar weather pattern as the western coast, for example. At sea level, or in the large valleys, there are normally four seasons in the empire: a long dry summer, a milder yet dry fall, a short but rainy winter and a rainy and warm spring during which hurricanes may follow the coast up to the Yezchamenid Empire.

The *zatrapias* are:

Darsia: Darsia is the largest of all the zatrapias; it is located on the Jyar Plain and overlooks the waters of Yalu Bay. It is characterized by large valleys flowing slowly toward the bay. Small white houses dotting the land are sometimes grouped in small fortified hamlets, sometimes built atop a hill. Many shrines dedicated to the philosophy of Zaranaster may be found along the trails and

roads of Darsia; inside them, one can find the ever-burning fires dedicated to Mizara-Idan; it is considered as a crime for a non-believer to even breathe into the air near such a sacred fire. The biggest cities of the zatrapy are Darsagades, the imperial capital (pop. 37,000) and Ragmata (pop. 13,000), the empire's major port on Yalu Bay

Uvaraz: This small zatrapy is peopled almost solely by Dars but was separated from Darsia more than 300 years ago as a gift to a cavalry captain who saved the life of the shah-an-shah. Since then, the people of Uvaraz have developed an identity of their own, but the main thing that distinguishes them from the Dars of Darsia is the fact that the hivebrood is a constant threat in the region and that many from Uvaraz are infected and cured or sent to the southern steppes. The zatrapy's capital is Uvar (pop. 4,500), a pretty-looking port on Yalu Bay that also serves as the main naval base on this side of the empire.

Pazarkan: Pazarkan is the land of the pegataurs, located atop the high peaks of the northern Immortal Shield. It is a region blown by constant fiery winds and showered by the region's worst thunderstorms in winter and spring. The pegataurs have adapted well to this environment and have built what they call "cloud cities" on the verge of the most precipitous cliffs. The biggest of these cloud cities is Degerin (pop. 9,000), the zatrapy's capital and Pegat (pop. 8,500) a city in two parts: the upper level, reserved for the pegataurs and the lower level where human merchants of the rest of the empire come to trade with the winged centaurs.

Zrakan: Zrakan is one of the poorest zatrapias of the empire, yet it is of strategic importance since its high forested hills and the narrow valleys are the easiest (and almost only) way to cross from the eastern part of the empire to the western coast. People there survive by herding sheep and goats and by trading their carpets (renowned for their quality) beyond the empire's frontiers. Also, one of the main resources of the zatrapy's administration comes from the trade on the imperial road and the central

state's credits to maintain it. Praptanj (pop. 3,500) is the regional capital; it is a bleak city where only the central market, the bazaar, seems to live.

Hattas: Hattas is the empire's jewel. It provides almost half of the empire's mineral resources and nearly three quarters of its timber. It also profits from the imperial road, which brings even more riches to the zatrap's coffers. However, Hattas has always been one of the most turbulent zatrapies of the empire, for its people still believe that it should head the empire instead of the Dars. Nevertheless, the riches that Hattas receives from the empire's inner trade are enough to convince them that stability is better than civil war. Attasar (pop. 11,500) is filled with opulence and monuments that were built in the time when it was the empire's capital. It is also a major center for the study of magic in the empire.

Yivja: Yivja is the land of the empire's best and richest merchants. The Yivj are among the best sailors living in Brun and have ventured farther than many other seaborne peoples. Their only problem is that, if they are good merchants and sailors, they are poor warriors; this helps explain why the empire's overseas trade is still constrained by foreign piracy, after centuries of fighting. Utsidon (pop. 21,000), the capital city of the zatrapy, is the empire's biggest and most prosperous port; Bertsos (pop. 11,000) is the home of the imperial fleet and a holy site of the Yivj's religion.

Mebirush: The land of the Mebirs encompasses the most fertile lands of all the empire. There, the irrigation network, is, in itself, a real wonder. Rice, sorghum and wheat are harvested in large amounts and date palms are grown along the main rivers and on the seaside and provide an additional source of revenue for the peasants. Flax is also grown both for the production of linseed oil and for its textile fibers. There are two cities of great importance in Mebirush: Ishmar (pop. 17,000), the zatrapy's capital, is a impressive city renowned throughout the empire for its immense gardens and its multitude of fountains and Kadour (pop.

11,000), while more austere is also impressive for its fifteen-story-high ziggurat.

Chura: Chura is the land that has been inhabited by sedentary people for the longest period in the empire. Artifacts and ruins of long-gone peoples and kingdoms dot its lands. Chura is somewhat smaller than the territory inhabited by the Churans, which extends well beyond the frontier with Midan and along the frontier with Mebirush. Chura comprises most of the central Zebris Valley and the fields are almost as bountiful as they are in Mebirush. Asniveh (pop. 14,000) is the historical capital city of the Churans and it is still the capital of their zatrapy; Regnieh was traditionally the second city of importance in the zatrapy, but it has been given to Midan by the current central administration in a bold move to weaken the influence of the Zatrap of Chura.

Midan: Midan is the most artificial zatrapy of them all. It has been given to the Midannite nomads by the first emperors so that they would help the central government control the Churans' aspirations to sovereignty. Now, the Midannites are a minority in their own lands, most of them live in the hills at the foothills of the great Immortal Shield (which, from Midan's side, looks like a wall of rock thousands of feet high), while the Churans occupy the valleys and cities. Nonetheless, Midan is one of the richest zatrapies of the empire, its riches coming from its lands, ideal for the cultivation of wheat and from its hills that contain many gold and silver deposits. Nishep (pop. 10,000) once was the Churan kings' summer capital, now it is the permanent capital of the zatrapy. Regnieh (pop. 7,000) has been considered as part of the Zatrapy of Chura for most of the reign of the Yezchameni, until the current regent decided to give it to Midan.

The People

The Yezchamenid Empire is a multiethnic state where no one ethnic group really predominates. Relations between the peoples of the empire are free of competition or confrontation on ethnic

grounds; the people of the empire refer to themselves as Yezchameni before any other designation based on language, ethnicity or race. The largest ethnic group of the empire is the Dars, who came from the steppes of inner Brun about two millennia ago. These people are of approximately the same stock as the Huleans and the people of the Midlands, even though they mingled with some of the Pitchans who were living on the Jyar Plain before their arrival. Dars can be found throughout the empire serving in administrative offices or trading with the locals, but they are predominant in the three zatrapies of the northwest, Darsia, Uvaraz and Zrakan. Many dialects are spoken among the Dars and may vary wildly from one region to the other. The second most important group of people in the empire are the Churans. They live principally in the Zebris Valley in Chura, Midan and southern Mebirush. Of all the people in the empire, they are the closest descendants of the original Pitchans even if they have lost most of their ancestors' original culture. Some Churans are of mixed Oltec (Pitchans) and Tanagoro blood, which explains their darker complexion. The Mebirs and Yivj share the same language and origin but their cultures are so different that the Empire treats them as different people, which they, in fact, are after centuries of divergent development—culturally and religiously. Both peoples are descendants of the first Tanagoro settlers that landed on the western coast around BC 1700 and were integrated with the Pitchans of the coast. The Hattas are closer to the Oltecs than to their Pitchan cousins, they were forced to migrate from the lower basin of the Yalu River to the forested hills of the western coast when the Dars tribes arrived in the region. Since then, they might be considered more as a blend of Oltec and Neathar since some intermixing occurred between the two nomadic groups. The Midannites are a smaller ethnic group, they are close to the Dars since they came from the same faraway steppes, but were sent to the higher part of the Zebris Valley so that they would ensure the obedience of the native Churans during the time of the early

Kanastenid Empire. Since then, the Midannites have lost most of their earlier cultural traits due to contact with the Churans, but they still consider themselves different. The Dremens are descendants of the Pitchan nomadic tribes, though they have abandoned this way of life long ago and are now among the most closed societies of the empire. Among them, marriage with the other groups has always been forbidden, which explains their quasi-pure Oltec/Pitchan traits. As for the pegataurs of Pazarkan, they came from the northern mountains millennia ago and much of their memories of those distant times were lost during their exile. Since then, they have been very reclusive in their high mountains, but accept the suzerainty of the shah-an-shah, for he traditionally gives them the best positions in the army and leaves them to manage their own lands as they want.

The social structure is roughly the same throughout the empire, the main social divide coming not from the different cultural areas but more from the cleavage between the sedentary people of the coastal and fluvial plains and the semi-nomads of the hills in Zrakan, Hattas and Draya. These peoples' social and political structures are built upon the clannish ties and leadership is, in general, given to the elders. Clerics and priests are most of the time the counselors of these chiefs, magic-users are few but respected and warriors are numerous and skilled. In the urban areas and in the rural communities of the valleys and coasts, social classes are more distinct, with the scholars and religious people being almost on par with the hereditary nobility. Rich merchants may wield more influence than the nobility and scholars and the richest of them may have a similar standing as the upper class, but, generally, they live in conditions closer to the bulk of the laboring population. While highly respected, the free peasants and craftsmen must economically support the entire empire and pay most of the taxes. The law allows slavery in all the empire but the teachings of Zaranaster have had such an impact that some regions are nearly freed

from this form of exploitation. The presence of slaves may be deceiving, since some of the richest landowners may grant their slaves the right to retain some of their production for their own use (they may choose to sell it or to consume it). It is not uncommon to see some slaves of the Zebir Valley, for example, live more comfortably than the freemen of the less fertile regions.

Historically, the empire has been quite decentralized, the regional leaders being quite free to do what they want as long as they respected their obligations toward the shah-an-shah, paid their taxes and sent their armies when needed. Nowadays, the *zatraps* still have almost the same autonomy as kings would have elsewhere, but discontent against the central administration of the imperial regent have encouraged the *zatraps* to ask for more autonomy. Recently, they have been increasingly reluctant to send their taxes and military to Darsagades and some are nearly asking for full independence.

One of the most surprising things in the empire is its code of law. It came down through the generations and, albeit modified regularly, has retained most of its original characteristics while being quite modern and impressively comprehensive. Almost everything is codified in Yezchamenid law, from the unified weight of coinage, to the age at which one may marry (15 years for a man and 13 for a woman), to the exact distance at which one must kneel when facing a noble or a high-ranking priest. There are many who say that this strict and comprehensive, while just, code of law is the key to the survival of an empire that might have crumbled under the weight of its ethnic and religious cleavages.

The Yezchamenid Empire is almost as diverse on the religious grounds as it is ethnically. The traditional religious tolerance of the rulers has allowed many pantheons and philosophical schools to develop and perpetuate themselves within the political framework of the empire. Religious conflicts were few in imperial history and happened only when no legitimate ruler was in charge of the central administration. Spellcasters of

the empire are called mages regardless of the origin (magical or granted by the Immortals) of their powers. The peoples of the empire may be broadly divided in five main religious groups: the followers of Zaranaster's teachings (found mainly in Darsia, Uvaraz and Zrakan); the followers of the Churans' pantheon (most of the Churans and Mebirs and some Midannites); the Hattas and the Yivj both have their own pantheons and the Dremens have their own ways of accomplishing miracles. The pegataurs also have their own pantheon, but many of them have been converted to the teachings of Zaranaster.

Zaranasterism: Zaranaster, was a merchant of Dars origin, who went to the land of the enduks, Nimmur, during the seventh century BC and came back enlightened by the winged minotaurs' faith in a sole Immortal. Once back in Darsia, he began to preach the faith in a sole Immortal, Mizara-Idan (Ixion). According to Zaranaster, Mizara-Idan was accompanied by two different immortal and immaterial spirits. Spenta Mainyu, the one He loved and cherished, was a good spirit and was the guardian of a paradise-like place where the souls of those who did good would go after their deaths; the second, Angra Mainyu, despised by Mizara-Idan, was of evil essence and was responsible for the punishment of the evil beings. The teachings of Zaranaster were revolutionary for the Dars as they gave a meaning to the people's lives. They were not the pawns of the Immortals anymore and were free to choose their path between good and evil and be rewarded or punished accordingly in the next life. According to the prophet's teachings, fire was of holy essence since it was given to the humans by Mizara-Idan to fight the darkness of Angra Mainyu's realm.

If, at first, the teachings of Zaranaster were followed tightly by his followers, the passing centuries and the actions of the Immortals have changed what Ixion once thought would be a realm devoted to His own magnificence. The two Mainyus, which were only supposed to be avatars of Ixion, began to act independently from the Sun God's

will. At first, only the evil side of His personality acted autonomously: it was Hel who used this identity to influence the followers of Zaranaster's teachings to do evil acts. Then, in a quick response, Odin overtook the role of Spenta Mainyu to balance the Entropic Immortal. Since then, the followers of Zaranaster's philosophy more or less have a pantheon made of three Immortals even if most ignore this fact.

The Churan Pantheon: The Churan Pantheon is a classic pantheon if compared with Zaranasterism, it consists of many Immortals revered elsewhere on Mystara, even if they have different names or functions. Another specific trait of this pantheon is the role given to the shedu (winged bulls with human heads from another dimension, the ancestors of the enduks) who are the messengers and guardians of the Immortals. The importance given to the shedu help explain the reverence with which the enduks are treated on Churan soil. Each Churan city has its own protector, which might even be from Entropy. Entropic Immortals are on an equal level with each other since They are essential to keep the balance of the universe. They are even more revered and honored in some regions since Their worship is seen as a way to protect oneself from the wrath of the fiend.

The main Immortals of the Churan Pantheon are: Edad (Thor), God of Lightning and Rain; Allaruta (Talitha), Goddess of Copulation and Lust; Aszun (Korotiku), the Wicked Thief; Abskallar (Ka), He Who Teaches the Arts; Asarduxli (Pflarr), He Who Has the Power of Magic; Ashnankan (Freyja), Goddess of Grain and Fertility; Alu (Alphaks), He Who Crushes Men; Pastirrid (Loki), He Who Erases; Shagulhaz (Masauwu), Upholder of Evil; Menkir (Odin), God of Wisdom; Enbiludli (Koryis), God of Irrigation, Farming and Prosperity; Kerrar (Orcus), the Scorched Earth; Gibal (Rathanos), Fire God; Gushkin (Kagyar), He Who Works Metals; Basmur (Atzanteotl), the Horned Serpent; Umbala (Ordana), Guardian of the Forests; Ishahura (Tarastia), Goddess of Marriage, the

Enforcer of Oaths; Ishteri (Valerias), Goddess of Love and War; Mushassu (Demogorgon), the Furious Snake; Nebur (Ssu-Ma), God of Writing and Eloquence; Namuntar (Thanatos), the Decider of Faith, God of Plague and Other Diseases; Nanash (Nyx), Moon Goddess, the Darkness; Kulit (Tiresias), the Hymns Singer; Ninlul (Calitha), Goddess of Sailors; Numsar (Djaea), Goddess of Plants and Survival; Nuskmash (Ixion), God of Light and Sun.

The Hattas Pantheon: As the Churans, the Hattas have their own pantheon, which predates the empire by centuries. The main figures of this pantheon are: Kumarbis (Odin), the Storm God, head of the Hattas' pantheon; Tasmisus (Thor), the Child of Kumarbis; Hannahanna (Terra), the Mother of All Gods; Suwalyattas (Halav), the Warrior God; Upelluri (Gorrziok), a Giant Who Carries the World on His Shoulders; Ulikummis (Kagyar), God of Rocks and Mines; Hapantallis (Ixion), the Sun God; Inaras (Djaea), Goddess of the Wild Animals and Forests; Telepinus (Freyja), She Who Makes the Crops Grow; Hahhimas (Protius), the Sea God; Illuyankas (Ka), the Dragon, He Who Makes the Earth Reborn; Kamrusepa (Pflarr), Patron of Magic and Learning; Astabis (Orcus), the Destroyer; Yarris (Thanatos), God of Pestilence; Hasamelis (Asterius), He Who Protects Travelers; Istustayas (Nyx), Moon Goddess.

The Trinity of Yivja: Strangely, for such a peaceful and constructive people, the Yivj worship a triad of Entropic Immortals: Djaal (Thanatos), He Who Rules the Universe from a Throne of Skulls; Ashaat (Talitha), the False Maiden; and Melqeart (Orcus), He Who Supervises the Process of Destruction. This peculiarity comes from long-forgotten times when the Yivj traded extensively with the ancient city of Dravya, where the fiendish cult was venerated. Many Dravyans sought refuge in Yivja when the Yazak goblinoids destroyed their city and brought with them the cult of Entropic Immortals. The Yivj see their evil and chaotic Immortals as being at the root of all changes, without Them there would not be a reawakening of the earth every spring, for

the earth needs to plunge into darkness to wake up once more. The Yivj have built giant-sized statues of the three Immortals in their cities, with fires always burning inside them; offerings (fresh meat, money, even human sacrifices) to their Immortals are thrown in the fire. Human sacrifices are common, but it is seen as an honorable end to die in such a way that it will appease the wrath of this fiendish trinity.

The Way of the Dremens: For the Dremens, there are no arch-beings, no Immortals from which to draw the energy to cast spells or prayers. This is not to say that there is not somebody able to heal or to turn undead; there are no shamans, either. The Dremens instead revere *qur-zhoitkar*, or permutators. Permutators are people able to discharge the magical power imbedded in the *qur-aoutat* (the root), a magical tuber found in the valleys and caves of Draya. The ways to use the root are only taught to young Dremens who possess certain mystical characteristics. A permutator will discover how to trigger new power from the consumption of the *qur-aoutat* as he or she will become more experienced with the use of the vegetable (same spells and spell progression as with clerics). Many scholars and mages of the rest of the empire have tried to explain and use the magical capabilities of the root, but none have reached convincing conclusions or results, so the use of the *qur-aoutat* remains unexplained and limited to the Dremens.

Recent History

The history of people living on the Arm of the Immortals goes back well beyond the Great Rain of Fire. However, at that time, only the southernmost part of it was inhabited since the northern part was covered with a thick ice sheet. People of roughly the same origins as the Oltecs and Azcans settled this land well before the rise of Blackmoor. The Pitchans, as they called themselves, lived on the coastal plains and in the misty mountains of the southern part of the peninsula. They had followed a path similar to the Oltecs, even though contacts

between the two were sparse and the Pitchans were isolated. Between, BC 4000 and BC 3000, the Pitchans were able to unite the tribes of the Arm of the Immortals and eventually large cities were built atop the rainier plateaus of the central Immortal Shield Range. With the Great Rain of Fire, however, their mighty empire crumbled as terrific earthquakes rocked their lands, drowning parts of the coastal plains and wreaking havoc on the higher plateaus. The remnants of the Pitchans fell back into barbarism as tribes fought each other for the few resources left.

As the ice sheet receded from the northern part of the peninsula, some Pitchan tribes began to migrate north as others tried to reestablish the old order as they remembered it. The two groups gradually lost contact from each other since the hardships of surviving in these troubled times impeded travel and the arrival of the migrating elves of Ilsundal in the region, around 2350 BC, further rendered the communications between the two branches difficult. For almost a thousand years, the northern tribes remained nomads trying to survive on the desolate land that slowly replaced the glacial fields. It was only around BC 2100 that the northern Pitchan tribes settled down in the area known as the Zebris Valley, where the ice had receded, leaving behind rich mineral deposits that gave rise to lush pasturelands that were soon irrigated and cultivated by the Pitchans.

There were five Pitchan city-states competing for power in Zebris Valley when, fifty years later, a mission of enduks came in contact with the Pitchans. Following this first contact, trade ties were established across Yalu Bay between the more advanced civilization of the enduks and the somewhat backward Pitchan city-states. The Pitchans adopted many of the customs of the enduks in terms of architecture, arts, technology, magic; even their language was rapidly filled with enduk words. The worship of Ixion also grew among the Pitchans, even though it had to share the Pitchans' souls with other divinities instead of being the sole Immortal as in the enduk pantheon. Contacts with the

city of Dravya also developed between BC 2100 and BC 2000, even if they were a little tenuous than the relations with the winged minotaurs; the contacts with Dravya had a great impact on the still-nomadic northern tribes, some of which adopted the fiendish cult.

The city-state of Asniveh rapidly took advantage of its position of main trading partner of the enduks among the Pitchans to increase the techno-magical gap between it and its competitors. The Churans of Asniveh transformed what looked like peaceful knowledge into a military edge against the other tribes and gradually subdued most of them. Around BC 1850, the Churan Empire was at its apex. Centered in Zebris Valley it covered much of the northern Arm of the Immortals and traded with most of the nations of the Yalu and Savage Coasts.

Around BC 1700, a small fleet of rafts loaded with people from Tangor landed in the northwestern region of the Churan Empire. The new settlers were welcomed and were promptly integrated into Churan society. Their assimilation left the Churans with the knowledge about distant lands overseas, but also added new deities to the region's pantheon. In BC 1556, however, the Mebirs—of mixed Tanagoro and Pitchan blood—revolted against their Churan masters and a civil war ensued between the two peoples. In BC 1478, the civil war ended and the Mebirs established their hold upon most of the former empire's territories.

The Empire of Mebirush kept control of the northern Arm of the Immortals until, around BC 1280, scores of humanoids from Wogar's hordes, invaded its territory. For almost a century, the humanoids plundered the land, leaving behind only ashes and ruin. When, around BC 1200, they resumed their southward migration, Mebirush was in ruin; only the high walls of Utsidon and Bertsos were able to resist the creatures' onslaught. Once the humanoids had gone, the two cities began to thrive as the sole inheritors of Mebirush's trade links with Skothar and Davania.

Another group of humanoids delivered chaos to the distant northern land of the pegataurs, which forced them into exile. They landed in the high mountains of the northern Immortals' Shield around BC 1150 and founded a new kingdom, Pazarkan (Freedom) and established good neighborly relations with the divided and exhausted peoples surrounding them.

Coming from the far steppes of inner Brun, several tribes—of Oltec-Neathar descent—moved into the lands of the Hattis, a Pitchan tribe living at the mouth of the Yalu River and, overwhelmed by the riders' sheer numbers, the Hattis withdrew towards the mountains. The nomadic tribes were the vanguard of the gigantic Yalu River Empire, which stretched as far as the Hyborean Valley. Dravya was conquered and sacked by the nomads in BC 1088. Following the demise of Emperor Dorfin, the Yalu River Empire fragmented in BC 1034. Under constant threat from the humanoids of the Yazak Steppes, the main tribe among the nomads, the Dars, retreated behind the protection of the Yalu River estuary into the Jyar Plain northwest of Yalu Bay. Pressured by the westward move of the northern nomads, the Hattis were forced to settle the forested valley of the Zob River.

The Dars finally settled the valleys of the Jyar Plain, in BC 1000 and Darsagades was founded. Contacts were made with the societies of the western coast; this is the dawn of the region's modern history.

From BC 750 to BC 700, Xaries, King of Darsagades, united the city-states of the Jyar Plain. Trade with the kingdoms of the western coast and Nimmur intensified. In BC 653, Zaranaster, a merchant from Darsagades, came back from a journey to the land of the enduks. He brought home a new cult—in fact a syncretism of the traditional Darsian manicheist pantheon and the enduks' cult of Idu (Ixion)—where Mizara-Idan is the sole Immortal. This religion preached that people doing good will be rewarded at the time of their death while people of evil nature will be sent to a place of eternal torment. Many Dars among

the nobility as well as among the populace adopted his religious school.

In BC 611, the sacred alliance was signed between Kanastez, *shah* of the Dars and Pasuldar, king of the pegataurs. This alliance decreed that, while being their vassals, the pegataurs would make up the bulk of the Dars' elite troops and, as such, would be the first to exert their right to plunder new territories in the name of the alliance. Also, the alliance established that as long as the pegataurs stayed trustworthy allies of the Dars, only pegataurs would be eligible as king of their brethren. Following the signature of the treaty, the Dars and their new elite cavalry of pegataurs launched an attack against the small and divided kingdoms of the Arm of the Immortals' western coast and the Zebris Valley. In BC 590, the conquest of the Pitchans' lands was complete and Kanastez was proclaimed the sacred *shah-an-shah* (emperor); the Kanastenid dynasty was founded as a result.

From BC 590 until approximately BC 400, the Kanastenid Empire bloomed: it became a trade hub in western Brun. The merchants ships of Yivja could be found in the farthest ports and trade links were established with Nimmur, the Nithian Empire, Hule, the Milenian Empire, the eastern coast of Skothar and western Davania. Maritime expeditions were sent to explore Mystara, some going as far as Alphatia and Pelatan. Money taken from the taxes financed the arts, science and literature and the Kanastenids were renowned for their magical skills. The humanoid tribes of the Yazak Steppes were kept at bay or even bribed to remain peaceful. The teachings of tolerance from Zaranaster allowed the empire to avoid any troubles among the diverse collection of religious groups residing within the empire.

The first blow to the Kanastenid Empire was the eradication of the Nithian Empire. Even if the memories of that empire were removed by the Immortals, the disappearance of a major trading partner in eastern Brun handicapped the Kanastenid merchants. More costly was the war between the enduks and the Skothar manscorpions;

the demise of Nimmur, the empire's first trading partner, made the eastern trade routes almost unprofitable.

The real blow to the Kanastenid dynasty also came from commerce, even if it was of a very different nature: in BC 314, a cargo ship arrived from Davanian lands with a crew infested by broodlings. The parasite creatures spread rapidly throughout the unprepared empire and years of internal fighting against the hives was not enough for the empire to persevere and finally, in BC 272, the Kanastenid Empire collapsed, its administrative structures corroded by the monstrous parasite.

Around BC 250, while the people of the northern Arm of the Immortals were divided and exhausted by their struggle against the hivebrood, a group of ogre-kin sailors from Tangor landed on the western coast, south of the former imperial territories. From this time on, they began to settle a land that was known as the Land of the Gyerians during the empire's heyday. The ogre-kin bought parts of the land from the bird-like gyerians in exchange for petty jewelry and fake precious stones. As they settled the lands, these newcomers overtook many of the trade routes abandoned by the disorganized empire. In BC 239, there were enough ogre-kin living in the region to found a new political entity called the Kingdom of Suma'a; 16 years later, a second kingdom was founded, named Gombar. Both countries thrived on the trade with Tangor, Davania and the Arm of the Immortals.

In BC 44, a group of Hattas adventurers, led by the mage Supalinaan, killed the broodmother of Attasar. This event triggered the reawakening of the people in the former Kanastenid Empire. Supalinaan and his group led a mighty crusade against the hive throughout the empire. As the chief of the liberation squads, Supalinaan and his friends built a new empire: each city freed of the hive had to swear allegiance to the council (composed of himself and his friends) in Attasar. By AC 10, the entire country had been liberated from the hive's yoke and Supalinaan left the new empire's

throne to his son Attassaper in order to quest for immortality. A new special security force was created in AC 9 in order to keep the hive out of the empire's territory; any infected person had to be sent to the nearest temple for immediate healing. Otherwise, the new hivebroods were sent to the steppes south of Uvaraz. The new empire awakened, only to find that it was not the center of the world anymore...

After one and a half centuries of internal rebuilding, the new Hattasin Empire felt ready to reassume its former position. In AC 157, an armada of breathtaking size assembled in the western ports of the empire, its goal to invade the ogre-kin kingdoms of Suma'a and Gombar and reassert the empire's control over the trade routes across the Strait of Tangor. On its way to the two kingdoms, the armada was surprised and nearly annihilated by a hurricane summoned by the ogre-kin shamans. The few remaining vessels of the fleet were sunk or captured by the smaller but faster ships of the ogre-kin navies. Defeated at sea, the empire tried an overland invasion seven years later. But the legions of the Hattasin Empire were humiliated by what was thought to be uncivilized and disorganized gyerians. The Hattas discovered that, helped by the Gombarians, the gyerians had created their own kingdom, Adilli and mastered the modern war techniques and equipment.

In AC 179, the Yevo, a nomadic tribe of Antalian blood from the northern steppes, conquered Vyatka, which was, until then, a satellite of the Hattasin Empire. Preoccupied by the protection of the new territories in the Yazak Steppes, the Hattas neglected to care about these peripheral developments.

Focused on its maritime struggle against the kingdoms of the western coast, the Hattasin Empire was surprised, in AC 217, by a sudden attack from the humanoids of the Yazak Steppes and their Hulean allies. The empire lost its control over Dravya and the Yalu River estuary. Threatened on its eastern flank, the Hattasin Empire signed a peace treaty with Adilli, Suma'a and Gombar in AC 220, in exchange for which it obtained

control over some minor trade routes toward Tangor. Beginning in AC 233, the empire entered a war of reconquest against the humanoids of the Yazak Steppes. Casualties were heavy on both sides and the Hattasin advance stalled on the Yalu River, with neither adversary able to cross it.

It would not be the situation on the frontline that would define the results of the war: the implosion of the Hulean Empire (in AC 295) and the subsequent fragmentation of the Yazak tribes (in AC 297) was the deciding factor. The armies of the Hattasin Empire reached Dravya in AC 299 and conquered a large portion of the Yazak Steppes in the following four years.

Around AC 415, the increasing resources diverted from the Hattasin Empire's economy to protect the eastern territories stirred discontent among the nobility. In AC 466, the discontent reached its apex and the vassals of Zebris Valley refused to pay their taxes or send any more troops to the eastern territories. The imperial army was sent to quell the revolt and encountered the local garrison, which was supportive of the rebel nobles. The empire was split between those allied to the Hattas rulers (most of the northeastern nobility) and the southwestern kings. The ensuing civil war devastated most of Yivja while other territories were more or less spared. In AC 473, while most of the imperial army was fighting in southern Yivja, the king of the Dars, Pirooz Yezcham, backstabbed the Hattas by sending his forces to Attasar. With the support of the pegataur king, he proclaimed that Darsagades would be the capital city of a new empire, the Yezchamenid Empire. The elite pegataur troops shifted their allegiance to Yezcham, followed closely by the core of the imperial army. A separate peace was signed in AC 475 with the King of Chura, thus splitting in two the alliance of the southern vassals. However, it took more than thirty years for the Yezchameni to reunify the empire.

It was only with the victory over the last Dremen rebels, in AC 508, that the new dynasty stabilized. After more than a century of trouble, however, the empire's trade had been disrupted and the most prosperous

regions had been ravaged. The economy of the empire was at its worst as traders from the Savage Coast (primarily from Bellayne and Renardie) now controlled most of the trade to and from the Yalu Bay ports. Also, the loosening of the sanitary controls during the civil war has triggered a new surge of the hivebrood in the eastern regions.

Following the end of the civil wars was a period of inner buildup and sociopolitical modernization in the Yezchamenid Empire. The multitude of vassals that characterized the reign of the Hattas were reduced to ten *zatrapias*, each headed by a *zatrapi* designated by the *shab-an-shab* among the locals or in his family. The teachings of Zaranaster were brought back to the forefront after a period when the Hattas pantheon prevailed. The domestic economy was revamped and a state school system was established. Ready to reassert itself as a major power in western Brun, the Yezchameni built a new war fleet in Yalu Bay. In AC 622, at the Battle of the Bayou, the fleets of Bellayne and Renardie were ousted of the bay and the colonists of those countries were forced to withdraw from the region. However, the two kingdoms of the Savage Coast continued to finance piracy in the Strait of Yalu, thus impeding the growth of Yezchamenid trade outside the bay. Also, in AC 649, the hivebrood was effectively eliminated from imperial lands. In AC 665, a new trade treaty was signed with the kingdoms of Suma'a and Gombar that allowed the empire to conduct trade with Tangor and Davania, but piracy remained an endemic problem in the Sea of Brun's waters.

Around AC 700, the growing power of Zuyevo increasingly worried the Yezchameni. A small-scale military expedition was sent in AC 706 into Zuyevan lands to test their capabilities and the rapid victory of the Zuyevans signaled to the Yezchameni that they were no longer free of threats from the north.

Despite the piracy problem on both sides of the Yezchamenid Empire and the growing power of Zuyevo, the eighth century AC was marked by the prosperous and peaceful reign of Qanikes Yezchamenid

"The Enlightened" from AC 727 to AC 789. During his reign the empire underwent an artistic, philosophical and magical renaissance. Trade ties with neighbors also develop, but oversea trade remained constrained by the pirates' activities.

His grandson, Sasdan, followed the guidelines set by his grandfather. But his reign was ended abruptly when, in AC 818, his ship was sunk in the Yalu Strait by Renardois pirates. Leaving no heirs, his throne became the object of a fierce competition among his brothers. The following fifty years, during which the throne was vacant, were filled with assassinations, intrigue and treason. In AC 866, Fazar Yezchamenid, a distant nephew of Sasdan, was chosen by a council of mages to be the new *shab-an-shab*. His reign, from AC 866 to AC 903, was renowned as one of the most just of the region's history.

In AC 913, the southward expansion of Zuyevo crashed headlong into the interests of the Yezchamenid Empire. This expansion led to the first open conflict between the two empires over the status of the southern Yalu Steppes. After a brief engagement, in which the mobility and discipline of the Zuyevans allowed them to gain the upper hand against the flying chariots and infantry of the Yezchamenid army, the Yezchameni were defeated and by the Quesun peace treaty only kept a small area of land around the Yalu River estuary to link them with the *Zatrapi* of Drazde.

In AC 957, the citizens of Utsidon were awestruck at the sight of a flying island hovering just outside their city. Soon they met the island's inhabitants, wizards of a distant empire named Alphatia. Their island came from the Kingdom of Floating Ar and for a reason unknown had broken free from its magical anchor and wandered randomly for more than 15 months. In fact, Palartarkan, the Immortal who created the island, freed it from its magical anchor and brought it to Yivja in a move to widen His base of followers. The journey of the Alphatians was made hard by the lack of readily available food and, since the Yivja provided them with food upon arrival, the

Alphatians felt welcome in this new land. Local merchants, seeing an opportunity to bypass the pirates of the Sea of Brun, began to learn from the Alphatians how to make flying ships. The cult of Palartarkan, taught by the newcomers, found many followers among the merchants and sailors of Yivja.

In AC 977, a new competitor appeared in Yalu Bay: the Vilaverdans. Five years later, the empire was defeated by them at the Battle of the Horn. The Yezchamenid eastern fleet was destroyed and the bay was opened to the Savage Coast colonial powers anew.

In AC 986, Zuyevo sank into a civil war and seeing in this struggle an opportunity to weaken its northern neighbor, the Yezchameni secretly provided help and equipment to the two factions. However, in AC 989, the unrest was quelled by pro-imperialist elements of the Zuyevan military under Marshall Steyev and the Yezchamenid plot was uncovered, stirring anger throughout the Zuyevan nobility.

The year AC 997 marked the death of *Shah-an-shah* Mayzar Yezchamenid, in a hunting accident. His sole son, Zhoher, was crowned sacred emperor at the age of four under the tutelage of his uncle Quymier. The regent's decision to place some of his own relatives in influential positions, to raise taxes and lower transfers to the *zatraps*, to use his own guard as a paramilitary force and to enforce religious repression, earned him the hatred of most of the *zatraps*. Nevertheless, the *zatraps*' allegiance went first to the *shah-an-shah* and even if they disapproved of his uncle's policies and strove for greater autonomy, none of them attempted to declare independence as long as a Yezchameni was a head of state.

Profiting from the Yezchamenid Empire's problem, the Zuyevans launched a series of attacks against the empire's possessions at the northern tip of Yalu Bay in AC 998. Taking the Yezchameni off guard, they easily conquered the estuary of the Yalu River and founded the city of Kishinev on the bay's shores, thus cutting the Yezchamenid Empire in two. The *Zatrapy* of Drazde

became a de facto independent state in AC 999, but the authorities in Dravya, the capital city, were divided between the supporters of Zuyevo and the loyalists to the old motherland.

Zhoher proved to be a weak ruler and was unable to prevent the resurgent Zuyevan Empire from increasing its influence in Drazde and eventually annexing it in AC 1008.

ZUYEVO (*Empire of*)

Location: Continent of Brun, Yalu River Basin. WB

Area: 520,000 sq. mi. (1,346,800 sq. km.).

Population: 1,600,000.

Languages: The Zuyevans speak a derivative of an ancient Antalian language that shares a 45% commonality with Heldannic with a slight hint of Ethengar influence.

Coinage: *Dvina* (gp), *vaska* (sp), *keven* (cp).

Taxes: 25% tax on the income of peasants (much of which is paid in kind or through servitude) and merchants and 10% on the nobility.

Government Type: Autocratic imperial monarchy.

Industries: Agriculture, hunting, fur trading, logging, conquest, mining (gold, silver, tin, electrum, copper, iron), alcohol production.

Important Figures: Andrei III (*Tsar*, human, male, F16), Vasily Stolbov (Minister of State, human, male, F8).

Flora and Fauna: Being a northern land with rich soils, Zuyevo hosts a wide variety of plant life. Towards the south, grasslands and steppes predominate, while in the north and towards the foothills of the Endworld Line, great forests cover the land, culminating in the immense Tunguska Forest, which is primarily coniferous. Towards the central regions of Zuyevo, the vast stands of evergreens give way to forests of maple, poplar and aspen. Interspersed with the various mundane plants can be

found grab grass (in the steppes) and strangle vines (hanging from branches in the southern forests).

Zuyevo is also home to a wide variety of animal life, including deer, mink, beavers, foxes and wolves. Various humanoids found within Zuyevo include troglodytes, goblins, gnomes, some elves (in the Tunguska Forest) and a large number of hill and mountain giants in the Endworld Line, as well as the occasional red dragon. Some fey races have been sighted in the forests north of Archangelsk. Centaur tribes live in the south near the Yezchamenid Empire.

Further Reading: None.

Description by Marina Takanitas.

While exploring Bellayne for this year's almanac, I had heard that the far-off nations of Zuyevo and the Yezchamenid Empire. Though I had been warned of the danger in making such a long journey, I had already gone all the way to Bellayne as it was; a couple hundred extra miles would make no difference, now. Besides, there might be something in it for the family business. Though I did not have much time to explore either nation to any great extent, I was able to get a sense of what these places are like.

The Land

Zuyevo is a land of immense steppes and grasslands as well as vast forests. The land is bounded by major natural barriers—the Endworld Mountain Range to the west, the Yalu River to the east, arctic plateaus to the north and Yalu Bay to the south. It is also a cold and bitter land, especially in the north and the population works hard to extract a living from the soil. The north of the empire is prone to heavy snowfalls, although the hunting is good in the birch, aspen and conifer forests of the north in the warmer months as bear, deer and other wildlife are plentiful.

The land is most heavily settled along the Yalu River and its numerous tributaries; however, Zuyevan colonization spreads far beyond these regions, although populations

here tend to be much sparser and more clustered in defensible villages along internal routes of communication and at sites of valuable resources like mines and good hunting regions.

The People

The Zuyevans come from a mixed heritage. The most numerous, from a Yevo background, are largely of Antalian heritage, tall and of light complexion. The Talmavs who make up much of the remainder of the population are of Ethengar stock and tend to be more swarthy and stocky. A significant proportion of the peasantry are serfs—bonded laborers—while there is also a small group of well-off, independent farmers: the *kulaks*. The merchant/middle classes tend to be relatively small as much of the export trade is dealt with by a handful of trading families. The nobility (the only precondition for entry being the amount of farming land owned) is quite large in comparison to most other dominions (especially ones like Karameikos and Thyatis).

The major cities of Zuyevo are:

Zybirsk (pop. 3,000): Zybirsk is a relatively newly created town following the discovery of silver and gold in nearby hills in AC 989. Zybirsk is the classic frontier town—wild and untamed, although the *tsar's* troops maintain a presence in the town, ostensibly to make sure that taxes are paid on the metals extracted from the mines. However, corruption is rife and the *tsar's* troops and officers often accept kickbacks in return for not levying taxes.

Kishinev (pop. 4,500): Kishinev is the newest of all Zuyevan towns, founded in AC 998. It is Zuyevo's only port that is ice-free year-round and its only outlet onto Yalu Bay. The small Zuyevo Southern Fleet is headquartered here and the town is a base for naval explorations of Yalu Bay and beyond. It is also the site of the Renardois embassy. The Kingdom of Renardie and the Empire of Zuyevo are forging a strong trade and military alliance—both hope to profit from this at the expense of Vilaverde and Bellayne.

Zuyganev (pop. 40,000): Capital city of the nation, Zuyganev is a prosperous but rambling collection of stone and wooden buildings, surrounded by thick and strong stone walls. It is home to the principal imperial palace, as well as many other fine examples of the unusual Zuyevan architecture.

Dubyshev (pop. 14,000): Dubyshev is a thriving logging and mining town and is the key to Aska Pass, the narrow and treacherous route that links Zuyevo to its northern ports on the Sea of Brun. It was originally the power base of the Dubyshev princes, but since the recent time of troubles (i.e. the civil war of AC 984-988), the independence of the region has been crushed by the *tsar*—who maintains two Talmav Guard regiments in the city.

Krasnavodsk (pop. 6,000): The earliest Zuyevan port that was built, it was settled in AC 594 by Talmav explorers. It is now a thriving sea-port, although the bay on which it is situated (the Vaigach Morye) freezes over for three months of every year and is dangerous to larger ships for another two months due to floating ice sheets and the like.

Archangelsk (pop. 13,000): Archangelsk (archangel in Zuyevan) is the principal port of the empire. However, it faces similar problems as does Krasnavodsk, with the port open to navigation at best seven months of the year. It is the administrative and economic center of Zuyevo's north. The region (or *oblast*) is cut off from the outside world for at least four months out of every year with the Aska Pass snowed in and impassable during winter and the shipping lanes similarly impassable. Despite the founding of Kishinev, which is still in its infancy, Archangelsk is the main route for exports to be shipped out of Zuyevo.

Kulikovo Fortress (pop. 6,000 soldiers): Kulikovo is an immense rambling fortification system built on the eastern side of the Yalu River. It features a sizable wharf/dock area where riverboats ferry troops and supplies to the fortress from Sharya. The fortress is the most major

military instillation of note on the eastern side of the river and is the point from which military expeditions are sent out against the vicious humanoids of the northern Yazak Steppes. It has two satellite fortresses called Kustany and Aktynkidze, which act as buffers against humanoid incursions.

Sharya (pop. 17,000): Strategically positioned in the apex of the mighty Yalu and Rybinskoye Rivers, Sharya is a booming city and gateway to the east. It is largely a military town and is constructed as such—neat long streets in a grid pattern. Sharya supplies the troops across the Yalu River at Kulikovo and is the starting point of military and trading expeditions that strike out eastward across the northern Yazak Steppes.

Vyatka (pop. 9,000): Vyatka has been an integral part of the Zuyevan Empire since it was conquered by the Yevo in AC 179. It sits amongst vast tracts of excellent agricultural lands—wheat, rye and other grains are grown here in abundance. As a result, Vyatka is known as the granary of Zuyevo, exporting its excess produce north and south along the Rybinskoye River.

Kostyn (pop. 10,000): Kostyn sits at the source of the Medyn River, namely Markavey Ozero (Zuyevan for Markavey Lake). Its main industries are fur trapping and fishing. The city has grown rich and prosperous from the fur trade in particular—pelts of beaver, mink, sable and others are sold here by hunters that range hundreds of miles north and east through the forests of the Kostyn *Oblast*, punctuated only by stockaded forts and villages. The *tsar* levies a 15% fur tax on all pelts brought into the city, but corruption and overzealous bureaucracy often results in more or less being collected for the imperial coffers.

Kirov (pop. 19,000): Kirov is the second largest city in Zuyevo. Its size is a result of the prosperity of its fur trade and its strategic position at the junction of the Rybinskoye and Tashkent Rivers. Formerly the capital of the powerful Visneskayan *Khanate*, it was conquered by the Yevo war leader Miska in AC 517. It is also well

known for its most famous product, vodka, which is produced here in abundance.

Kharkav (pop. 11,000): Located on the upper reaches of the Rybinskoye River, Kharkav is the traditional home of the Talmav tribesmen who have been a part of the empire for almost 500 years. The Kharkav *Oblast* is principally wooded steppe, but there are also large plains of feather grass. Horses are common in the region and many peasants living in the *oblast* are excellent horsemen. As such, many go on to join the *tsar's* armies and vie for positions in the elite Talmav Guards.

Chusqvoi Selo (pop. 3,500): Chusqvoi Selo is a solitary and often snowbound northern outpost for Zuyevo. Connected by roads (little more than muddy and barely passable tracks) to Saratov and Kharkav, it is the center for those hardy Zuyevans who choose to live in the inhospitable north of the empire. Talmav settlers continue to push the borders of the empire further north and east every year as they expand the fur and the hunting grounds. They leave behind small fortified hamlets and villages along muddy roads that are forged through the wooded Chusqvoi Steppes.

Saratov (pop. 8,000): Saratov is Zuyevo's window on the north. It is a large trading center—many expeditions leave from Saratov for Douzbakjian and Sardjikjian. Its primary industries aside from that are military and fur related. The military are there to secure the routes of communication and to prevent tribesmen (like the Sendarya from the Zdredanyan Forest) and white orcs from the north from disrupting trade. The hunters are there, because wildlife is abundant in the region and the value of a good pelt is often more than worth the risk.

Vyamisgrad (pop. 3,500): Vyamisgrad is but a shadow of its former glory. The town is still recovering from its almost total annihilation by Marshal Steyev in AC 988 when it was the unfortunate site of the largest (and final) battle of the time of troubles. However, the region is rich in farming land and is another major crop-growing area and will likely bounce back

within a few decades. Many of the nobility maintain estates in the region of varying sizes—each populated by anywhere from 10 to 3,000 serfs.

Richland (pop. 10,000): Conquered in AC 1016 by Zuyevo, Richland is Zuyevo's southernmost city. It is a port of considerable renown and possesses an excellent deep-water harbor. It is currently in the process of intense re-fortification as the Zuyevans seek to make the city impregnable against retaliation from Vilaverde and others.

Zablin (pop. 7,000): The capital of the former Yezchamenid *Zatrapy* of Drazde, it was assimilated by the Zuyevans in AC 1008. It gives them a strong presence on the eastern bank of the Yalu River and on the northern coast of Yalu Bay.

Recent History

Zuyevo's distant beginnings lie in the reign of terror created in Norwold by the vast humanoid army of the Great King Loark. His assault on the Antalians of the area in BC 1722 was savage in the extreme. A large tribe of Antalians known as the Yevo managed to escape the slaughter by migrating west over the Icereach Mountains. Ten years later, another migration began, this time by Ethengars of the Talmav tribe, driven from their country by the southward rampage of King Loark.

Over a period of 650 years the Talmav horde moved slowly westward warring as they did with various humanoid tribes. Around BC 1050 these Talmav tribesmen, having traversed the entire northern expanse of Brun, moved south, down the Yalu River. Skilled horse-archers, they marauded through the declining Yalu River Empire. That empire was finally crushed in BC 1034 with the death in battle of Emperor Dorfin. The Yalu River Empire splintered as various factions vied for whatever power and resources that they could secure. The Talmavs settled around the area that is now Kharkav.

On a separate and more northerly migration, the Yevo tribes entered the

northern Yalu River valley from the Hyborean Steppes around BC 550. Finally finding a place safe from marauding humanoids, they settled in the steppes north of Tunguska on the western bank of the Yalu River. Over a period of several hundred years the Yevo expanded across the northern steppes. In the 2nd century AC, however, a considerable blow splintered their burgeoning civilization. For several centuries the area became increasingly inhospitable as weather patterns across the lower Hyborean tundra made the area colder and colder. In AC 175 freak snowstorms of bizarre intensity struck the region, resulting in a blizzard that covered the whole region for more than a month. The blizzard was accompanied by attacks from bizarre ice-demons and their cold-loving kin. When the snow finally stopped, the Yevo emerged to find many of their kinsmen dead and their cropland devastated.

Seeing no other option, the Yevo packed their remaining possessions into longships, which they were now adept at sailing and traveled south down the Yalu River. After failing to find suitable landing sites, in AC 179 the Yevo found and quickly conquered the small but prosperous dominion of Vyatka. From this power base in the rich black earth plains, the fierce Yevo raiders swept over a number of surrounding tribes and villages during the following 200 years. Soon the Yevo found it more profitable to farm the region and grow rich on the tribute levied on subject tribes. They founded their capital, Zuygano, in AC 415 and built the city into both an impressive citadel and a center for trade and the arts.

Their warlike nature did not abate, however and the Yevo continued to conquer surrounding peoples. Over a long period these tribes and kingdoms were gradually assimilated. In AC 502, Zuyevo as the kingdom had come to be called (literally Place of the Yevo) faced one of its biggest tests when it involved itself in a full-scale war with the Kingdom of Visneskaya to the north. The war raged on and off for 15 years, before the Zuyevans, with the help of the former allies of Visneskaya (the

Talmavs), finally crushed their opposition. The leader of the Zuyevans, a man known as Miska Gureyivich, had himself crowned *tsar*—emperor of the united Zuyevan and Visneskayan kingdoms—at Kirov, the site of his greatest victory over the Visneskayan forces.

The Zuyevan program of assimilation continued for a further 200 years until they were masters of the entire Yalu Steppes. Only a handful of unimportant tribes in the Tunguska River region remained outside the control of the *tsar*. During this period, the Zuyevan nobility grew greatly, as nobility was based on land control and warriors and others who had grown rich on the conquests of surrounding peoples soon began to acquire vast estates. This led to a growing class of peasants with no access to land. In AC 696, *Tsar* Alekseyev, later known as Alekseyev the Brutal, instituted a system of serfdom for landless peasants—a form of indenture, whereby these serfs worked hard on the lands of the nobility in return for the right to own and farm their own little plot in their “days off.”

The dawning of the 8th century AC saw a series of border skirmishes along the southern frontier of Zuyevo with the Yezchamenid Empire. The expansion of the empire had stalled in the north, as the Zuyevans became bogged down in conflicts with the tribesmen of the Tunguska Forest. As a result, Zuyevan interests had turned south to the wide Koltenyi Steppes. More critically though, Zuyevo desperately wanted an ice-free port at the mouth of the Yalu River. In AC 706, concerned at the Zuyevan intransigence to its north, the Yezchamenid Empire sent an expeditionary force to teach the upstart Zuyevans a lesson. *Tsar* Alekseyev led Zuyevan forces to a monumental victory over the invaders at the battle of Akmolinsk. The Yezchamenid force was outmaneuvered by the skillful Talmav Guard cavalry and pulverized by the onslaught of wave after wave of Zuyevan infantry. Out of a force of 13,000 Yezchamenid troops, 7,000 were killed outright and the remainder surrendered. Alekseyev accepted their surrender,

disarmed the soldiers and then massacred them.

Although *Tsar* Alekseyev had been a brilliant leader since his crowning in AC 687, the Yezchamenid invasion appeared to trigger a complete personality change. He grew brutal, perceiving enemies at every turn. Alekseyev abandoned his plans to push the Zuyevan Empire to the brink of Yalu Bay and instead turned inwards, conducting a campaign of terror within Zuyevo itself, killing all those who opposed him. A daring assassination attempt, with the connivance of some Zuyevan military officers, finally ended his life in AC 716.

For the remainder of the 8th and the whole of the 9th centuries AC, the Zuyevan Empire pushed northwards into the Severnaya Novay (the new north). The catalyst for this expansion was the fur trade—on which the empire grew rich. Furs and pelts of all kinds were traded to Douzbakjian and other countries of the Midlands as well as Hule, the Yezchamenid Empire and even Gombar and Suma'a. With Talmavs pushing deep into the Tunguska region, conflict with the local tribes was inevitable. However, the superior weapons and technology of the Talmavs proved far superior and Tunguska tribes were quickly conquered. This was reinforced by the *tsar's* armies, always plodding along behind the Talmav frontiersmen, enforcing the will of the *tsar* through the force of arms and the building of stockaded forts and villages along the rivers and trade routes. The late 9th century also saw the discovery of large veins of gold in the western mountains around Dubyshev. This led to the local nobility and the princes of Dubyshev in particular, growing rich on the taxes levied on the miners.

The beginning of the 10th century AC saw the Zuyevan Empire again expanding southwards after easy gains had been made in the north. Zuyevan settlers overran the Koltenyi Steppes and armed conflict between Zuyevan and Yezchamenid farmers were common. This increasing tension exploded in AC 913 when a group of Yezchameni slaughtered a camp of Zuyevan settlers, including many women and

children. Regardless of the fact that the Yezchameni were responding to the burning of their farms by militant Zuyevan settlers, *Tsar* Turgay declared war on the Yezchamenid Empire, sending his large serf armies southwards. The Yezchameni responded by sending a force of infantry and chariots to meet this threat. After a series of skirmishes the two forces met in the battle of Dasht-i-Kavar. Bloody losses were sustained on both sides, but the sheer size of the Zuyevan army eventually carried the day and the Yezchameni were routed. The Zuyevan war machine continued to rumble south until it was halted with heavy casualties at Qesun. A formal truce was negotiated within weeks that gave the northern two-thirds of the Koltenyi Steppes to the Zuyevans. Surprisingly, both sides observed the new borders in a peace that lasted 84 years.

The Zuyevans made the most of this peaceful situation to strengthen their foothold on the eastern side of the Yalu River. Constructing a string of fortresses that radiated out from the giant fortifications at Kulikovo, the Zuyevan army concentrated its efforts on subduing the humanoid tribes of the northern Yazak Steppes. This policy was designed to remove the threat of humanoid invasion from the east as well as to open up the possibility of contesting with Hule for the mineral-rich Bylot Hills and even the Converted Lands.

The humanoids were driven further and further back after successful campaigns by *Tsar* Berezov the Great (AC 935-967) and *Tsar* Andrei II (AC 967-976). However, during the reign of *Tsar* Alekseyev II, the Zuyevan army suffered a series of reverses in the campaign of AC 979-981. The humanoids had finally united under a strong leader, Vacek Jawbreaker, an orc of exceptional cunning. With dissension at home rising at these continued failures, *Tsar* Alekseyev II personally took command of the war. This proved to be a disastrous step. The reverses continued and Vacek even succeeded in sacking Kulikovo's two satellite fortresses of Kustany and Aktynkidze in AC 983. The blame for these losses fell squarely

on the *tsar*, where before it had been falling on his generals. After a series of riots in AC 984, the Dubyshev princes led an uprising against the *tsar*. Initially the rebel forces made considerable incursions into imperial territory, assisted by military equipment and financial assistance from the Yezchamenid Empire. Vyamisgrad and Kirov fell to the rebels in AC 985 and in AC 986 rebel troops from Anzhero and Krasnavodsk captured holdout imperial forces in Archangelsk. Also in AC 986, Ryazan was sacked by rebel forces and even Kharkav fell under siege by rebel troops from Surgut and Dubyshev.

The summer of AC 987 saw a turning in the tide of the war however. Imperial forces under the leadership of one of the greatest Zuyevan generals of all time, Marshal Steyev, began to beat back the Dubyshev forces. Kirov was liberated and the imperial forces pressed north to break the siege at Kharkav. In so doing, they allowed Talmav units to move southwards to assist the imperial forces. With Dubyshev forces holding impenetrable positions in the Tashkent Khrebet, imperial troops were forced to swing south along the Vyamis River. In AC 988 the rebellion was finally broken with the defeat of rebel forces at the epic battle of Vyamisgrad. The rebellion quickly fell apart as imperial forces had clearly gained the upper hand. Rebel troops in Anzhero saw the way the war was turning and sided with Marshal Steyev. This support was critical, as Anzheran troops held the strategic Aska Pass, preventing rebel reinforcements from Archangelsk from reaching Dubyshev in time to save it from the imperial army.

Despite his victory, *Tsar* Alekseyev II was politically disgraced and much of the empire's economy was in ruins. The nobility forced his abdication in favor of his young son andrei III. While only a young man of 19, this was a most fortunate move for the Zuyevan Empire, for Andrei III was energetic and dynamic and a gifted leader. *Tsar* Andrei revitalized the empire, crushed internal dissent and focused the empire on expansion once again.

This led to colonizing drives to the south of the empire—fortuitously establishing the

town of Zybirsk in the southwestern hinterlands. This is a particularly mineral-rich area and soon gold, silver, electrum and other metals were winging their way back to the center of the empire.

Of far more significance however, was *Tsar* Andrei's financing of insurgency within the Yezchamenid Empire, a technique he learned from the Yezchameni themselves. With the death of *Shah-an-shah* Mayzar Yezchamenid in AC 997 in a "hunting accident," and the crowning of his four year-old son andrei seized the chance to capture the Yalu River Delta. Launching a lightning attack, the Zuyevans seized a large swathe of Yezchamenid territory, effectively cutting the *Zatrapy* of Drazde off from the rest of the empire. Most importantly, the Zuyevans finally had access to Yalu Bay. *Tsar* Andrei immediately founded the naval base of Kishinev at the mouth of the Yalu River and established a bastion of forts around the Yalu River estuary. The *Zatrapy* of Drazde became de facto independent of the Yezchamenid Empire in AC 999, but the authorities in Dravya, the capital city, were divided between the supporters of Zuyevo and those still loyal to their old motherland and the then seven year old *shah-an-shah*.

In AC 1008 the *Zatrapy* of Drazde was absorbed by the Zuyevan Empire as the Zuyevan faction gained ascendancy there. The Yezchameni were still too weak to do more than diplomatically protest the action. The Zuyevan expansion continued and in AC 1016 the Zuyevans conquered the Cimarron trading colony of Richland. Vilaverdan and Cimarron troops were unable to prevent the takeover and now the *tsar* plots a way to remove the Vilaverdan scourge from Yalu Bay.

Atlas of Skothar

Introduction to Skothar

Dear readers of the *Mystaran Almanac*, it is a great pleasure for me, Erakliton, philosopher, politician and scholar, to write these few lines to present this new atlas section.

My humble self shall first excuse himself for the errors I surely will make writing in Thyatian, hopefully for your pleasure, in order to correct some information that has been written on the past issues of your wondrous almanac and to provide Western lands with an insight from our distant shores.

The region you call the Minaean Coast should more properly be called Tarystian Coast, from the name of a population who once dwelled in this region and from which we are descended. There is one major nation, here and it is, obviously, the Confederated Kingdom of Minaea. To the immediate east of Minaea, there is the free city of Akuba. Then the Kingdom of Tangor, one of many black-skinned nations that extend eastward in Skothar. Immediately at the north of Minaea are the barbarous Jennite lands, which I will not cover.

Besides the Tarystian Coast, Thyatian correspondents give us reports about two northwestern nations of Skothar: the Alphatian Republic of Esterhold and the not-too-distant Kingdom of Thonia.

Correspondents for Skothar

Erakliton of Traun

Erakliton is a Minaean philosopher from the city of Traun. He has long been a member of the ruling body of that city, but now he has left all his occupations behind to dedicate himself to scholarship. He has decided to join the almanac after having read the past issues and their imprecise description of the Minaean region.

Vivianna Romanones

An adviser and supporter of Eusebius, Lady Romanones is one of the empire's special envoys. Her duties demand a considerable amount of travel throughout the region under Thyatian influence and she has been kind enough to provide us with some unclassified reports of these areas, including an extensive description of the heartland of the empire this year. A strikingly beautiful but headstrong woman, Lady Romanones is a skilled negotiator known for her dedication to Thyatis and its interests. She is a strong proponent of reform in Thyatis and of doing the right thing. Some of her detractors claim she is willing to use any means to achieve what she believes is right, but we can only say she deserves praise for the insightful reports she has graciously sent us. We know our readers will find her unique insight into the Thyatian mindset interesting. Though her writing is very pronouncedly favorable to the Thyatians, everything we have been able to check seems factually accurate.

Yin Tang of Beitung

Yin Tang is a priest of Noumena, explorer and soldier. He spent many years prior to the Great War delving into the mysteries of the Dawnsea region and beyond. When it became apparent to him that Alphatia and Thyatis were bound to clash, he enlisted in the Thyatian military, remaining in service even after Ochalea seceded, out of a sense of duty and an unwillingness to betray his oath to the empire and also because he believed that Alphatia must be stopped. Because of his unique pre-war experiences, he was sent on far-flung missions, including an effort to foster dissent against the Alphatians in Esterhold, a mission that first brought him to the shores of Skothar. After the Great War he was among those that explored the sunken Alphatian continent and he has worked for the reintegration of Ochalea into the Thyatian Empire and he recently returned to imperial service as an explorer.

Atlas

AKUBA (City-State of)

Location: West of Tangor Empire, immediately east of the Confederated Kingdoms of Minaea, Tarystian Coast. SK

Area: 3,800 sq. mi. (9,850 sq. km.).

Population: 16,500 humans, 90% of Tangor ethnicity.

Languages: Tangor, Minaean (both are considered official languages).

Coinage: *Abu* (gp), *ku* (sp). Minaean and Tangor coinage accepted.

Taxes: 10% income tax, collected half on Nu. 1 and half on Fe. 1. Taxes are low to boost national trade. There is an import tax of 5% and non-Akubans must pay to get licenses for conducting a lot of activities (including trade, owning a shop, etc.).

Government Type: Democracy.

Industries: Agriculture (bananas, cocoa, dates), crafts.

Important Figures: Kulu Pomba (Governor, human, male, F7).

Flora and Fauna: No humanoids live in the small territory of the city. Giant crabs live on the beaches and the sea is rich with fish of all types and of giant squids and octopi. Dolphins and sahuagin are occasionally found.

Further Reading: None.

Description by Erakliton of Traun.

Akuba is a city-state with very small territorial extension, however it is a rich one, having skilled seamen and merchants who export bananas, cocoa and dates westward. This has helped the city to build a strong economy and recover from its turbulent history. Akuba's economic situation and its political views, are similar to that of other Minaean cities, however the architecture is clearly inspired by its black-skinned ancestry.

Recent History

Akuba was founded by refugees of the Kingdom of Ubu, conquered in AC 219 by the Tangor Empire and who were soon joined by the first refugees of the Kingdom of Mawuru, who suffered the same fate a few years later. Akuba still was, however, too near to the empire and thus it was conquered by Tangor in AC 445, remaining under its control until AC 816, even though it had always been an unstable province and tried several times to revolt. Freed in AC 816 by the Minaean Confederacy, it refused to become part of it. Batu-Fomba immediately organized a political coup to gain control of Akuba, but it was defied by a young warrior named Dabo, who became king. Struggling to retain its independence, strangled between two great powers, it finally fell again in AC 968. King Mupu led several raids against Batu-Fomba, so the Minaean city, allied with Tangor, eventually attacked it and conquered it after a siege. Then, the city was assigned to a ruling body composed equally of Batu-Fombans and of Tangor. The political exiles of Akuba, led by Trambul (a half-Tangor, half-Minaean politician), freed the city in AC 981 and created the democratic government that still rules the city-state.

ESTERHOLD (Republic of)

Location: Peninsula west of the Jennite lands, north of Minaea, continent of Skothar. SK

Area: Approximately 1,000,000 sq. mi. (2,590,000 sq. km.) are claimed, including Blackrock 100,000 sq. mi. (259,000 sq. km.) and Verdán 126,000 sq. mi. (326,340 sq. km.); the rest is mainly wilderness with scattered settlements on the southern coast.

Population: 230,000 including Blackrock (pop. 60,000), Verdán (pop. 150,000), Port Marlin (pop. 10,000), Rock Harbor (pop. 5,000) and Anchorage (pop. 5,000). Cities include Skyfyr (pop. 15,000) in Blackrock and Faraway (pop. 35,000) in Verdán. An unknown number of "free" Jennites also live

on the peninsula. [*Population figures are tentative, pending census. Ed.*]

Languages: Alphatian (Arogansan dialect), Jennite.

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher and an import tax of 1% (Naycese kingdoms and Karameikos excluded). 10% goes to the imperial treasury.

Government Type: Monarchy with developing democratic institutions, member of Nayce. Free Jennite clans living on the central plateau follow their own chieftains.

Industries: Light agriculture (Blackrock); military (Verdan); herding, hunting (free Jennites); fishing, logging (south coast communities). Mining was once (and probably will be again) the chief industry of Blackrock and Verdan but recent unrest and social upheavals has disrupted this for now.

Important Figures: Favian Vern (President, human, male, Pr15 of Razud); Talin (Self-designated Leader of Jennite Resistance, human, male, F6); Tristilia (Governor of Verdan, human, female, M20).

Flora and Fauna: Scrub bushes, tough grasses, two-humped camels, wild asses, horses, gazelles, antelopes in the uplands; humanoids scattered in the broken hills and mountainous areas. Taiga along the southern coast has deciduous and evergreen forests, moose, elk, bears, wolves, mountain lions and some deer as well as orcs, goblins, trolls, ogres, ettercaps and especially rabbits, all of which are prey for the feared and legendary Esterhold Devil.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Vivianna Romanones (*from a report to Emperor Eusebius leaked to Joshuan Gallidox Publishing*).

The Esterhold is a large but infertile peninsula jutting into the Alphatian Sea; growing even modest crops requires backbreaking labor, which in the past needed to be forced. Esterhold was famous for its rich minerals and infamous for the

harsh conditions the Jennite slaves were forced to endure in mining them. Of late it is known for the social unrest caused by several years of rebellion and warfare followed by the granting of freedom to all Jennite slaves. Favian Vern, appointed King of Esterhold by the Nayce Council in 1013, has announced his intention to mold Esterhold into a republic with democratic institutions. It is not sure whether he will risk his own office by making it elective or emulate the Thyatian system, where the emperor (in this case, king) is insulated from the electoral process to maintain continuity of government. Furthermore, a significant number of Jennites are against any continued Alphatian presence in the region. The unrest they caused last year forced Vern to put all elections on hold indefinitely.

In addition, when Vern suddenly freed all the Jennites, he did not take into account the disruption this would cause. Jennites hate laboring in the mines and find working on the (Alphatian-owned) plantations of Esterhold only slightly less abhorrent. Though many, if only because they need to work in order to eat, have accepted jobs working for their former masters, they usually demand high salaries. Furthermore, they can no longer be whipped into being productive and many barely work at all (and get angered if their employers complain of their lack of effort, claiming such employers are trying to turn them into “wage slaves” or some such).

Also, even the more enlightened Alphatian inhabitants of Esterhold have found the new arrangement somewhat unsettling. Though broadly supportive of Vern’s goals, they were not aware of the extent to which their lifestyle depended on forced (if better treated) Jennite labor. The days of living in luxury and being waited on hand and foot by Jennites who were happy to have a relatively kind master are over. Faced with Jennites who think they should be treated as equals, even the liberal-minded Alphatians of Esterhold sometimes think that insolence among the servant classes (meaning, in Esterhold, the Jennites) needs to be curbed. In retrospect it might have been better if

Vern had phased out slavery over a period of time instead of ending it instantly; but we must also remember the conditions under which he made his choice. Had he tried to keep slavery, even in part, even for a short time, the revolts that led to Vern's rise to power would have restarted (see below).

But these social frictions, though probably a long-lasting problem, are the least of Esterhold's difficulties. As mentioned, a large number of Jennites hate the Alphatians for what that empire did to them for a thousand years. They want complete freedom, not the freedom under Alphatian domination that Vern offers. This resistance movement is focused around a Jennite named Talin, a self-styled freedom fighter. If anything, the situation in Esterhold is reminiscent of the conditions your Thyatian ancestors were in when they threw off the yoke of Alphatia a millennium ago. Though we are, at the present, at peace with Nayce, we should recognize our spiritual kinship with the Jennites. And if at some point it becomes necessary, the Jennite resistance would no doubt welcome aid and support.

However, we must also take into consideration that Vern's reforms, emulating as they do our own system of government, may be the best way to encourage the spread of internal change within Nayce and evolve it into a less despotic society. If this happens, then in the long run the Alphatians will be less of a threat to their neighbors. For now I advise that we take a wait and see approach, even if it means not intervening on the side of the Jennite freedom fighters.

MINAEA (Confederated Kingdom of)

Location: West of the Jennite Lands, southeast of the Esterhold Peninsula. SK

Area: Roughly 750,000 sq. mi. (1,942,500 sq. km.).

Population: An estimated 480,000 humans living here consider themselves Minaeans. 412,000 of them live in the sixteen city-states and kingdoms that are

members of the confederacy; nearly 70,000 more live in the so-called national territories. In addition, there are an unknown number of tribal humans of Tangor stock (primarily in the southeastern forests of the Minaean Coast). The humanoid population levels are likewise unknown.

Languages: Minaean, Alphatian, Jennite, Tangor.

Coinage: *Kalit* (gp), *kalos* (sp), *kalen* (cp); foreign coins accepted in cities and large towns.

Taxes: 10% income tax collected on Nu. 1 by the confederate government. Individual city-states also collect an income tax that generally ranges between 5 and 10%, collected on Fy. 1.

Government Type: The Minaean government combines a national monarchy with autonomous local governments. The Minaean king has the power to decree and enforce laws affecting national territories (primarily the unclaimed areas between Minaean communities and along the roads that connect them), collect taxes from member communities, raise an army composed of member communities' militias and pass judgment on any legal matters brought before him. Each Minaean community passes and enforces its own laws within its borders. Most of them are small democracies, with a governing body consisting of citizens (often adult male land owners). In the larger communities, voting citizens elect representatives and officials to govern for them. Although Minaea claims a large expanse of land, it effectively controls only the areas that are directly occupied by its sixteen ruling cities.

Industries: Agriculture, crafts (especially jewelry, pottery, weaving), piracy.

Important Figures: Korudon (King, human, male, F8).

Flora and Fauna: Minaea is assumed to be home to many plants and animals common to temperate and subtropical forests. Gnolls, goblins, hobgoblins, kobolds, orcs, minotaurs, hill giants and firbolgs are known to live in the forests, hills and mountains of the area. Some explorers

have observed giant crabs on Minaean beaches. The coastal waters are known to harbor giant lamprey, giant octopi, sahuagin, sea lions, sharks, giant sea snakes, giant squid, tritons, whales and, of course, pirates.

Further Reading: Previous almanacs.

Description by Erakliton of Traun.

The Land

The Minaean Coast is a vast region stretching along the southwestern bulge of the Skothar continent. Rolling hills rise up from the Steppes of Jen, peak in a hilly range almost tall enough to qualify as mountains and gradually subside into the coastal lowlands. The entire region is blanketed in forest and is dotted with open terrain. The climate is surprisingly temperate; in the lowlands, the climate tends to verge on subtropical.

Minaea, the nation's capital city, rests five miles back from the coast, across the Strait of Minaea from Seahaven in Meriander. The coastal town of Piraeus serves as Minaea's port.

Other Minaean cities and towns are scattered throughout the region, connected by a vast network of roads and trails. Each city is semiautonomous and satellite towns and villages are granted access to community services (libraries, universities, marketplaces and the like). Minaean cities share a common language, culture and currency. Trade goods and cultural achievements (literature, plays, music and so on) flow freely between the cities.

The People

The Minaeans are the principal inhabitants of this forested land. A people of dark complexion with dark brown or black hair, Minaeans are descendants of a mix of Tarystians and Milenians. Although Minaeans are primarily known for piracy, due to the depredations of an infamous band of pirates, Yodar's Sea Wolves, that preyed on Alphatian and Bellissarian shipping 70 years ago, this piratical

reputation is largely exaggerated [*However, in the Alphatian Sea, Minaean pirates have harassed so many ships that most people immediately think of pirates whenever they think of Minaeans. Ed.*]. Other races present are civilized minotaurs in the cities of Erech and Sinbay and black-skinned Tangor. All of them have contributed to the creation of the Minaean culture and are a full part of it, sharing it totally.

The main Immortal of the region is Athinai, a manifestation of Tarastia. Other worshipped Immortals are Poseidon (Protius) and Zeùs (Odin). Collectively they are known as the Olympians, from the name of Mount Olympus, a sacred mountain of Minaea.

Recent History

The history of Minaea goes as far back as BC 100, when colonists fleeing the falling Milenian Empire reached the western shores of Skothar. The land was known as Tarystia, from the name of an ancient city that was once the region's center of power. The Milenians founded the city of Minaea after an agreement with the Tarystians and during three centuries of peaceful coexistence, the two cultures gradually blended; the Milenians, who had taken with them the technology, magics and architecture of their homelands, were gradually absorbed into the piratical, warlike Tarystian way of life, abandoning their old patriarchal ways for the egalitarian Tarystian attitude; intermarriage was encouraged by the Tarystians and over a short period the two races had become one, the Minaeans, from the name of that city who had become the main settlement of the new culture. In AC 335, several Tarystian-Minaean cities decide to create a league in order to resist the aggressive attitude of the neighboring Tangor humans to the east. Several wars took place between Tangor and Minaea, notably that of AC 335-336, that saw Minaea's victory and that of AC 439-446, with Tangor conquering the city of Akuba. Soon after, a disastrous war with the northern Kingdom of Hastwr occurred over

the control of the cities of Dool and Durke (AC 536-539).

In AC 721-722, the cities of Erech and Sinbay, founded by a civilized minotaur culture, suffered an invasion of green orcs and savage ones (the name by which civilized minotaurs call their northerly, barbarous counterparts). After the destruction brought by the invaders, they entered the league, which was re-formed as a confederacy in AC 738, with thirteen cities and kingdoms joining. The new confederated kingdoms entered the Third Tangor War in AC 814, which ended in AC 816 with their victory, resulting in the liberation of Akuba. However, the city refused to enter the confederacy and was able to prevent a Minaean coup d'état to take control of it.

In AC 917, a new green orc swarming attack was crushed at the Battle of Adunapolis and the date of the victory (Flaurmont 4) is a day of great celebration all over the land. In AC 934 the city of Dool revolted and left the Kingdom of Hastwr, joining the confederacy.

The confederated kingdoms are:

Minaea

Population: 49,700 (27,000 in the city), 90% Minaeans, 5% Tangor, 5% minotaurs.

Minaea, the capital city, is a prosperous community of some 27,000 people. The city boasts a sophisticated sewer system and is kept relatively clean. Many of Minaea's public buildings are made of stone and have graceful fluted columns. (The buildings are, in fact, reminiscent of those built by the defunct Milenian Empire on the Davanian continent.) The king's palace is a magnificent sprawling complex of stone and brick buildings that practically qualifies as a miniature city in itself.

The political status of Minaea is that of capital city of the confederacy. Minaea is ruled directly by the king of the confederated kingdoms. The ruling family of Arkalion has been in charge of the royal seat since AC 730, when the Minaean pirate Arkali threw down the democratic

government. Minaea controls the towns of Tresa (pop. 3,400) and Markos (pop. 1,800).

Adunapolis

Population: 32,400 (16,700 in the city), 95% Minaeans.

Adunapolis is an ancient city and is considered the architectural and artisan center of Minaea. The main Immortals of the city are the Twelve Watchers. The marvelous Temple of Art, decorated with statues of the Twelve Watchers, all in white and pink marble, dominates the city. The government of Adunapolis is made of representatives chosen among the twelve art corporations. The city has always been at odds with Serenia. Adunapolis's racial stock is mainly Minaean. Adunapolis was the site to a great battle in AC 917 and every year, the first ten days of Flaurmont are the occasion of the fair of Adunapolis, during which the city's population nearly doubles.

Batu-Fomba

Population: 24,100 (8,900 in the city), 65% Tangor, 35% Minaeans.

The city of Batu-Fomba was founded by refugees from the Kingdom of Mawuru, conquered more than 750 years ago by the Tangor Empire. Batu-Fombans are mostly of Tangor stock; they are closely related to the population of Akuba, which was also founded by refugees. However, Akuba and Batu-Fomba have been enemies for centuries.

Batu-Fomba is ruled by a tyrant. The tyrant is in many regards like any king, except that the title is not hereditary. A small group of persons, known as the people's tribunal, is elected by all male and female residents over the age of 21 when the old tyrant dies. Those persons must then elect a tyrant, who will act as a monarch for life. The current tyrant is Kwangu M'boma (human, male, T15).

Dool

Population: 23,800 (city-state), 75% Jennites, 15% Minaeans, 5% minotaurs.

The city-state of Dool is a powerful fortified military city in northern Minaea. It borders the Jennite lands and most of its

population is of Jennite origin. The city was once part of the Kingdom of Hastwr (now a small nation surrounded by Jennite tribesmen) but has been a member of Minaea since AC 934. In the past century, Dool has always had a democratic government. All males over the age of 19 vote every year to select the 100 representatives at the *boulè* (senate). Then they elect two war leaders who are known as *bouleforoi*. The city is in a strategic position against Jennite and green orc invasions. The city-state is currently ruled by Seastian Viniska (human, male, F20).

Dain-Karak

Population: 31,700 (city-state), 95% dwarves.

Dwarves coming from the Kingdom of Thorin arrived in Dain-Karak about three hundred years ago and soon entered the confederation, though with the status of ally of the confederacy. This means that, in fact, Dain-Karak is not subject to confederated laws, even if it has the right to be represented at the council. The dwarven city is located in the northwestern mountains. Although most of its population is composed of dwarves, several adventurers, bounty-hunters and orc-hunters live in the city. Dain-Karak's structure is typical of dwarven cities: part of it is above ground, whereas the most important buildings are in caverns inside the mountains. The current king is Duriel II (dwarf, male, F11).

Ekimmu

Population: 11,700 (city-state), 85% Tarystians, 10% Minaeans.

One of the original Tarystian cities, founded in BC 1135, this city is one of the few where there is a consistent majority of well-recognizable Tarystians and not an undistinguishable mix of Milenians and Tarystians (i.e. Minaeans). Tarystians of Ekimmu are close to Jennites in skin tone and in culture, being great pirates and aggressive toward strangers. Minaeans are respected, but minotaurs, dwarves and Tangor are watched with suspicion. The pirate Yodar was born in Ekimmu and is a

national hero. The most revered divinities are Poseidon (Protius) and Korotiku.

Erech

Population: 19,000 (7,600 in the city), 85% minotaurs, 10% Minaeans.

Ruled by the minotaur Overlord Ogzar, the city is a hereditary monarchy mostly settled by minotaurs. The architecture is clearly Minaean, but there are several alien elements that I think can be considered similar to those that I have read about regarding the enduk kingdom of the Arm of the Immortals. The minotaurs are often found as pirate mercenaries; Ogzar often leads goblin hunts in the north. The city hosts a monastery and a temple dedicated to Minoides, Father of Minotaurs. The current overlord is Ogzar (minotaur, male, F12).

Erineos

Population: 21,000 (4,000 in the city), 95% Minaeans.

Erineos is a colony of Minaea, founded around AC 500, but has early in its history been granted independence by its founder. Erineos has no particular feature. It is a city of merchants and peaceful seamen and fishermen and as such it has sometimes been sacked by Ekimmu pirates. There is a lot of enmity between Erineos and Ekimmu as a result.

Thanasis

Population: 23,400 (11,000 in the city), 95% Minaeans.

Another typical Minaean city, Thanasis is quite ancient, having been founded just before Minaea. It is famous for its horse-breeding and has a powerful cavalry. Thanasis is one of the few important settlements who has not access to the sea (the others are Dool, Dain-Karak and Tesla). It is ruled by a plutocracy; its ruling body is known as *gberusia* and its government structure is identical to that of Ire.

Ire

Population: 22,300 (14,000 in the city), 90% Minaeans.

Ire is a Minaean city of the southeast. A colony of Thanasis, founded in AC 811, it immediately joined the confederacy. It is

ruled by a form of plutocracy that is erroneously believed to be the traditional form of government of Minaean cities. This plutocracy allows all male landowners to vote for the election of the *gherusia* (senate), a body composed of 80 members of the population who are at least 40 years old. The members of the *gherusia* are called *gerontes* (sing. *geron*). Ire is home to explorers and pirates; it is second in piracy only to Ekimmu, but its vessels are seldom seen on the Alphatian Sea, as they prefer to raid the shores of Tangor.

Leontion

Population: 19,000 (city-state), 95% Minaeans.

Leontion was conquered by the four wizard-kings in AC 353 and they rule it still. Leontion was called Lendar at the time of its Tarystian foundation in BC 986, but the wizard-kings renamed it Leontion and forcefully changed the Tarystian ways (which were being preserved, as the city is quite isolated from the others and had experienced less Milenian influence) into pseudo-Milenian ones, because they had developed a knack for the Milenian culture. Leontion holds good relationships with Bellissarian nations. It is a safe port for Alphatian ships directed eastwards. The wizard-kings are Alphatians, but their names are unknown.

Serenia

Population: 28,500 (9,400 in the city), 50% Tangor, 40% Minaeans.

This city was founded in AC 649 by Zambul colonists, fleeing their homeland, which had been conquered by the Tangor Empire. The Zambulans, of Tangor ethnicity, faced a hard time fighting against the city of Adunapolis, who claimed the region and wanted them to pay tribute. The two cities are still enemies and only the fact that they are both part of the confederacy prevents them from fighting each other. A number of competitions are held among the two cities: the most famous is called *trio* and is a fight to death of three Serenians against three from Adunapolis. This bloody event

takes place each New Year's Day and it is considered a good omen for a city to win it.

Sinbay

Population: 17,200 (7,900 in the city), 55% minotaurs, 40% Minaeans.

Sinbay is the other minotaur-founded city of Minaea. There are fewer minotaurs here than in Erech, but the city is ruled by minotaurs nonetheless. Lord of the city is Andian, a minotaur bearing the title of tyrant. A new tyrant is chosen by popular acclamation when the old one dies and rules the city until his own death. In fact, the most important families have a great influence on the popular vote. Sinbay has rich agricultural lands and is famous for its cows.

Tesla

Population: 39,600 (24,600 in the city), 60% Minaeans, 35% Tarystians.

Tesla is one of the oldest and most important cities of Minaea. Its origins are lost in the past and it could be considered one of the oldest surviving cities of Mystara. Tesla has a consistent presence of Tarystians and bears significant traces of ancient pseudo-Jennite civilization. In Tesla, there are two temples dedicated to Tarastia, that do not worship Her in the form of Athinai and there are a significant number of followers of Rathanos (known, in Minaea, as Apollon). Tesla is an important military center, which is home to the Academy of Military Tactics. Generals from all over Minaea are formed in the academy. A lot of Tesla's activities deal with military matters. Tesla is ruled by two kings, a hereditary title, but they are controlled by ten *ephoroi*, in charge for their whole life-times, selected by the *gherusia*, a body formed by 28 citizens who are older than 50 years. All the political debates, however, must be discussed in the Assembly's Plaza, who can host 10,000 citizens, in order to allow all male citizens over 21 to assist. The current kings are Ian Aronal (human, male, F11) and Theodozon IV (human, male, C14).

Traun

Population: 26,300 (19,200 in the city), 80% Minaeans, 10% Tarystians.

Another important city is Traun, center of philosophical studies and the most enlightened city of the region. Unfortunately, this has often resulted in a softening of the city's customs and in the decadence of the citizens' lives. Traun does not have an army and relies completely on a mercenary force of Teslans for its defense, so the general of the mercenaries plays a big role in the city's political life. The city is an ancient Tarystian one, founded as far back as BC 1054. However the city has lost a lot of its grandeur. The city is ruled by a council, known as *boulè*, made of 30 elected Tarystians and 30 elected Minaeans of the city, plus 5 members of the minorities. The elections take place every two years.

Vidrontos

Population: 22,200 (12,000 in the city), 90% Minaeans.

Another of the Minaean cities, Vidrontos is one of the original members of the confederacy. Founded in the 6th century AC, Vidrontos is a small city and an agricultural center of Minaea, with rich farmlands and a great production of wheat and corn. It is a city with few attractions, however, distant from any significant form of cultural life and adventure possibilities.

SWANAMUTU (Tangor and the Black Human Kingdoms)

Description by Erakliton of Traun.

This will just be a short description of what the Black Lands are. The Black Lands are so called by the Minaeans, because they are settled mainly by a human population known as the Tangor. However, it seems that the name Tangor is not much appreciated by the various communities of black men, because it is the name of the westernmost nation of these lands, the Empire of Tangor, that is not very popular among them. It seems that the black men have developed a new term for themselves, the Swanamutu.

Swanamutu are divided in a number of linguistic groups, forming several stately entities of different sizes. Most live in the jungles and savannas that form the Swanamutu regions. Inexplicably, Alphetian and Brunian maps alike draw mountains all along their lands, but I must correct that information and assure you that jungles and savannas stretch much more inland than those maps, presumably written by "great" scholars of "great" cultures, indicate. Most Swanamutu share common traits, like their productive activities (agriculture, goat herding, crafts) and a social organization (division in clans and tribes), but generally have different religions (myths of the origin of the world, totem worship or not, ancestors' cult or not). There are also bloody rivalries among some of the tribes and often even within a nation.

There are also a number of minor cities: these are common in the southern regions, where Minaean merchants have brought democratic influences to populations living in less savage environments. Other cities have also been built by other human or humanoid races of Skothar who migrated here. A notable site in the Swanamutu region is Lleweryn, a dark stretch of forest northeast of the Tangor Empire. A colony of hivebrood once conducted slavery with the empire, but they have long since moved eastwards and now they live isolated, in the secluded valleys of Cymru.

Apart from these nations and states, there are green orcs and dark goblins and many other humanoid barbarian races.

THONIA (Kingdom of, a.k.a. Empire of)

Location: Northeastern Skothar, along the Bay of Thorin, north of Esterhold. SK

Area: Approx. 600,000 sq. mi. (1,554,000 sq. km.).

Population: 750,000 (including 80,000 in the capital of Serison), 90% human, 1% elven, 1% dwarven, 1%hin, 2% goblin, 2% hobgoblin, 2% gnoll, 1% pegataur.

Language: Thoniatian (descended from ancient Thonian).

Coinage: *Imperial* (5 gp), *gilder* (gp), *pars* (ep), *mark* (sp), *pence* (cp).

Taxes: 20% income tax (15% on nobles) collected biannually, 5% sales tax on all goods except food, 5% toll on all commodities passing through the realm.

Government Type: Monarchy advised by a council of nobles.

Industries: Fishing, cattle-raising, horse-breeding, shipbuilding, agriculture (poor), mining (iron in hills).

Important Figures: Iyxis XXXIV (King/Emperor, human, male, C16), Verdis (Queen/Empress, human, female, M13), Thelekari (Dowager Empress, human, female, C18), Marick of Glevum (Archbishop of Serison, human, male, C20), various dukes.

Flora and Fauna: Evergreens and deciduous trees, scrub brush, sheep, cattle, elk, deer, wolves, foxes, moose, black bears, grizzly bears, hawks, ogres, trolls, boars, lycanthropes, giant rats, mountain lions, rams, bison, hill giants, yeti, displacer beasts, mastodons, seals, walrus, giant toads, white and silver dragons, wyverns, ghouls, ghaists, thouls, wights, wraiths.

Description by Yin Tang of Beitung.

After landing in Minaea and learning more about this land, our mood was filled with excitement and anticipation as we sailed to the legendary Thonia, a nation whose heritage dates back to the days of Blackmoor. While we have seen many wonders here, Thonia has to be considered a disappointing and disillusioning experience in reality.

The Land

The Bay of Thorin is bounded on the south by the Peninsula of Esterhold, in the east by relatively good lands and scattered forests and in the north by sub-arctic steppe lands and hills. Thonia controls much of the eastern and northern shores of the Bay of Thorin, as well as an unremarkable stretch

of territory north and east of that (borders here are very permeable, the area inhabited mostly by migratory clansmen with their herds, who share the region with the scattered northern fringe of Jennites). Thonia shares this region with various Ystmarhavner colonies that form enclaves within the region. The borders are not sharply defined and the Thonian government tries to pretend, officially, that these enclaves don't really exist and that the Ystmarhavner lords are subject to their empire. The Ystmarhavners seem to pretend to go along with this arrogance when they have to have dealings with Thonians, but otherwise do their best to ignore it. Squabbles and even minor wars have started when this attitude has gotten too extreme or forceful, however. But since most Thonians live near their capital, frictions aren't usually too severe.

This southern area shared and feuded over by the two peoples is the best and thus most densely populated, land in the area. The coastal area is reasonably lush, its climate similar to that of Heldann. There are plains and farms here, as well as forests and hills in the interior, near the dwarf-holds of Thorin. The northern area claimed by Thonia, the Marches, is considerably less welcoming, topographically and climatologically. This area covers the coast and much of the interior of the northern rim of the Bay of Thorin. It is covered with frigid moors, steppes, taiga and sub-arctic lands, similar to the grimmer regions of Norwold. This region covers the vast majority of Thonia's land area, but is only sparsely inhabited.

Thonia has one major city and several smaller towns. The capital is Serison, built atop the ruin of an ancient, pre-Blackmoor Thonian city, by survivors of that great cataclysm. This city is very old, pre-dating Alphatian Landfall by centuries if not millennia. It rests on a mound that looms over the surrounding land. This mound is said to be not a natural hill, but rather the accumulation of centuries of debris, crumbled structures built over and over again in many layers. Magic has been used to "raise" various old and important structures

several times over the ages to keep them from being buried over time. Such structures include the palace and the wall itself, among other things. Because of this build up, Serison is honeycombed with a network of tunnels and catacombs and knowledge of much of what these consist of has been lost in time. A seamless wall seemingly carved out of a single piece of stone, thrust up from the earth, surrounds Thorin and seems to be as old as the city itself.

This wall arcs out into the bay itself, forming a breakwater and creating the city's port. The wall is immune to natural and unnatural damage (such as earthquakes or spells) and is protected against normal, non-magical missiles (including non-magic artillery). The battlements likewise protect the defenders during time of war as if protected from evil/good (regardless of the alignment of the attackers). Numerous pieces of artillery are mounted in and atop the towers that stud the walls. These are operated by ancient mechanisms, allowing them to be aimed and fired with only one crewman, who is protected by 90% cover. They are able to aim these skyward against flying creatures or *skyships*. Serison itself is a large city, covering almost the same area as the great City of Thyatis does, but with only a fraction of the population. Much of the interior is parkland, fields, even small gardens or croplands, with the occasional cows, chickens, or goats. The population has gradually dwindled for centuries and here and there can be found weed-choked ruins (though few of these date back to the time of ancient Thonia or Blackmoor—most of the older ruins are buried under several feet of earth). The palace of the Thonian King (a.k.a. “emperor,” though usually only outsiders call him that) is a monumental relic to ancient Thonian architecture, with a gilded dome at its center and many large windows. The palace is heated magically and would be quite pleasant if it wasn't for the jury-rigged towers and fortifications built into its sides, obvious later (and architecturally clumsy) additions. The city is defended by a small but elite royal guard force, some royal marines and a force of

pegataurs tasked with protecting Thonia against aerial attack. Many if not most Thonians live in the lands around the capital city. These engage in farming and fishing. They use large galleys in warfare and large (if somewhat slow) sailing ships for trade and fishing.

The rest of Thonia is divided into approximately ten provinces and is inhabited mostly by herdsmen and ranchers (on the steppe lands) and miners (in the hill country). Scattered rustic towns and villages dot the coastland of the Bay of Thorin, these mostly built of wood, surrounded by palisades and having none of the splendor of the city of Thorin. They are grim places, where social life centers around the local watering hole or tavern. There are few inns and foreigners are distinctly unwelcome in these parts. Only in the capital are accommodations made for outsiders, but they are usually treated brusquely there as well—not rudely, but in a businesslike fashion.

The People

The Thonian people seem to share physiological characteristics with Antalians, though cultural drift has separated them linguistically and in civilization (Jaggar von Drachenfels and some other old Thyatian families trace their lineage back to scions of elder Thonia, however). They are a very spiritual and religious people, devoted to the Immortals and to maintaining their traditional faith. The Immortals they worship include several that I have not heard of before, though some of these may just be variant names for more familiar Immortals. To make things confusing, one of these Immortals is called Serison. Either the capital was named for this Immortal or vice versa. Unfortunately, the Thonians are very reluctant to share more than just general information regarding their faith with non-believers and keep its rituals secret. Greater study is needed here before I will be able to report more on this.

Thonia's noble class is, if anything, even more haughty and arrogant than that of

Alphatia—their hauteur based upon ancient bloodline claims rather than an inborn knack for magic, however. Some of these use their heritage as an inspiration to spur them to excel and thereby honor their ancestors. But many see their heritage as an excuse for indolence, sloth and arrogance, seeing little need to accomplish anything on their own. In my eyes, this disgraces the very heritage their claims of authority rest upon and dishonors the legacy of their ancestors.

Many of these nobles will not deign to speak directly to a “foreign barbarian,” using an intermediary as a “translator” in conversation, even if the outsider speaks Thoniatian. Some are marginally more open and accepting, doing this only until the outlander has “proved himself worthy” of direct conversation. Thonia’s nobility could be called decadent, interested only in pursuing frivolous pleasures.

Thonian commoners do not share this arrogance, per se. They are more gregarious and warm—at least among themselves. But, rather than being haughty, they are very suspicious of foreigners and insular. Outside Serison they have a small-town mentality, isolated and wanting to be left alone. Fearful of what a strange person might introduce into their community. Surrounded by dangers, I suppose one can see why they might develop this insularity. Once an outlander proves himself or herself worthy and friendly, they are more accepting, though they still seem to share many of the attitudes of villagers in Bellissaria. Which is ironic, considering the disdain that the Thonians in general have for Alphatians and, indeed, all foreign peoples.

An interesting note are the pegataurs and the gnolls of Thonia. The pegataurs of Thonia insist that they are a natural and true race, rather than a magically-created hybrid. They claim that the pegataurs in Alphatia were produced by Alphatian wizards wanting to replicate the natural and original pegataurs, which those in Thonia claim to be. I have not been able to either verify or disprove this claim.

The gnolls are, likewise, somewhat odd [*they might actually be flinds. Ed.*], being somewhat different from those found on Brun, being harrier and larger. These gnolls are nomads, living mainly on the northern moors and steppes. They often are soldiers in Thonia’s frontier forces, but have distinct communities of their own within the nation.

The dwarves are of clans from the dwarven Kingdom of Thorin.

History

Thonia is a survivor-state of the ancient Empire of Thonia, which predated even Blackmoor. Its people are conscious of their history, but surviving in the rugged lands is enough of a challenge that they have never managed to recapture their old glory. The history of Thonia since the destruction of Blackmoor has been one of rebuilding followed by the struggle to survive in their harsh environment.

According to Thonian histories which I have read while here—one of the few things with which to occupy one’s time here is to read—, they felt the appearance of the Alphatians as a sort of insult and rancor at the prestige of the Alphatian Empire while it existed and pushed itself onto the world stage. At the time of Landfall the Thonians were in the process of colonizing the continent to their southeast, the continent that the Alphatians would claim as their own. But only few and small Thothian settlements had been created—exploration was just beginning, as Thonia had only recently managed to recover true seafaring capacity and had few ships and did not match the Alphatians in strength. In essence, the arrival of the Alphatians permanently restricted the Thonians to the region they inhabit now, preventing them from ever recapturing the glories of their lost empire and thus embittered them.

In the interval, the Thonians have occasionally fought with, but in other times cooperated with, the Jennites to their south and the Ystmarhavner peoples who colonized here after they were forced from their homes by the invading Alphatians. The

Thonians see these peoples as barbarians who “know their place.” The Jennites are respectful of the Thonians—not so much because they feel themselves inferior (which is what the Thonians would like to believe), but because the Thonians have never cared to try and invade the steppes of the Jennites (having enough near worthless lands of their own). As a result, when the Alphatians attacked Esterhold 800 years ago, the Thonians and Jennites developed closer ties and see each other as a potential ally to keep the Alphatians at bay.

Almost of necessity, trade sprang up between Thonia and Alphatia over the centuries. This trade was rather meager, however, as the lands of Thonia produced little that the Alphatians wanted (if it had, they would simply have seized it outright). The Thonians often raided deeper into Skothar to capture slaves to sell to the Alphatians in exchange for the wares the Alphatians produced. When Alphatia sank, many thought the Thonians would try to take advantage of this by marching into Esterhold, or at least helping the Jennites recapture that peninsula. But Thonia did nothing. They seem instead satisfied with the disappearance of the Alphatian continent, smugly happy with the pitiful state of the surviving Alphatian kingdoms (which have now formed Nayce)—there is little compassion or awareness that the destruction of the Alphatian Empire echoes their own experience of long ago. They are just happy that the long shadow cast by Alphatia has been removed and that now the “glory of elder Thonia will be revealed.” Thus, the Thonians stew impotently, living in their past, having apparently no real energy to actually restore the glories they still dream of and pantomime. They think that greatness will come to them without their having to take initiative to seize it, a very abnormal perspective on destiny.

Atlas Of The Hollow World

Introduction to the Hollow World

Hollow World... the name is highly indicative as to this part of Mystara. For Mystara is hollow and within the hollowed space resides an entirely different world. But a world it is, with expansive forests, virgin mountains, tenacious seas and harsh deserts. Being inverted, the landscape has no horizon and slopes noticeably upwards. Reaching out from the inner crust, the surface features are warmed and lighted by the shimmering and pulsing red sphere that acts as a sun. Around this orb orbit several bodies, one of which is the continent of Alphatia.

This world is populated by peoples long thought dead from Mystara’s surface world. Here, one can see the very civilizations that flourished and eventually fell throughout Mystara’s history. Though some civilizations have sojourned here for centuries and even millennia, the passage of time has not altered them. Despite time, they still are as they were when they were present the surface world.

As it is, the Hollow World knows of no night but is in a perpetual state of red-hued daylight. There are no constellations, only the regular rotations of the orbiting landmasses in the void above. Magic is also limited to more primitive levels, with spellcasters being few and far between. This limitation is partly due to the Immortal magics that keep those civilizations as they once were in their splendor—and also in their limitations or sometimes outright barbarism.

Correspondents for the Hollow World

Here is our list of correspondents that give us detailed information on the nations, places and events of the Hollow World:

Aritmanes

Aritmanes is a cleric of the Immortal Alphatia in the nation of Vertiloch. He used to live in the imperial capital of Sundsvall and was fortunate enough to survive its destruction. In the years since, Vertiloch has been mostly abandoned for the new nation, Alphas'ar and its new imperial capital Andaire, but Aritmanes is one of those who remained in Vertiloch to help rebuild the declining nation. He is dedicated to the philosophies of peace that his patron teaches and as an aristocrat he pities the commoners who are without magic.

Aritmanes is not known to be an adventurer, although there are rumors of him having traveled around during his younger days and that is probably where he gathered his experience and insight. He looks to be in his late 30s, has long, brown hair and copper-like skin like most Alphasians. He is rarely seen dressed in clothing other than his *kihara* robe.

Dellebram

Through efforts in Karameikos, *Joshuan Gallidox Publishing* has garnered the support and participation of the Alphasian Department of the Interior in providing resource material for the Hollow World. Overseeing this effort is Dellebram, Assistant Minister of the Imperial Office of the Interior. We at the almanac greet this addition with hearty thanks, however we will not depend solely upon the Alphasians for reports from the Hollow World.

Dellebram is a “common” Alphasian mage (human, male, M12). As a medium level mage he was appointed as assistant to the department head's administrator. An up and coming bureaucrat of moderate talent, he was assigned the task of reporting on the Hollow World—a task he neither welcomes nor appreciates.

Gerta Knutsdotter

Gerta is of Antalian background, hailing from the town of Krakaj in the Hollow World. She seems to have escaped much of

her culture's limitations, however, when she left her homeland as a young woman and somehow gained a high degree of education. Some think that she may be a scholar from the legendary Lighthouse in the Hollow World. Gerta has a knack for acquiring information that eludes many scholars, but rumors that she uses less than legal means to do so seem to be tales spread by envious rivals. Gerta has spent the last several years studying Hollow World Alphatia for her organization. While she is vague in providing us with information as to how she reached the floating continent to study it, her reports on Alphatia give us a unique outsider's perspective on the mysterious empire.

Leadyl Feadiel

The almanac was able to obtain several reports from the Hollow World written by Leadyl Feadiel through a secondary source. Leadyl is an adventurer from Alfheim who reportedly entered the Hollow World via The Pit on Aegos during the Great War. He continued his adventures throughout the Hollow World and was eventually captured by Heldannic Knights during the Battle of Laroun, in the Milenian Empire (AC 1006). He was held prisoner at the outpost of Stonehaven before being liberated by the Oostdok gnomes in AC 1011. In the aftermath of the rescue, he found himself in the Makai Islands and has since made his way to the Merry Pirates Seas. His writings indicate that he is still unaware of many of the events that transpired on the surface world during the Great War.

Taleris of Calimnis, son of Trestian

Taleris of Calimnis, son of Trestian, brings us news from the mysterious and far-off realm of Selhomarr. Shortly after completing his Wandering, he embarked upon his adult life as a young cleric of Xeron, confidant that he could fulfill what he saw as his destiny by serving his Immortal.

At the age of 26 however, a new calling was revealed to him. The mysterious organization, known as “the Lighthouse,” came to him and urged him to record the

lore and legends of Selhomarr and neighboring lands and add them to its current collection of knowledge. In the three years since that time, he has traveled all over the empire and in other regions of Suridal. When the *Mystaran Almanac's* researchers and correspondents were made aware of this enigmatic continent and its obscure inhabitants, they sought out someone who could provide them with the information they needed. Contacts in the organization based in the Lighthouse pointed them to Taleris.

A relatively unassuming man, Taleris walks anonymously along the byways of Selhomarr, with passers-by noticing only another wandering cleric, going about his appointed business. In his position, though, Taleris has gained access to important politicians and other figures, news of which he strives to bring to the attention of the almanac's eager readers.

Theukidikies the Historian of Corisa

A widely traveled Milenian philosopher and sage specializing in cultural studies and political geography, Theukidikies seems to have studied most of the civilizations of the Hollow World over his many years of scholarship. He has provided us with a brief description of most of the Hollow World nations, with extensive reports on some of the more prominent ones. His remarks are academic in tone and only occasionally influenced by his outlook as a Milenian (this does color his report on Nithia especially, however).

Zweibelterm

Coming from the town of Adiach in the Alphatian Kingdom of Haven, Zweibelterm is the scion of old Alphatian bloodlines, rich in magic and steeped in tradition. Zweibelterm gives us a view of Alphatia from the unique perspective of its aristocracy. While his own attitudes infuse his writings and may put off some readers (especially non-Alphatians and non-spellcasters), the very aristocratic attitude he expresses will give our readers an insight

into a facet of Alphatian society and the outlooks of his class and kingdom. For Zweibelterm is a patriot of Haven as much as, if not more, he is of the Alphatian Empire as a whole. Zweibelterm seems to have spent his entire life in the continent, visiting and experiencing one region after another in his social travels.

Atlas

ALPHATIA (Empire of)

Location: Largest floating continent, in an equatorial orbit over the Hollow World. HW

Area: 1,968,134 sq. mi. (5,097,465 sq. km.).

Population: 5,097,000 (humans 92%, elves 2%, all other 5%; note that this is different from before because the “monster” population of Limn, which is over 4% of Alphatia’s population, was unaccounted for in the previous breakdown). [*Population figures are tentative, pending census. Ed.*]

Languages: Alphatian (various dialects). Elvish (Shiye-Lawr dialect), Dwarvish (Denwarf-Hurgon dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp). Various kingdoms may mint other denominations in addition. Kingdoms tend to prefer coins of their own mintage and charge conversion fees for coins from other kingdoms, especially esoteric coins. Coins of imperial mintage are accepted at full value throughout the empire.

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher. Slaves are counted as the property of the owner and the product of their labor is taxed as income for the owner. Individual kingdoms may also have some additional taxes.

Government Type: Imperial monarchy overseeing subject kingdoms.

Industries: Agriculture, crafts, herding, exploitation of magic. Various others in specific kingdoms.

Important Figures: Eriadna (Empress of the Alphatian Empire, Queen of Vertiloch, Queen of Alphas’ar, human, female, M20).

Flora and Fauna: With its immense size and use of magical arts, Alphatia boasts a wide variety of plant and animal life. One may find examples of just about any life form known, as well as some previously unknown types.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperor* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Zweibelterm and Gerta Knutsdotter.

Zweibelterm: Most of the readers of this publication will recognize the Alphatia described herein, though it has been many years since it has graced the surface of the planet. Instead, the continent and people of Alphatia now preside at the center of the world, orbiting the twin suns of the Hollow World. Each of the magnificent kingdoms that compose this majestic nation shall be given its due in a separate entry, but in this entry I shall endeavor instruct the barbarians with a thorough overview of our empire as a whole and of the Alphatian people.

Readers familiar with Alphatia as it was on the outer world will find most features, especially geographic ones but including most demographic features, to be exactly the same as they were, without alteration. Similarly, our society remains as it always has been, operating in accordance with long-established customs which you should familiarize yourself with before attempting to visit.

Gerta Knutsdotter: I submit to both the Lighthouse and to this *Mystaran Almanac* my assessment of Alphatia compiled as a result of my travels and studies of that empire. Alphatia is a powerful and technologically and magically advanced empire set on the Hollow World’s largest floating continent. I must note that the Alphatian people almost uniformly treated me throughout my visits to their lands as at best a quaint curiosity and at worst with scorn as a barbarian. While such attitudes are found in other lands, such as Nithia and among the Azcans as well, the Alphatians seem to have taken these attitudes of racial supremacy to uncommon extremes, expressing unusually high degrees of contempt for “barbarians,” especially non-spellcasters. I am lucky in that, after having observed their Alphatian Neatharum in earlier years, I at least knew the Alphatian tongue, for it is said that almost all Alphatians will not permit foreign languages to be spoken to them. I should note that there are two basic versions of the Alphatian tongue. One is “archaic Alphatian,” supposedly the oldest known version of the

language, in use today by Alphatia's aristocrats as a mystical, arcane language and used at social functions by them as a sign of distinction. The other is "common Alphatian" in a variety of dialects, the language of everyday use spoken by average Alphatians.

The Land (Gerta Knutsdotter)

The empire of the Alphatians consists as I said of the largest of the floating continents. The continent contains almost every type of terrain save for deserts, with large areas seemingly affected by magic (either mortal or Immortal. Some plant varieties seem to be alterations of types commonly found elsewhere, but changed to be able to exist in temperate climes where the continent is found). Alphatia is composed of rich tilled fields and lush plains given to pasturage or left in a natural state, forests large and small, rolling hills and several mountains ranges, from the large Kerothar Range which rivals the World Spine Mountains to smaller ranges like the Aasla Spur and Grey Mountains. Much of the land, especially in the places inhabited by the more powerful mages, has been landscaped by magic (see especially Vertiloch).

[Since I am from Vertiloch myself, I had better comment on this... To Alphatians Gerta's comments might seem a bit lacking here, but in all fairness, she never had the chance to witness the marvels of cities like Aasla or, especially, grand Sundsvall. Many of our greatest achievements and monuments were lost to the destruction of these metropolitan cities. Though we Alphatians haven't greatly changed the very landscape around us (at Landfall our ancestors settled in the lands that best suited them, so little change was needed), the best way to witness our achievements were in our cities. In a great number of these, one can still witness our impressive construction techniques. Many a time have I seen foreigners enter Sundsvall and nearly lose consciousness [kaleidoscopically clashing colors and images have been known to induce vertigo. Ed.]. It is difficult to grasp, much less describe, the utter beauty and majesty of our structures and towers—the vast buildings, some heavily decorated with infinite details that confound the mind itself, while

others were slick and solid, like huge, carved stones of basalt or obsidian, yet in all colors possible. Like I said, the greatest of these marvels have been lost to posterity, but some examples can still be witnessed in a fair number of our cities. Though this naturally means that Gerta must have witnessed at least some of these, I don't hold it against her that she doesn't offer any great description for the simple reason that doing so is exceedingly difficult. I have participated in the construction of such structures myself and yet I find myself unable to offer a description that would do these marvels of magic justice. In fact, I fear than even a bard or other skilled storyteller or author would not be able to truly capture in words the very majesty of Alphatia's achievements in this case. We really would require an extremely skilled artist to accomplish such a feat! Aritmanes]

There are a number of rich river valleys and three large lakes (Llyn, Crystal and Shiell). Because it is a floating continent, there are no seacoasts. But the continent seems formed as if there should be seas, as if those living here expected there to be seas and the habitation pattern reflects this (with most settlements clustered along the continental rim, almost as if they were built as ports facing a now vanished ocean). There are beaches aplenty, but without the water this seems to have caused some disruption. Resorts are seemingly built overlooking the void, as if they were originally built facing seas. This might be because the Alphatians consider themselves masters of aerial magic and thus build their dwellings like those of eagles, perched on the ledges. But various details, small and large, seem to belie this. More on these discrepancies between the two versions of Alphatia's origins will be explored later, but for now I shall give just one small example. Leaping dolphin motifs are common in places like Bluenose and some areas seem to lack sufficient food, as if they were expecting a harvest from the sea or imports from beyond.

[This lack is somewhat made up for by use of the large lakes to replace this lost resource, as Crystal, Shiell and Llyn Lakes in due time pick up the slack of providing maritime relaxation and some variety of fish. However, unfortunately, the varieties are still limited to freshwater catches, which is a pity

*and an imposition upon our refined palates. Still, other things have filled this lamentable gap, as well as the gap in available imports of exotic foods, but still the absence is felt, especially among the common people who cannot avail themselves of such substitutions and whose diets and livelihoods sometimes depended upon these lost resources from the seas. Also, an oddity perhaps is that despite the lack of surrounding seas, the Haunted Marshes remain well-watered in southern Vertiloch and southeastern Haven. These marshes are said to be not only the haunt of various monstrosities, but also the abode of lawless types who seek to escape just punishment in the wetlands. This is fine by me, as it usually saves us the cost and imposition of a trial, as these villains become prey to the monsters that lurk therein. **Zweibelterm.**]*

Indeed, the inhabitants seem to recognize a disconnection between their pattern of settlement and their current needs. The settled areas are along the rim of the continent and the interior lands are sparsely inhabited in most cases, but this pattern of settlement is undergoing change as a result of perceived reality, with a notable migration towards the interior beginning, apparently all of the sudden.

In Alphatia, with a few exceptions, most of the land is sparsely inhabited and left in a state of wilderness, with population clustered in a few places, in concentration around the cities and towns with nearly empty lands between these population nodes. This is much like Nithia, where most of that empire's land is virtually uninhabited, with people living clustered along the Nithia River. But in Nithia this is a matter of climate and terrain (with the uninhabited lands being wasteland), while in Alphatia this seems to be a conscious policy rather than a result of the environment, as the wilderness areas are usually good lands. In Alphatia people tend to live mostly in and around the cities. The wizards build their estates in these areas, where they meet and socialize and conduct various businesses in common (like magical research). The commoners live clustered in communities around them. They work either as part of the wizards' households, or as all those around that produce the food on nearby plantations and

craftsmen who create the products that are needed to support the aristocrats and the society in general, working as farmers, fishermen and craftsmen. Many of them work for the wizards, while some are members of the freemen.

Thus most commoners live in or around the cities and they are forbidden from settling farther from them. The rest of the land is left unsettled as wilderness, resulting in a low population density in Alphatia as a whole. There are some densely populated areas and clusters of habitation, but around these are vast wilderness areas, used sometimes as hunting preserves and the like. In these unsettled lands, the aristocrats are free to build additional estates. Thus as they grow in power and wealth, the aristocrats tend to accumulate more estates; estates in the cities for socializing with each other and isolated estates to conduct their more private researches and affairs undisturbed. They keep minimal staff in these more rural estates (servants and slaves only). Rarely do they allow communities to build around their towers and mansions; everything the wizard needs for his research or comfort is brought from a city by his staff or by his magic).

Blackheart is the most extreme example of this pattern of settlement, but it holds true in most kingdoms to a lesser degree. The exceptions are numerous though. Besides the demihuman kingdoms (Shiye-Lawr, Stoutfellow and Limn) and Stonewall, they are: Haven: because of the project of beautification of the land cities tend to sprawl far and large and most wizards have estates in larger numbers in the cities and less as hidden labs in the countryside. Ar: With most of the aristocracy gone and the commoners left to themselves and the need of other kingdoms (primarily Stonewall) for large supplies of food, the fields have been mostly turned to grain production and previously unexploited land is being tilled as well. Bettellyn: there are more cities and towns in that kingdom than in most, so that there is less land left for hidden labs; besides, the kingdom is not so popular with wizards, because it is more clerical than most

would like it. Randel: basically standard, except that people here are more militant and large areas are given over for military exercises; large swaths of the countryside are still left for the wizards, though. Alphas'ar: is becoming normal, but is still underpopulated both in terms of cities (the exception being Andaire) and hidden towers (they used to be imperial facilities only) and some wandering, isolated persons who try to avoid attention. Vertiloch it seems was densely populated until recently, but seems to have lost most of its inhabitants to some cataclysm.

Also, the land itself seems fractured in some places, as if recently affected by a series of great earthquakes or by some other cataclysm or disaster. As for the popular versions of what caused this, see below.

The People (Gerta Knutsdotter)

I will limit myself to a general overview of the Alphantian people here and then discuss things separately as I describe the individual kingdoms that make up Alphantia. As I noted, Alphantians are a haughty and conceited people, who speak condescendingly to foreigners, which they almost universally consider uncouth barbarians. They are extremely proud and conceited regarding their civilization, deeming it vastly superior to everyone else's. Only the Nithian ambassadors seemed to be excepted from this attitude and treated with respect, perhaps because the two societies are both very magically oriented, with the difference being that the Nithians' society revolves around Immortal magic while the Alphantians' society is more dedicated to arcane magic. Never the less, this attitude is something one must keep in mind when travelling here, as one must be acclimatized to the attitudes that will commonly be expressed. They simply do not believe any other people measure up to them and often denigrate other societies as if it were simply a given that no one but themselves had achieved anything noteworthy. While this is, as I said, an attitude that is found in other nations as well, the Alphantians seem to have pushed this attitude to exceptional lengths

and never even pause to consider that expressing it might be taken badly by others. Even their currency says "Alphantia Above All."

Alphantia is dominated by two human races, the "common" and the "pure" or "high" Alphantians. Common Alphantians (also called Cypri) have golden to coppery brown skin like Azcans or Nithians, gold, brown, or red hair and brown, gold, green, hazel, or amber almond-shaped eyes. They tend to be tall and slender. The so-called pure Alphantians are less frequently found. They have pale skin like Antalians but with bluish tints, black hair and black, blue, or purple eyes. They are also usually tall and slender. There are also elves and some other demihuman races in parts of Alphantia, but these largely live in their own kingdoms and almost nineteen out of twenty Alphantians belong to the two human races described above. Almost singularly among civilizations, the Alphantians have no marriage customs. This can make their family lives complex and even bizarre to others. They are also quite brazen in their sexual mores. I cannot tell you the number of times I was boldly propositioned by an Alphantian who thought I would jump at the offer to be his courtesan simply because an aristocrat was extending his favor to a barbarian commoner and seemed affronted when I declined.

Alphantian society is built around magical talent and magic use. Newborn children are tested for magical ability, with those who are found to have the ability being sent to one of Alphantia's many fine magical schools and universities. Thus there are not only many mages among the Alphantians, but an extraordinary number of them become quite powerful. The Alphantians like to enhance their art, theater and other entertainments with lavish displays of magic and their more skilled elites enchant items on a wide scale for the purpose of entertaining and fascinating each other. Their use of magic on such a wide scale is captivating in many ways and is one of the hallmarks of their civilization. They have such a surfeit of magic that, at least among the aristocracy, it

is a backdrop of their enjoyment of life, though most of the applications they put it to do not have much practical use as such, but are certainly awesome. Some of these items, especially the *skyships* they seem almost obsessed with building and which can be compared to Nithia's *hover barges*, could no doubt be quite potent in war, however, though most of the Alphatians do not seem to be very warlike, with some notable exceptions.

The Alphatians have their own set of Immortals, but largely seem disinterested in venerating them and are not very pious. Unlike most priesthoods, especially the Nithians with whom the Alphatians seem to have some affinities, the Alphatian clerics seem more interested in the power and status they gain through the favor of their Immortals, than in the teachings of those Immortals. Some kingdoms (again, notably Stonewall) are exceptions to this general lack of interest in matters of faith, but overall it seems most Alphatians pursue clerical studies not out of reverence but for access to the spells and thus status, that such study gives them. The Immortals seem to accept what they can get, or so it seems, tolerating a lower level of devotion than in most lands.

Alphatians who can afford it, mainly aristocrats but wealthy commoners as well, go in for extravagant makeup and hair styles, but prefer simple, elegant jewelry. Theater and arts, especially magically-enhanced ones, are commonplace. Alphatian architecture is quite well developed and advanced, with towering structures common. Magic is used extensively in the building of monumental buildings frequented by the aristocracy and in the construction of their abodes. A wizard's friends often contribute to such construction efforts, sometimes adding little touches or practical jokes to the project. Powerful magics shape the nature of entire cities, creating wondrous structures. Living dioramas, permanent illusions and pyrotechnic displays are among the most respected art forms. Music, gambling and a game known as hard-ball which has some similarities to the Azcan game of *tlachtli* (though without the ritual sacrifices of

losers) are among the other forms of entertainments relished in Alphatia. Alphatia's economy is strong, built as it is on two factors: cheap labor in agriculture, mining and crafts (slaves and servants) combined with magical disaster relief as needed. Their economy seems to have been even stronger once, but it seems to have experienced some economic setbacks recently, with the destruction of two major cities and disruption caused in the wake of the earthquakes or cataclysm (depending upon which version of recent Alphatian history you find most plausible—see below). Alphatia also has trade guilds that try to make sure they get good wages for their members and high tariffs imposed on imported goods, but except for the magically-oriented ones these guilds don't have much influence.

In Alphatia, the sexes are considered equal and treated as such, with no discrimination, unlike in Milenia or Antalia where doctrines of male superiority predominate and subordinate the women. But one should not get the impression that Alphatians are egalitarian in other respects, for their society is based on a hierarchy of race (Alphatians above all others) and a social hierarchy almost as firmly entrenched and structured as that of Shahjapur.

The Alphatians prize the ability to use magic above all else. In Alphatia, the spellcasting aristocrats are chaotic individualists who have leisure and freedom of choice. They enjoy great wealth and prestige and though some start off with little more than the robe on their back this soon changes as the society revolves around them and their well-being. The lifestyle of many of the aristocrats in Alphatia is more sumptuous than that of similar classes in many other nations in the Hollow World with the possible exception of Nithia, due to their access to magical devices that enrich their means of entertainment and enliven their leisure. All non-spellcasters are destined to serve in some capacity or another. Great power is possessed by individual spellcasters. Alphatia is a land where such exalted kings can make a whim a

law, if only for a day. The Alphatian Empire is maintained through fear and intimidation, eccentric blood ties and sheer magical might rather than managerial efficiency and impartial law as in Nithia or Milenia. Those who lack the ability to cast spells have a status similar to Azcan commoners (the *tlacotin* and *maceualli* tenant classes of Azca being rough analogs to Alphatia's slave and servant classes). The servant class is not bound to the soil, but they must, like the *maceualli* tenant farmers have a master and they do pay taxes. But, unlike the more successful *maceualli*, the Alphatian servant class never owns land. These commoners, the slave and servant classes, would be called a *belotry* in Milenian or *thralls* in Antalia. Most aristocrats who ponder the question believe that everyone is happy and contented with this system because it has lasted a long time, while others simply think everyone must be because they are and it is true that most of the servile classes are resigned to their lot. But it might be on account of the fact that hardly anyone, especially among the commoner classes, has any basis of comparison of their social structure with others, as a result of the insular nature of Alphatia. In Alphatia few people have any true knowledge of foreign lands [*like Karamaikos or the Five Shires. Ed.*], but instead simply dismiss them all as barbarians unworthy of consideration or emulation and thus they wouldn't know how their lives compare to the lives of others. Some kingdoms, Stonewall comes to mind and to a degree Randel and Greenspur as well, are more hospitable to non-spellcasting commoners and this might be why Stonewall, though a tiny kingdom by Alphatian standards, is its most heavily populated one. But in most of Alphatia the distinction is a sharp one: spellcasters form the respected aristocracy and most others are in thrall. My lack of ability to cast spells, as a "mere" warrior, was a handicap in my studies, as I was constantly treated as an inferior and with the exception of the few kingdoms mentioned above this made it somewhat difficult on occasion to gain access to information, because of my status

as a "mundane barbarian." They often judged me not on my own merits as a knowledgeable scholar in my own right, but simply on my lack of magical ability. Therefore I might recommend that in the future a spellcasting scholar be sent for further inquiry into Alphatian society, but I do think also that the experiences one has in this society as a non-spellcaster are worthy of relating and are also an important aspect to be studied. It is hard to forget how things are when one is experiencing things directly and this I think gives my report added accuracy and depth. Between the enthralled classes and the aristocratic classes are the commercial classes—the freemen and gentry, whose social role is similar to that of the Azcan *pochtecatl*. As social class is of utmost significance in Alphatia, I shall discuss each class at further length.

Like the Nithians, Azcans, Milenians and my own people, the Antalians, the Alphatians have slavery in their society. But it might aptly be said that the majority of their people are held in thrall, because all but the aristocracy and wealthier commoners must have a master over them. There is no such thing as free-agency for average people within Alphatia, thus making their society closer in some regards to that of the Azcans than that of Milenia or even Nithia. This is indicated by the titles of the classes in which most Alphatians fall: slave and servant. In Alphatia, some slaves seem to be of their own race, but many also appear to be Antalian, Jennite, or Milenian [*these would probably be from Norvold, Esterhold, or of Minaean or Thyatian descent. Ed.*] and other exotic races. The slave is property, as in other nations we are familiar with, but as in all nations it differs in its particulars. An Alphatian slave is little more than a mule—few are permitted to learn, few ever even hold coin and none have a possession they can call their own. Even touching a weapon is a death sentence for them. An Alphatian slave's life is often like the lot of the most wretched slaves in other lands, such as the *tlacotin* of Azca. Some slaves do have relatively less burdensome lives, serving as nursemaids, house slaves, or concubines, but

for most life is backbreaking labor from youth until death. Any aristocrat can slay them out of hand though they must compensate the owner for destroying her property and by imperial law runaways are executed. Even the slaves of Milenia are treated better than this, for unlike Alphatian slaves they cannot be killed or maimed without cause and are permitted to have some minor belongings of their own. The laws of Alphatia, especially the ones pertaining to weapon use by slaves, seem to have been put in place as a precaution against uprisings.

The servants are somewhat better off, being more akin to thralls in other nations. They may not own land and must belong to the household of another. Their main advantage is that they are permitted to change masters if they can find one willing to take them on. Some servants work for no more than room and board, the same that most masters in Antalia or Milenia provide to their slaves, but sometimes with a salary in addition. The Alphatians, their aristocrats at any rate, often see this system as very enlightened compared to other nations, as no one “wanders aimlessly,” but rather all are employed because all must either have a master or be one. By most accounts, nearly seven out of ten Alphatians belong to either the slave or servant classes. *[I doubt these figures are entirely correct. Twenty percent, meaning two out of every ten Alphatians, are wizards, yes, but that does not include clerics like myself or other spellcasters who would also be aristocrats. Aritmanes.]*

In between the aristocracy and the enthralled classes are the freeman and gentry classes. The wealthy commoners have this status, though they are relatively few since the aristocracy naturally does what it can to concentrate wealth in its own hands. Many if not most explorers and itinerants *[she means adventurers. Ed.]* belong to the freeman and gentry classes and those who do not aspire to join it as soon as they are able. Less than one person in ten seems to belong to the freeman class, a name that indicates that this is the first rank at which an Alphatian is considered to have freedoms. Freeman

status is achieved by owning a shop or business of some kind and they do not have to belong to the household of a higher-status person. They may own slaves and have servants in their households, but must make enough money to keep their business registered with the empire, or they will have their businesses stripped and find themselves reduced to servant status. It is not unknown for aristocrats to use their better connections to do this to mundane competitors, driving them out of business to eliminate unwelcome competition. Sometimes, even, it is said that such aristocrats then buy up the forfeited businesses and find a way to get the old owner to be their servant and operate it for them. Far fewer belong to the gentry, with many of these seemingly the progeny of aristocrats, children of theirs who lack magical ability and thus are endowed by their families with 10,000 gp in a bank in order to keep their status close to their families and allow them to mingle with aristocrats in social affairs.

All spellcasters and only spellcasters, in Alphatia are aristocrats. They lead lives of freedoms and pleasures more luxurious than can be found in most other nations because of the magical devices that are often available for their enjoyment and entertainment (not all of the aristocrats have these things, but an unusual number create large items, like rolling palaces or flying yachts). Only the aristocracy can wear the spider-silk robe that is the distinctive garment of Alphatia’s elites. Many study arcane matters throughout their lives, becoming accomplished spellcasters, while others simply learn enough magic to be accorded privileged aristocrat status and then move on to other pursuits. Lords, ladies, princes, princesses, kings and queens are the ranks of the aristocratic class that have governmental roles. These serve much the same functions as rulers in most lands, administering and governing the empire and its kingdoms. All these people must be spellcasters, naturally, with one exception. In the Kingdom of Stoutfellow, a kingdom of dwarves, gnomes and hin within Alphatia,

the current queen is a warrior. The demihuman inhabitants of that kingdom do not seem to have fully adopted the customs of Alphatia, but indeed seem to be recent arrivals from elsewhere, operating almost as if under a distinctive charter.

Alphatia's legal system follows this bifurcation between the classes, with a different code for commoners and for aristocrats and different penalties depending on the status of the victim. While some might think that they would expect a higher standard of behavior from the aristocrats, who are deemed in other spheres to know better, this is not the case. Penalties for aristocrats are significantly more lax than those for commoners. They make frequent recourse to *ESP* in their proceedings, relying on magic to produce accurate results. But many less reputable types who I had occasion to interview said that because of the widespread faith in and dependence upon magic, this causes the authorities to underestimate common intelligence, skill and guile. Indeed, in my travels I found this to be true, as I was able to acquire information supposedly kept in great secrecy just by applying a little creativity. Also, Alphatia does not seem to have imprisonment as a penalty, as many nations do—they impose fines, corporal punishment (lashes), confiscation (including enslavement) and death. Imperial law concerns itself with preserving the status quo. It protects the status of wizards and sets the scale of social hierarchy used throughout Alphatia, decrees how matters of succession is to be handled and establishes imperial taxes. Beyond that, the kings have wide discretion on other laws (civil and criminal).

As I mentioned above, there seem to be two distinct accounts of Alphatia prevalent among its people. Most believe Alphatia was always here, though they have difficulty explaining their history and background. This last shouldn't be too surprising, as most people in many lands are unfamiliar with history. However, in Alphatia those who believe Alphatia was always where it is have trouble explaining episodes which took place

in their own lifetimes and which they experienced. For example, they believe that much of the damage that can be seen here and there throughout Alphatia was caused by a series of major earthquakes, but have trouble putting things into context and there are odd gaps and discrepancies in their accounts. Pressing them on these things seems to disturb such people. On the other hand, there is a different and though outlandish, more consistent and thus more plausible account of Alphatia's history and background, the version held by the more experienced and accomplished Alphatians. In this version, Alphatia was until very recently a continent like most others on the surface of another world, surrounded by seas. This Alphatia was part of an even larger empire (indeed, it was its core) and recent events (described in detail by in the attached account of *Zweibelterm*) led to a great cataclysm resulting in the destruction of that empire and the transfer of the continent to where it now resides. While it isn't uncommon for the nations of the Hollow World to have in their lore legends of having existed in another world in the past (the *Azcans* come to mind), I can think of no other where there are two such competing versions like this. Also, those other nations which have such beliefs in their lore date it back to the misty, almost mythical past and not so close to current times.

The People (*Zweibelterm*)

Alphatians are a justly proud people, set apart from all others by their refined and ancient civilization and its exalted traditions. We had mastered magic and the other arts while most of your ancestors were living naked in rude huts or dwelling in caves. The example of our culture is emulated by all who have a pretense of civilization, but none have come close to our achievements. So read my words, transcribed though they are in crude Thyatian you may still yet benefit from them.

Alphatians divide our people by class and race. The Alphatian people do not mix with esoteric and unaccomplished foreigners as the degenerate barbarians, especially the

Thyatians, do. The Alphatian people are composed of the original, or “pure” Alphatians—pale of skin, dark of hair and fair of eye and of the descendants of the Cypri, who are now known as “common” Alphatians—copper-skinned, they are the more usual type of Alphatian who is encountered. There are some dwarves, gnomes and elves in Alphatia now, as well as an entire kingdom of what some would call “monsters.” The elves do intermingle somewhat, but for good reason most of these demihumans are kept in their own kingdoms, where they can serve Alphatia but live in their own ways. Indeed, one piece of advice comes to mind which I shall generously share with you barbarians who may visit Alphatia: be sure you know our language, as few commoners and no nobles, except for the most permissive, will suffer to have other, lesser languages spoken to them. Sure, we cannot expect you people to be able to fully master our complex and beautiful language, but still you must do your best.

Alphatians are also, as I indicated, divided into several classes, on the basis of an enlightened social hierarchy. At the top, as is only natural and appropriate, are those who have the blood and talent for magic, which is naturally and properly paramount in determining one’s status within society. Why others, with the exception of the Glantrians (who learned from the degenerate Flaems anyhow and have created a twisted and imperfect replica of the Alphatian social order), do not see fit to structure their societies on the natural order of things, recognizing the superiority of those who can wield magic, is beyond me, but it probably has to do with the envy that those without the talent have for their natural betters. Thus they try to pull down what should be exalted, while civilized people, by which I mean Alphatians, do not succumb to such base and spiteful influences. In most Alphatian kingdoms on the continent, the aristocratic class forms some twenty percent or more of the population, a far higher proportion than the so-called aristocracies of other nations. But our aristocracies are also a

natural one, based on a demonstrated talent for spellcasting, not some ephemeral achievement that may not be indicative of true superiority. Another difference is that the ruling classes of other nations are all expected to administer to the task of government whether they have the inclination for it or not. This is not so in Alphatia, where the bulk of our aristocracy neither has nor desires a role in political policy, but would rather be given personal latitude and freedoms. What their position affords them is not government station in most cases, but rather the freedom to do as they please and, instead of mere administration or input into decision making, they devote their time to developing their aptitude for magic, which is what we want. Of course, some of our aristocrats, the lords and kings and up to the empress herself, do devote such time as they must to ruling, but this only involves a small fraction of our aristocracy, with the majority free from such cares and concerns, as I have described. But the aristocracy pays the lion’s share of the taxes submitted to our national and imperial treasuries each year, as we have the most to offer. Thus, it can never be said that we avoid our responsibilities.

Our system evidences great care for everyone, far different from flawed societies that do not provide a proper structure and thus wind up with discontent and strife. The proof of this is that our empire has withstood the test of time without interruption or upheaval throughout the centuries, stable and unchanging, while those nations who cleave to plutocracy, believing that wealth derived from being a successful merchant is an indicator of a capacity to rule, are young and ephemeral. Still more has it shown its manifest superiority to systems that grant a useless “citizenship” to anyone and everyone but then fail to provide them with direction and purpose.

The People (Aritmanes)

I shall try to limit my comments for the sake of brevity, though I do feel there are some matters that I need to address here. Most importantly, we Alphatians are often seen as arrogant and haughty by outsiders,

which is frequently a surprise to us. Many of us may indeed make the mistake of automatically assuming that we're superior to other cultures, but given the great achievements and learning of our empire and how we have surpassed the accomplishments of others over the long life of our nation, I really do believe that this is at least understandable. However, it is surely not correct to simply assume that we discriminate toward all... [*I know how I was treated and most of the people I saw who were of obviously non-Alphatian background were generally treated even worse. Gerta Knutsdotter.*] After all, we did incorporate Thothia into our empire when we met their people (though contact with them is now lost to us). We did deign to allow elves to settle and even establish their own kingdom. We even let dwarves, hin and gnomes enter our empire and set up their own kingdom under their own laws, where they know their place and though the vast majority of Alphatian aristocrats dislike Stonewall due to its pro-commoner policies, we still allow the nation to exist. This does, at least to me, show that we show some acceptance, if only to people like the Thothians, as they share our pursuit of magic [*actually, Thothians are dedicated to the pursuit of mysticism, not magic. Ed.*]. This is exactly where I think most uncomprehending outsiders misunderstand us—they fail to see that, as an empire, we put the pursuit and exploration of art above all else—magic being the grandest art of all and so, naturally, has with the greatest priority focused upon it! This means that we require all within our empire to aid in this endeavor, even those who have not been fortunate enough of having been born with the gift of spellcasting, who must then serve the attempt in whatever other capacity in which they are able. This is an ancestral trait of our people which predates our very arrival on Mystara all the way back to Old Alphatia where all our people had knowledge of arcane magic. This was not possible on Mystara, but rather than have our traits die out, our ancestors modified the new empire to take this into consideration and then based our society on those

conclusions so that our desires for the pursuit of magic has survived and even flourished—to deny our magical heritage is to deny that we are Alphatians! Those best suited to pursue this are wizards and so all that can, which are about twenty percent, will become wizards in Alphatia. Those who lack these skills can instead become clerics, such as myself and though we do lack the true creativity and freedom in our magics that wizards possess, we can still contribute to the greater pursuit of magic. Still, many who cannot be wizards still do not choose to be clerics (even those who have the option of doing so), which I really think should be taken as an indication that life as a commoner isn't quite as bad as some foreigners seem to think, even though it does mean living a life of servitude to at least some degree. [*Though this might be more due to the general lack of devotion to the Immortals than anything else. Truth be told, most Alphatian clerics become such in pursuit of spellcasting ability, to escape the life of a commoner, than due to reverence for the Immortals. Ed.*] I've lived all my life in Alphatia and I've rarely, if ever, witnessed evidence to suggest to me that the general populace is greatly dissatisfied with their lot. Some are, naturally, but on average I get the impression that we're all, including the lower classes, proud of our empire and its achievements—our understanding and use of magic, our impressive construction techniques and our rich accounts of history which are written with great accuracy as a consequence of the fact that Alphatia was a learned empire which predates our arrival on Mystara [*though these versions are self-serving, as most nations' histories are and all nations believe their histories are more accurate than those of their neighbors. Ed.*]. Though aristocrats are those who probably have the best opportunity to study history (as they are usually the ones writing it in the first place), our people are not quite as unenlightened as some foreigners seem to think. We do nothing to hide history and our history even reflects those parts that do not reflect well on our empire, such as the events that predated our arrival on Mystara [*though most Alphatians seem to believe a version of their history which appears to*

be at odds with actual reality and are kept in the dark about the true history by conscious choice of Alphatia's leaders as a deliberate policy. Gerta Knutsdotter.]. This was indeed an unfortunate and unwise part of our history, but rather than ignore and suppress it, our ancestors decided to learn from it and base the new empire on the mistakes that were made at the time instead, thus attempting to turn the mistakes into strengths.

Foreigners are also typically appalled by our laws, which admittedly favor those who know magic (the aristocrats) over those who do not (commoners or lower classes). Still, though these laws may seem lacking, one must remember that we're generally a people marked by strongly individualistic and even chaotic traits and as such have little respect for strict enforcement of rules *[on themselves. I have witnessed how harshly they impose them on their lessers. Gerta Knutsdotter.].* So though a law may grant an aristocrat the right to abuse his slaves, it is by no means given that he or she will do so, although there are, sadly, many cases where this is indeed true. We Alphatians do not wonder so much about these laws that foreigners find so harsh because, we do, in fact, expect them to be harsh so that the freedom of the aristocracy will not be limited by these. But I firmly believe that it is a misinterpretation to believe that because these regulations exist as written that this indicates that the great majority of our people will abuse these to their limits. Many do, but then again, many do not. Naturally, such a system may cause friction where two or more aristocrats are involved, for which the practice of duels has been developed, so that two aristocrats could duel each other for a solution when they could not decide on something. Indeed, there are even stories which claim that such duels have even been conducted over the claimed mistreatment of members of the lower classes, but then such stories are rare *[actually, the aristocrats tend to duel each other over disputes between themselves and often because of petty personal feuds, like many Antalian warriors. I have never witnessed, or even heard, of a case where a duel has occurred as a result of disagreement on imposing*

punishment on a commoner and commoners I asked about this idea just laughed. Gerta Knutsdotter.].

Recent History (By Zweibelterm)

The Alphatians have a long and magnificent history, a history of wonder and triumph, but we shall not dwell on the past glories and successes of the Alphatian people here. You can find extant histories of our accomplishments and deeds elsewhere and if you are unable to, then that is a sign that you are unworthy to do so. So instead of spending my valuable time on the distant past, I shall just give you an accounting of our more recent experiences.

All are aware, I trust, of the war that was launched on the benighted Glantrians due to their practice of dangerous magics twisted by Entropy and on account of their wanton, unprovoked destruction of the glorious city of Aasla as a result of their jealousy of our magical and artistic superiority. This jealousy is what caused them to turn to forbidden magics in the first place, in a desperate attempt to outdo us and it is what caused them to destroy the most brilliant jewel in the Alphatian crown, wondrous Aasla. *[Though Aasla was indeed a city of wondrous magical achievement, it still could not best Sundsvall. I remember these parts of our history well as there was a great dissent within the Order of Alphatia as to whether we should support Eriadna and oppose Glantri or keep out of the whole affair. Many of the more experienced of our order surprised us all by saying that we should fully support the empire in its stand against Glantri, which was shocking to many of us given Immortal Alphatia's peaceful traits and general reluctance to support any imperial tendencies of conquest. Aritmanes.].* Faced with these things, we had no choice but to declare war upon them, in an effort to remove their blighted presence from the world. Disturbingly, but really unsurprisingly, the venal Thyatians and grasping Heldannic Knights decided to meddle in affairs beyond their concern just as they had a century and a half ago when we were first poised to bring the region now known as Glantri into our fold. They inappropriately intervened once again in the war on Glantri's behalf, thus

becoming the tools of the Glantrians in this conflict. Though I did not fight in this war, since some of us had to keep an eye on things at home and support the war effort in other ways, I know some of those who did, including my elder brother, Cratham and I have heard their accounts and shall altruistically impart them to you.

The meddling interventions of the Thyatians and the knights in Norwold threw it into discord and strife for the duration of the war. Because of this, as well as the destruction of our largest and best-prepared *skyship* fleet at Aasla by the nefarious and vile Glantrian opportunists, we were compelled to alter our strategy of war and were diverted into a costly but uniformly successful war of attrition against the enfeebled Thyatians. We overran West Portage only a few months after war was declared, then pushed forward over the next year until we were at the outskirts of Redstone. The siege of Redstone and Newkirk lasted six months, until our war machine smashed the defenses of Newkirk, capturing it. After this victory proved our dominance, the Thyatians in Redstone surrendered. Meanwhile, the Glantrians once again proved the kind of people they are by seeding Alpathia, even unto our mighty capital, with terrorist teams. Even those savages had to know that such methods could not win the war for them, but their destructiveness knew no limits. This caused many of us to stiffen our resolve to crush them and this was when my brother joined our Grand Imperial Forces. But it also, oddly and bizarrely, caused some dissension and opposition to the war among our own people, especially the Shiye elves, though their forests were not even affected by these Glantrian terror-strikes. The Thyatians stubbornly held out in the northern head of the Isle of Dawn until Eruul Zaar of Helskir wisely defected from their teetering cause in exchange for the title of king and the hand of Thincol Torion's daughter. This allowed us to finish off their last major strongpoint on the island. Though they clung to the Shadow Coast in the south, that was not strategically important.

After grinding them down on the Isle of Dawn from victory to victory, brushing aside the barbarian armies in every major battle as the Thyatians' so-called empire fell apart around them with even Thincol's friend Stefan Karameikos knowing the wisdom of making an accommodation with glorious Alpathia, we were finally in a position to send a fleet against Brun. Envoys sent to attempt to reach an accommodation with the Ethengar barbarians for the destruction of our mutual enemies, the blindly fanatical knights of Heldann and dark wizards of Glantri, were, for some reason, never heard from again. *[I have no knowledge of this, though it wouldn't surprise me. It is indeed a sad truth that Alpathian wizards are so blinded by their own powers and magical skills that they frequently act superior to all others. Such behavior is accepted and actually even expected in Alpathia, but it's probably not a good idea to carry such attitudes along if one travels outside the empire, particularly to a place like Ethengar where, from what I understand, they have little respect even for their own wizards. Given that the Ethengars and Heldannic Knights went to war over such attitudes toward each other, it is easy to imagine that such Alpathian wizard envoys might have seemed quite arrogant to the Ethengars. They then likely decided to show them just what they thought of such superior behavior, just as they did to "superior" missionaries from the Heldannic Knights years before and which caused the war between their people. Aritmanes.]* Therefore, since we were now in a position to kill two dragons with one *meteor swarm*, having partially restored our sky navy during the war and bolstered our fleets, we instead decided to finish off the weakened Thyatians before completing the task of eliminating Glantri for its crimes against us. The accursed Thyatians foiled our attempt to land on their shores in the summer of AY 2008 *[AC 1008. Ed.]* through guile and perfidy. My elder brother, Cratham, was serving on a *skyship* when the Thyatian dogs intercepted our forces in the Sea of Dawn. It was a mighty clash, which we would have won easily as we had the previous battles if it were not for the treacherous tactics of the Thyatians. As a result of these diabolical tactics, my brother's diary describes a bloody

clash and he saw many a *skyship* destroyed and transport sunk, though indeed we paid them back for every life they took. But in the end, we had to withdraw back to the Isle of Dawn, our first setback in the war. Never the less, they could not thwart us for long. Six months later, after some diversionary feints towards Heldann and Dawnpoint to keep the insensate enemy off balance, our forces were landed in Ylaruam, easily seizing Cubia in the face of weak Ylari resistance. Our military machine then rolled triumphantly into Thyatis again, smashing into the disordered and confused Thyatian forces and overrunning Tel Akbir. The vile dogs refused to give in, however, in their stubborn ignorance they always failed to recognize when they were bested, thus forcing us to kill more of them than would have otherwise been required. They fought on doggedly throughout most of AY 2009 [*AC 1009. Ed.*], even though no one would help them. This caused much suffering and waste of life and led to an increase in the misguided discord at home over the progress of the war, with some going so far in their complaining as to undermine the effort. They brought their fleets down to Vanya's Girdle at Port Lucinius, covering direct access to their filthy capital and our navies could not press them back from the channel as we did during the earlier Spike Assault. Therefore, we resolved to continue the march overland, to push them back and defeat them bit by bit.

Our forces pushed forward inexorably. The Thyatians, in their barbarous ferocity, battled us to a standstill outside Kantridae, but we brought in reinforcements and went around them, because at this point the pathetic Thyatians did not have enough troops to block every avenue of advance. They refused to budge at the Kantridae River, but again we brought up fresh forces, forded upstream while our massed forces rolled into them at the point of contact itself and they were forced to cede the field. Thus we had isolated the city of Retebius as their army fell back. But the defenders behind the walls, though now largely youths and old men, forced us to assault the city, as we

could not afford to leave it as a strongpoint in our rear where they could harass us. Though costly, the assault was successful, but the *skyship* my brother was serving on, the *Aaslan Fury*, was destroyed here. He survived, but had to fight the rest of the war from the ground. In addition, unfortunately, this delay allowed the defeated Thyatian armies to withdraw from Retebius before we could finish the curs off. But they could not stop us from marching in triumph down the road towards Thyatis City. All throughout this period, the treacherous Thyatians had been sending infiltrators into our camps to murder our officers and heroes, though they knew they could not win and these attacks were only provoking our justifiable anger against them, causing retribution to attempt to compel them to desist. At this point in the war, one such incursion of assassins found my brother Cratham and though I am told he took several of them with him, my brother and the head of our house was laid low. So here his diary of the war ceases and I must rely upon the accounts of others, brief though the rest is.

We washed over Thyatis with ease, reaching the banks of the Mesonian River. There the Thyatians' depleted armies, slightly bolstered by reinforcements from Glantri and some Heldannic Knights, attempted to face us again. Many foolish Heldannic Knights are said to have charged prematurely and were swallowed up by our vast and victorious forces and slain to a man (I am told that among the Heldannic Knights these men are seen as some sort of heroes. The true heroes are the winners). The Thyatians seem to have treacherously abandoned even their allies during the charge of the knights, withdrawing their forces across the Mesonian River or through River Guard Town into Thyatis City. Their ships patrolled both the Mesonian and the girdle and our triumphant generals were coming up with a plan for crossing the river and assaulting their capital when the Thyatian Emperor finally recognized the folly of continued resistance. A treaty of peace was signed, though for some unknown reason Eriadna agreed to terms

wherein we would withdraw from Thyatis, rather than finishing them off! For this, my brother died? But, never the less, in it the Thyatians were forced to allow our armies to continue across their lands unopposed, on our march to Glantri. I suppose that if the war had run its natural course, we could always have returned to the matter of subduing Thyatis once and for all later, treaty or no. So I must assume Eriadna had good reason and I do suppose subsequent events proved her wise to want to reach and eliminate, Glantri as quickly as possible. So she ordered our forces to advance as rapidly as they could through Thyatis and Karameikos and to push through the Five Shires and Darokin (which had neither the strength nor the will to prevent us from doing so) and on to Glantri.

For, just as our armies had crossed over the Mesonian River and were moving through that part of Thyatis which they call Kerendas, the vile Glantrians put to use the very forbidden magics that this war was fought to prevent them from developing. Knowing what was about to happen, they foolishly provoked us by destroying our ancient capital, Sundsvall, killing hundreds of thousands of civilians and murdering our empress. Just as an ode could be written for beautiful Aasla, one could be written for Sundsvall, the City Built by Magic, the product of two millennia of civilization, destroyed in the blink of an eye by the Glantrian savages. The sinister magics caused magic to fail for a week. In Thyatis and Karameikos (where the vanguard of our forces had already reached and crossed the Rugalov River), *skyships* crashed, at times even on bewildered troops. Instructions could not be received or messages sent through the usual magical means to home, so the commanders had to decide on their own. Most decided to push forward as fast as possible into Karameikos, lest the perfidious Thyatians take advantage of the lack of magic as an opportunity to attack our troops. Other commanders, though, sought to withdraw to a defensible position and await instructions. Still others stayed where they were, likewise awaiting orders. The

Thyatians seemed too stunned by their recent defeat and too weakened to even dare to attempt their usual treachery and try and take advantage of this situation, which was a good thing for them, as we could have easily taught them a lesson had they forgotten already. *[I think Zweibelterm is forgetting here that Thyatian wizards and priests would have been hit just as hard by the lack of magic as we were at the time. This is a common mistake to make for Alphantian wizards, who frequently tend to forget that Thyatis had many skilled spellcasters of their own. Aritmanes.] [Something does seem to have taken place somewhere, however, as surviving Alphantians after the war, either as refugees settling in Karameikos or troops taking service with Thyatis or on the Isle of Dawn, do not account for nearly the entire Alphantian army prior to the Week Without Magic. Many were killed when magic failed and skyships tumbled from the sky, but still more seem to have been killed during the week itself. Ed.]*

Eventually magic returned and we discovered we had a new ruler, as Zandor declared himself emperor. He ordered the war to go on, though some thought this rash. He sent orders to the generals, commanding them to continue on through Karameikos and push through the Five Shires and Darokin, as was the original plan, with Glantri as their ultimate goal. But he also summoned the Grand Council of Wizards, so hot tempered was he that he sought instant revenge and retribution to be visited upon the Glantrians, heedless of the consequences. Some of the council refused this order, seeing it as rash and intemperate and indeed advocated negotiations to end the war. These he ordered into exile. But most submitted to his order, knowing that though it might be precipitous, the Glantrians had earned whatever fate we would visit upon them. The Grand Council undertook rapid preparations and then left to destroy Glantri City just as they had destroyed our two greatest cities.

But then the Glantrians once again, as some had feared they would, unleashed their insidious magics. Though the surface world entered a dark age as a result of the unbelievable orgy of destruction they unleashed, the Immortals saw fit to preserve

us from this fate and saved us. We found ourselves, as befits the Followers of Air, elevated to a new status, our continent floating suspended over the Hollow World, inviolate from the savagery of the barbarians. Unfortunately, our council was scattered or cut down by the bloodthirsty Glantrians and our armies stranded in Karameikos, where many, I have been told, decided to settle temporarily.

For most Alphatians living upon the floating continent, their memories have been altered to remove any traces of their existence upon the surface world. Only Alphatia's more knowledgeable and experienced persons retain the true memories of Alphatia's past. For the unaware, Alphatia has always been in Hollow World and the sinking has been replaced by false memories of massive earthquakes and fierce firestorms. This has also done much to explain missing friends and family members: either killed during the war, killed during the sinking and not revived and those stranded on the surface world.

For those Alphatians aware of Alphatia's real history, the empire is full of inconsistencies with its rewritten history. This noble lie has been embraced by the masses, despite the numerous inconsistencies that surround them. Perhaps the powers that altered their memories are just so powerful. Perhaps the masses are too busy in their duties to dwell on matters beyond their limited perspectives. Perhaps they do recognize them, but subliminally the real truth is too difficult to remember or believe. Whatever the case, most Alphatians have no memory of the events surrounding our movement to the Hollow World and indeed think we have always been here. The glories of our true past and the comparison that can be made between our migration from Old Alphatia to Mystara, remain beyond their comprehension. We are now adjusting to our new position at the center of the world, just as we adjusted to the move from Old Alphatia to Mystara and have quickly begun to re-master all the magics we are familiar with but which for a brief span

of years were denied us. Thus the cycle of our history is renewed.

Regardless, the general population has been stripped of its knowledge of the Great War: the costly victories, the submission of Thyatis, the goal of Glantri at hand and the treacherous sinking caused by the Doomsday Device. Still, for most of these types, the common servitors, it is not necessary for them to know and was not even before—their role is to serve and to know what they need to perform that role. It is the aristocracy's role to know of history, so that we may guide policy with wisdom. Still, it is a curious and interesting anomaly, worthy of study. To them those events have been replaced by the false memories of massive earthquakes and blistering infernos. Their individual lives and recovering from these catastrophes has occupied the majority of their time. Buildings have had to be rebuilt and deceased nobles have had to be replaced. However, life must and does go on. For those like myself that are privy to Alphatia's true history, the time since the sinking has seen us overseeing the recovery process. This not only includes repairing the physical damage; it also includes familiarizing ourselves with this Hollow World and its attributes. Recovery is not a massive unified project. Recovery is focused on restoring Alphatia's prestige through the rebuilding of its majestic sky navy and similar endeavors. Even now, years since the sinking, there is still much damage about. But already we have a new and worthy capital rising in Alphas'ar at Andaire, just as we built Sundsvall after Landfall. Eventually these projects will be addressed. However, true Alphatians do not dwell on such gloomy matters, but rather keeps their gaze elevated.

ALPHAS'AR (Kingdom of)

Location: Center of the floating continent of Alphatia, between Blackheart and Shiye-Lawr in the west, Foresthome and Bettelyn in the east and Vertiloch in the south. HW

Area: 111,239 sq. mi. (288,110 sq. km.).

Population: 52,000, including Andaire (pop. 25,000). [*Population figures are tentative, pending census. Ed.*]

Languages: Alphatian (Vertilian dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp). Alphas'ar mints to the imperial standard only.

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher. Slaves are counted as the property of the owner and the product of their labor is taxed as income for the owner. Additional taxes include duties on parchments and writing materials. Under discussion also is a property tax, but for now this has been put off to encourage people to move here to settle the kingdom.

Government Type: Monarchy under the direct rule of the empress, member of the Alphatian Empire.

Industries: Logging, military, government sinecures, fur trading.

Important Figures: Eriadna (Empress, human, female, M20).

Flora and Fauna: See Alphatia.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperor* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Gerta Knutsdotter.

Alphas'ar is one of two kingdoms directly ruled by Alphatia's empress acting as the queen. Alphas'ar is by far the younger and less fully settled of the two (the other being Vertiloch), but is never the less the location of Alphatia's imperial capital andaire.

Alphas'ar is a long kingdom at the very center of the Alphatian continent. It consists largely of forests, hills and wild prairie. One major river waters Alphas'ar, a branch of the Greenlake River and the capital is located along its banks. Alphas'ar seems to have been a wilderness until less than a decade ago, when it was created as a kingdom and it became the location of the empire's new capital after the old one (the ruins of Sundsvall) was destroyed.

This capital andaire, the seat of the imperial bureaucracy and the empress's court, is currently Alphas'ar's sole settlement

of any significance. But the Alphatians are proud of how quickly they built it up from a collection of wooden structures to a city of stone and it is an impressive feat. Many artisans, architects and engineer-wizards from throughout Alphatia are said to have worked on this project. [*Indeed, one of the artisans who I had redecorate part of my family estate after the death of my brother Cratham, the highly regarded Hallothia, is one such. I myself recommended that those involved in designing the new city hire her. I can be gladdened to tell you that she brought the same fine touch to work done there and through the efforts of Hallothia and others, they have made the imperial palace a work of art in itself (well it should be, having been designed by architects and artisans from Haven) and monument to Alphatian power. Surely, no other land could have accomplished the same feat so hastily and if we sound prideful at times then simply look upon the awesome majesty of the imperial palace and you will know that we do not brag, but simply speak the honest truth. As Sundsvall was the City Built by Magic, so too shall Andaire be as well. Zweibelterm.*] [*As one who has had the good fortune to assist in some of these attempts, I must concur with Zweibelterm on this matter, though he clearly forgets about the many skilled artisans of Vertiloch and other Alphatian nations. I just fear that our good empress is forgetting a bit too much about Vertiloch, where reconstruction is also greatly required these days... Aritmanes.*]

The rest of the kingdom is a sparsely-settled wilderness, formerly the hunting preserve of the empire. It is attracting new inhabitants at a fast rate, though, people who want to curry favor with the imperial court, hangers-on and those who seek the life of a scribe or court functionary. Courtiers abound, willing to flatter the empress or a member of her family in the hope of some favor or boon. Andaire also continues to attract skilled artisans and accomplished mages and the kingdom is the headquarters of the Grand Imperial Army and skynavy. This has resulted in impressive growth, though it has sapped much of the potential recovery out of Vertiloch as these people, once at the heart of that kingdom's economy, shift their abodes north to Alphas'ar.

Don't Miss (by Zweibelterm)

Why, the imperial capital of Andaire, of course, should be your first stopover in this kingdom. While it isn't what Aasla or even Sundsvall was, without the soaring, majestic towers or the massive monuments of two thousand years of continuous habitation, so much has already been done in such a short span, it puts older, squalid barbarian cities such as Mirros to shame. The imperial palace, in particular, sits like a gorgeous pearl set in the center of the exquisite brooch that is Andaire.

Andaire is located along the Greenlake River, though far upstream from Sundsvall, in Alphas'ar. Picture an isthmus between two lakes; the Greenlake River runs through them, cutting across the eastern/northeastern part of the isthmus, over which some bridges cross. The palace is located on a square in the middle axis of the isthmus but set off to one side near the river. Eight streets run out from the palace square, as in Sundsvall; to the northeast are some government buildings on the blocks adjacent to the palace square and a park, then the rivers. To the southeast is an aerodrome; on the other sides are businesses and homes for those who work for the imperial government. Along the southwestern shore of the lake are some piers, here river barge traffic can dock, bringing supplies to the city. The northern lake is used for yacht races and along its shores homes for the wealthy are being built. The rest of the isthmus, as one gets further away from the palace square, is being built up into dwellings owned by landowners who rent them out to commoners and barracks for the imperial guard in a fortified encampment, shops selling goods of all kinds, taverns and a hard-ball court.

Also, the untamed beauty of the surrounding forests, the tranquility of repose it might give you, is an experience not to pass up. Do be aware, though, that these forests were set aside until very recently as a wilderness preserve and many dangerous creatures may still lurk within their depths.

AMBUR (Kingdom of)

Location: Northeast corner of the floating continent of Alphatia, bordered by Arkan. HW

Area: 11,723 sq. mi. (30,363 sq. km.).

Population: 103,000, including Starpoint (pop. 30,000). [*Population figures are tentative, pending census. Ed.*]

Languages: Alphatian (Arkan dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp). Ambur also mints electrum *stars*, coins bearing the images of the currently famous.

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher. Slaves are counted as the property of the owner and the product of their labor is taxed as income for the owner. There is also a surtax imposed on theater tickets, as well as licensing fees to operate such establishments and to register acting troupes. There also previously existed a tax on astronomical research structures, but this tax has dwindled to a negligible amount in current circumstances, forcing an adjustment in the kingdom's finances.

Government Type: Monarchy, member of the Alphatian Empire.

Industries: Agriculture, arts (especially acting), exploitation of magic.

Important Figures: Elshethara (Queen, human, female, M16), Lodun the Doomed (Fading Star, human, male, M12).

Flora and Fauna: See Alphatia.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperor* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Zweibelterm.

Ambur is a small kingdom in the far northeast of Alphatia. Ambur is the center of Alphatian artistry, especially with the destruction of Aasla and Sundsvall by the wicked and treacherous Glantrians.

Ambur is a small but densely populated kingdom. However, much of it is undeveloped, with the people clustered along the Ambur River and the north shore of Crystal Lake. The former seacoast here was not as heavily populated as the coasts of

other kingdoms, because the sea was so cold here, so the transfer to the Hollow World hasn't affected the pattern of settlement as significantly.

The inhabitants of Ambur are devoted to two things: the study of the stars and the theater. With the transfer to the Hollow World, of course, astronomy has become a rather empty and moribund exercise. But even the common rabble of Ambur might hope to strike stardust on stage and become the next Lodun the Doomed, a star in the firmament of celebrity.

In former times, the aristocrats were so obsessed with these twin callings—astronomy and acting—that they paid little mind to the servile classes. This seemed to attract those who were able to move, making Ambur, along with drab Stonewall, one of the most densely populated of Alphatia's kingdoms, despite its small size. Ambur's importance in the past as a center of astronomical research should not be scanted, as the star charts they produced remain of great import in navigation on the surface of Mystara even today. Without them, *skyship* captains might lose their bearings. A side effect of this is that many Amburians are attracted to the adventure and romance of serving on a *skyship* and they are found in unusual numbers in the fleet. One other change that has occurred as a result of the move to the Hollow World is that those who passed their time observing the stars now have little to do and so some have turned their attentions to their duties, though this has caused some friction with the common classes, as many of them seem to have forgotten their place. This shows the fruits of the folly of inattentiveness, as a firm guiding hand is needed to keep the unenlightened in hand.

Don't Miss

The theaters in Starpoint are built on a lavish scale and it is almost worth the price of admission to see experience their luxurious appointments even if the show is bad, which is rarely the case. Of these, the biggest and best is the Elshethara Theatre,

built by the queen in her own honor over twenty years ago, with its glorious decorative features and its large staff of liveried servants. Also of note, some of the old astronomical institutes have turned as a means of supporting themselves to giving tours and serving as a museum of astronomical and astrological history, including putting on light shows using illusions of skylscapes and starry vistas.

ANTALIA

Location: Northeast coastlands of the Ostzee on the continent of Iciria, east of the Beastmen Wastes and north of the Krugel Horde's lands. HW

Area: 322,854 sq. mi. (836,190 sq. km.).

Population: 100,000 living in villages of up to 500.

Languages: Antalian, Neathar.

Coinage: None (barter only).

Taxes: Corvée labor and levies of in-kind produce prevails in individual lordships.

Government Type: Numerous independent lordships governed by chieftains.

Industries: Agriculture, fishing, herding, leathercraft, piracy and raiding.

Important Figures: Kjodar Triudar's Son (Chieftain of Kiefstut, human, male, F16).

Flora and Fauna: Sub-arctic; hardy grasses, evergreen forests, hill, stone and frost giants, bears, wolves, white dragons.

Further Reading: *Hollow World* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Theukidikies the Historian of Corisa.

This is a hostile land of warriors living in a harsh environment.

The Land

The Antalians live in rugged, sub-arctic lands on the shores of the Ostzee, at the foot of snow-capped mountains. The lands are thick with evergreens. There are two

rivers here, the longer one being known as the Fym. The inhabitants mostly live along the coasts and fjords, the latter of which are shrouded in fog. A cold wind seems to constantly blow out of the north, making survival here difficult. The mountains and harshness of the land protect the Antalians from invasion, but do not prevent the Antalians from venturing out, either by land or sea, to raid and make war. Fierce wolves and even more dangerous creatures infest the land in large numbers.

The People

The Antalians are a grim, fatalistic and stern people, made hard by the lands they live in. They are a pale race, most having golden hair, though brown and red are not uncommon. Both men and women wear their hair long, with men also having beards. Blue, gray, green and brown are their eyes. They dress in heavy garments of leather, wool, linen and furs to protect themselves from the cold. The Antalians dwell in many small villages, in long, single-story halls that hug close to the earth where the winds do not penetrate, surrounding them with stockades to not only keep out enemies (including those from neighboring villages) but the winds as well.

The Antalians are a hard-living, rough people who lead short lives. They hunt and fish their lands, but like the Traldar they most enjoy raiding and piracy, sailing the seas to sack neighboring settlements with wild abandon. The highest aspiration, it is said, of an Antalian is to command his own pirate vessel, raiding the coasts until brought down at a young age by either hordes of enemies in overwhelming numbers or by an enemy so strong it is deemed an honor to be slain by it.

Those few Antalians who live to see wisdom try to counsel their youth against such a rough and early end of life, but few hearken to such advice, as the lure of the sea and of combat runs strong in the blood of these people. They challenge all strangers who come upon their villages to a duel to first blood with their finest warriors. Those

who win are welcomed as guests and feasted, those who fail the test are bludgeoned and enslaved. The Antalians do not enslave each other, but only other people, subdued in such tests or captured in battle.

The Antalians look upon life as a ruthless and harsh test that they are destined to fail in the end, but they feel they prove their mettle by facing it with unwavering resolve. They believe that this struggle against hardship and fate is what makes life worthwhile. They love fighting, but are clever about it and use trickery to gain for themselves every advantage, seeing nothing despicable in stacking the odds in their favor. After all, it is a matter of life and death to them and death comes early enough. Antalians fight most often with each other, but occasionally enter into grim wars against the Beastmen and the Icevale elves.

Like the Milenians, they respect their men over their women, though some women among the Antalians do become warriors. These live in one hall in each Antalian town, as the others are uncomfortable and suspicious of them. Many Antalian women warriors end up going out into the world as a result of this. The Antalians respect the Immortals, primarily their patrons, Wotan, Donar, Fredar, Fredara and Lokar. But they are suspicious of magic that does not come from the Immortals and Antalian wizards are few and treated harshly, often exiled from their communities, where most die. Those that do live have become quite powerful, however and a number of these sorcerers rule over their villages.

The Antalians are governed by *arls*, who preside over them like the kings of the Traldar rule over that people. Other than that, their laws are simple but hard, like the people. The Antalians trade little, preferring to raid instead. They have domesticated the large reindeer who are found in these lands and even use them as mounts when raiding or traveling by land. By sea they move in long ships with oars and a single mast, descending upon the coasts at will.

Do Miss

This is a harsh and unwelcoming land, inhabited by a harsh and unwelcoming people. There is little of note to see here, just the cold and the wind and the axes of the Antalians.

ARKAN (*Kingdom of*)

Location: Northeast corner of the floating continent of Alphatia, inland from Ambur, east of Frisland and north of Foresthome, bracketing Crystal Lake. HW

Area: 53,375 sq. mi. (138,240 sq. km.).

Population: 103,000, including Ceafem (pop. 8,000). [*Population figures are tentative, pending census. Ed.*]

Languages: Alphatian (Arkan dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp). Arkan lost its own mint when Skyreach was unaccountably left on the surface and makes due with coins minted in other kingdoms, especially Ambur.

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher. Slaves are counted as the property of the owner and the product of their labor is taxed as income for the owner. Prior to the sinking, much of the kingdom's tax receipts were generated from the floating islets. With those left on the surface, the new king has tried to turn to other means of generating revenues to restore finances, imposing severe duties on agricultural exports.

Government Type: Monarchy, member of the Alphatian Empire.

Industries: Agriculture (mainly grain), animal husbandry.

Important Figures: Qinn (King, human, male, M11).

Flora and Fauna: See Alphatia.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperor* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Gerta Knutsdotter.

Arkan is often called Ar for short by many outsiders and local commoners, because *ar* is

the common Alphatian word for *ark*, the arcane Alphatian (and official, with respects to the kingdom's name) word. Arkan is a flat land, almost entirely plains sprinkled with some small forests. Its most significant feature is Crystal Lake, around which most settlements, including the capital, a smallish town named Ceafem, is built. This town lacks many of the architectural features that make most Alphatian settlements noteworthy. This fact might be on account of Arkan's odd social situation. The Kingdom of Arkan seems to be almost denuded of aristocrats. Yes, there are some, but far fewer than in most of Alphatia. It is said that until quite recently, the aristocrats of Arkan lived above the kingdom on many miniature versions of floating continents and that the kingdom's capital was set upon one of these. According to local lore, these floating islets disappeared recently. Those who believe Alphatia has always been a floating continent think they vanished around the same time as the earthquakes, but when pressed on how or where they went, they get perplexed and are unable to explain. Pressing them on the issue just seems to distress them. Those who think that Alphatia was until recently a continent elsewhere that was shifted here in a great cataclysm assert that the floating islet abodes of the aristocrats were simply left behind.

Still, the point remains that the proportion of aristocrats in Arkan is a quarter or a fifth or lower than what one would find in other Alphatian kingdoms. When the local population is asked about this in the presence of an aristocrat, they express grave concern over the issue. But when approached on their own, without an aristocrat observing the conversation, they do not seem to mind much and even seem pleased about it.

Arkan consists largely of farms and fields and freshwater fisheries around Crystal Lake. This lake could serve as one of Alphatia's better resorts (a factor that is popular among Alphatians and well developed in other kingdoms), but the locals do not seem to have taken advantage of that opportunity. At least Crystal Lake does have

beaches, though they seem to go unexploited.

Don't Miss

As I said, Crystal Lake is the kingdom's most notable feature. Right now it is also a placid, relaxing place to visit, especially as it lacks the swarms of haughty aristocrats that frequent more common tourist locales. The people of Arkan are down to earth and seem truly contented and happy about their lives and are unusually open and polite to outsiders (for Alphatians at any rate), making this one of the more pleasant places to visit.

AROGANSA (Kingdom of)

Location: South central rim of the floating continent of Alphatia, south of Theranderol, east of Greenspur and west of Eadrin. HW

Area: 135,183 sq. mi. (350,125 sq. km.).

Population: 138,000, including Bluenose (pop. 45,000). [*Population figures are tentative, pending census. Ed.*]

Languages: Alphatian (Arogansan dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp). Arogansa also mints platinum *argers* worth 50 gp each and electrum *porpoises* (ep).

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher. Slaves are counted as the property of the owner and the product of their labor is taxed as income for the owner. Hospitality industries catering to tourists have additional taxes—lodging taxes per diem are imposed, as are meal taxes at restaurants. These are low as a percentage of the total cost, but due to the volume of tourism used to bring in much revenue. With tourism sluggish lately, the revenue has declined and the queen is said to be interested in finding means of making up the shortfall.

Government Type: Monarchy, member of the Alphatian Empire.

Industries: Agriculture, tourism, exploitation of magic.

Important Figures: Detteria Scarback (Queen, human, female, M19).

Flora and Fauna: See Alphatia.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperor* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Zweibelterm.

Arogansa is a true and proper Alphatian kingdom, second only to my own fatherland of Haven in refinement and taste. Arogansa places almost too firm a hand upon the servile masses, but at least they know to keep them in their proper place, unlike uncouth Stonewall. Still, I find the punishments a bit too harsh, but at least the commoners know to take them as their due and do not express any of the unbecoming insolence that is sometimes tolerated elsewhere by less vigilant aristocrats.

This proper, enthusiastic application of the norms has made this kingdom one of the richest in all Alphatia. Its fine forests and rich plantations are cultivated by suitably submissive slaves and servants. The beaches overlook the vast span of the Hollow World as it spins beneath us, a vision kept to the gaze of those with the taste to appreciate it, because the untalented, who aren't able to protect themselves with *levitation* or *flight*, may plummet to a deserved death if they get too ardent in looking upon this vista. Estates and villas of the aristocrats dot the scenic countryside, abodes of the prosperous elites and keeping watch over their dependent minions. Qinn of Arkan has failed to see the tourism possibilities inherent in his kingdom around Crystal Lake and develop them for those with discerning tastes, but even now the more visionary and insightful Arogansans are contemplating how to revive tourism in their nation, which has fallen off considerably on account of the sudden disappearance of the azure seas. While the queen is more interested in military matters, others in Arogansa have turned their attentions to solving the problem of slumping trade. Truly, with such leadership, Arogansa will continue to prosper for the

foreseeable future. [Unless one is an Alphatian wizard, Arogansa is probably a place to avoid. It used to have beautiful beaches, but I've always found that Arogansa's harsh treatment of those already punished by lack of magic to be too extreme. The lower classes are already disadvantaged enough without rules like these adding to their misery and the aristocracy of Arogansa really show no mercy for the less fortunate, I think. Now that those beaches are gone, there really is no reason to go there, except if one wishes to witness just how extreme Alphatian wizards can sadly become. Aritmanes.]

AZCANS (Empire of the)

Location: Northwest Iciria, east of the Northern Atlass Ocean, north of the World Spine Mountains, west of the Malpheggi Swamps. HW

Area: 728,847 sq. mi. (1,887,715 sq. km.).

Population: 3,000,000 including Chitlacan (pop. 200,000, including 10,000 nobles and 30,000 commoners on the island part), Huitlaktima (pop. 45,000), innumerable towns and villages.

Languages: Oltec, Neathar.

Coinage: None (barter only).

Taxes: Corvée labor and levies of in-kind produce.

Government Type: Theocratic monarchy.

Industries: Agriculture, especially beans, corn and peppers.

Important Figures: Otziltipac (*Tlatoani*, human, male, F18), Malinalxoch (*Ometochtzin*, human, female, Pr18 of the Four Hundred Rabbits).

Flora and Fauna: Predominantly what is found in tropical and sub-tropical rainforest; dinosaurs, monkeys, swine, snakes (including the Azcan winged viper and feathered serpent), tropical birds of many varieties and great cats (especially the jaguar).

Further Reading: *Hollow World* boxed set, HWR 1 *Sons of Azca*, previous almanacs.

Description by Theukidikies the Historian of Corisa.

The Azcans live amid a sun-lit tropical rainforest, practicing their bloody rites.

The Land

The lands of the Azcans are flat and wet and covered in jungle. Indeed, it rains every sleep here, at least once, with unbreakable regularity. The air is warm and damp, the land overgrown with underbrush. The forests are lighter on the fringes of the Azcan Empire and in the southeast it grows boggy, becoming the Malpheggi Swamp. The country is crisscrossed with an elaborate network of rivers and canals, which the Azcans use to travel and transport goods in canoes and rafts, the more so as they refuse to use the wheel. The wetness of the land also makes it very fertile. Indeed, the farm plots of the Azcans sometimes seem to be like floating gardens. Many dinosaurs prowl the jungles, as do cats such as jaguars and ocelots, which are held in high regard by the Azcans as totem creatures.

The People

The Azcans are a copper-skinned people with coal-dark eyes and hair, prominent noses and high cheekbones. They are short, but strong and fierce. They wear their hair long, but the men have no beards. They favor the wearing of headbands and dress in linen garments. The wealthy also wear ocelot fur and large amounts of gold jewelry with jade, obsidian and turquoise gems and sometimes brilliant emeralds.

The Azcan people are ruled by a king known as the *tlatoani*, or speaker, a priest-king like the Nithian Pharaoh who rules with absolute power over the people through a vast and exacting bureaucracy and hierarchy of nobles. They administer the Azcan people with more minute exactitude than even the Nithians are ruled under. The *tlatoani* nominates judges to adjudicate disputes. Their justice is swift and harsh, with many of the convicted sentenced to be sacrificed to their Immortals.

The Azcan Empire is organized along military lines, with a large and active army. From the day of their birth, Azcan men are devoted to the arts of war. They begin their formal training at the age of six or seven and serve at least until young adulthood, when, if they prove unsuccessful at war, they are expelled from the army and only those who continue to excel in combat are kept in service. The most successful of these rise to become leaders and officers and the best of all join one of the three fearsome military orders, the Jaguar and Eagle Knights and Coatl (formerly the infamous Winged Viper). Those who are expelled are pushed into the peasantry, where they are bound over into servitude.

The Azcans have had a shockingly sudden religious upheaval. They followed the Immortal Atzanteotl from the earliest times until just last year and their *tlatoani* was always a priest of Atzanteotl. But last year there was a sudden uprising and revolution and the Azcans deposed the *tlatoani* and the priests of Atzanteotl and their new *tlatoani* reveres Quetzalcoatl and has promoted a faith called the New Way over his people and claim to have entered a new phase in Azcan history. The followers of the old Immortal, Atzanteotl, continue to resist this revolution in some areas. The Azcan people remain highly superstitious, consulting soothsayers before making any major decision, only now these soothsayers supposedly get their inspiration from Quetzalcoatl rather than Atzanteotl.

The Azcans are organized in a rigid hierarchy, with the common peasants at the bottom, followed by young warriors, then experienced warriors and officers, followed by members of the prestigious military orders, over whom preside nobles (the *tecubtl*) and priests. Azcan villages do elect local leaders, known as a *calpullec* and this is similar to the Milenian practice of democracy, but the selection of this local chief is as far as they take it. Set somewhat apart from this ordered structure are the tradesmen, the *pochtecatl*, who are wealthy but despised and live with separate customs and laws, almost like a nation within a nation,

though obedient to the *tlatoani* and his officials. The *pochtecatl* do not flaunt their wealth, putting on a humble atmosphere, but they are quite proud. Trade among the Azcans is in barter rather than coin, but this primitiveness is somewhat alleviated because they often use quills filled with gold dust as a means of exchange.

Don't Miss

The Azcan capital of Chitlacan is a splendid city built on an island in Lake Chitlaloac and its western shore. Over it looms the step-pyramid temples of the Azcans' Immortals and the massive palace of the *tlatoani*. The city has broad streets suitable for ceremonial occasions, with the streets being flagged in stone. The ceremonial buildings and dwellings of the nobility are constructed out of large stone blocks. The commoners live in humble square, one-story homes made out of hardened mud (adobe), with each containing a small courtyard open to the sun. The island portion of the city is connected to the shore by a long wooden causeway. The Azcans' lives are so regimented that if one looks upon Chitlacan from afar, they seem like white-breachclouted ants, carrying a seemingly endless stream of supplies to the city in baskets on their backs. Canoes and rafts ply the lake and the rivers leading to it as well, likewise transporting goods to the city. At the center of Chitlacan is a large ceremonial plaza containing a calendar stone from which the Azcans measure time.

BEASTMEN (Lands of the)

Location: Northern portion of the continent of Iciria, south of the Bay of Gam. HW

Area: 1,413,353 sq. mi. (3,660,585 sq. km.).

Population: 100,000 living in small bands of 10-50.

Languages: Grruuk (a.k.a. Beastman), Neathar.

Coinage: None (barter only).

Taxes: None really.

Government Type: Independent family bands lead by a chieftain.

Industries: Fishing, hunting, trapping.

Important Figures: Krogada the Itchy (War Chieftainess, female, beastman, F13).

Flora and Fauna: Arctic tundra; seals, walrus, polar bears, white dragons, frost giants, ice toads, yeti, whales.

Further Reading: *Hollow World* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Theukidikies the Historian of Corisa.

These are a brutal and barbarous race of twisted monsters living in an ice-bound land.

The Land

The lands of the Beastmen are, if anything, even more harsh and forbidding than those of the Azcans. They reside among the mountains and in lands of tundra and snow near the northern edge of Iciria. This is an icy land, often made even colder by strong winds and blizzards that blow out of the north.

The People

These are not people as such, they are beasts who resemble the form of men in some ways. Their features vary widely, however, with no two looking alike and none resembling even their parents. The Beastmen are true savages, being cruel and brutal in their ways and unsophisticated in their crafts. They have only three interests: surviving the severe environment they live in (and their still more severe fellows), demonstrating their physical might over others and breeding more Beastmen. They do not seem to think about wider questions and I doubt they have ever produced a philosopher or scholar among them. Some Beastmen wander into the southern lands to prove their mettle over others, but most are content to stay in their own lands.

The Beastmen live in dome-shaped dwellings made out of ice, which there is

plenty of in their lands. They hunt and they fish and live simply. Though a cruel people, if approached in peace they do not attack first. Instead, they often invite a traveler to dine with them and stay for a sleep, in exchange for telling them stories. These often end up leading to challenges, however. Still, this is the most civilized custom the Beastmen have.

BETTELYN (Kingdom of)

Location: Southeast rim of the floating continent of Alphatia, south of Foresthome, east of Vertiloch and Alphas'ar and north of Randel and Theranderol. HW

Area: 172,595 sq. mi. (447,020 sq. km.).

Population: 330,000, including Citadel (pop. 30,000). [*Population figures are tentative, pending census. Ed.*]

Languages: Alphatian (Randellyn dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp). Bettelwyn also mints gold *citadels* worth 10 gp each.

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher. Slaves are counted as the property of the owner and the product of their labor is taxed as income for the owner.

Government Type: Monarchy, member of the Alphatian Empire.

Industries: Agriculture (especially grain), cattle, sheep.

Important Figures: Llynara (Queen, human, female, M17).

Flora and Fauna: See Alphatia.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperor* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Zweibelterm.

Bettelwyn is a pleasant if somewhat rustic nation of rich tilled fields and fine pasturage. Unlike most Alphatian kingdoms', Bettelwyn's rulers have allowed its people to build and grow without restraint and thus the landscape is littered with crude settlements and filled with much more than

its fair share of slack-jawed, slope-headed yokels. It has more such settlements of such persons than most other Alphatian nations, though not quite as many as can be found among non-Alphatian nations and things are kept from getting out of hand as the aristocrats do keep the common trash in reverence and obedience of proper authority.

But one should not forget that there is variety even in Bettelbyn. This kingdom of cretins has built within its borders one of the finest examples of Alphatian architecture to be found undamaged on the continent. The massive capital city of Citadel looms over the countryside at the bend of the Llyn River, attracting tourists from all around. This visible symbol of Alphatian power awes the masses and even many aristocrats, as the entire city consists of one huge structure, the size of a mountain. It is said by some that on a clear day Citadel can be seen from Randel, some three hundred miles away. Perhaps due to the curvature of the continent these days this is possible and if so it is a true indication of the mammoth size of Citadel. Some of the lower levels, the decayed older levels upon which new and glorious construction has been allowed to cover, have become an unexplored labyrinth, while other older areas have become a warren for the untutored masses. The more exalted reaches are home to those who can appreciate the view from the top, while the very pinnacle is, naturally, the royal city of the queen. Some of the older levels have been affected by cityquake damage and these have been shorn up with rock fills and additional support beams.

Don't Miss

As I mentioned, Citadel is a towering monument to behold. Within its massive structure one can find all the usual institutions found in any fair city. Obviously the areas facing out into the world, where light can penetrate, are at a premium, the inner areas are shrouded in darkness or lit by magic alone. The better establishments have

balconies giving one a panoramic view of the lands around.

BLACKHEART (Kingdom of)

Location: Northwest center of the floating continent of Alphatia, south of Frisland, east of the Kerothar Mountains, west of Alphas'ar and north of Shiye-Lawr. HW

Area: 74,326 sq. mi. (192,505 sq. km.).

Population: 45,000, including Shraek (pop. 15,000). [*Population figures are tentative, pending census. Ed.*]

Languages: Alphatian (Arogansan dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp). Blackheart sees no need to mint coins. Indeed, Blackheart mints no coins of its own, but rather accepts the coins of other Alphatian kingdoms.

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher. Slaves are counted as the property of the owner and the product of their labor is taxed as income for the owner. Payment of taxes and fees by the mages, including the "tower tax" (which actually applies to all types of structures built by the various wizards) insures that the kingdom will stay out of their affairs and leave them alone. Those who fail to pay often receive unwelcome visits. There are also tolls to enter Shraek, as well as surtaxes on all transactions conducted in that city.

Government Type: Monarchy, member of the Alphatian Empire.

Industries: Magical research, privacy, herbs.

Important Figures: Belgoth the Lamer (King, human, male, C14).

Flora and Fauna: See Alphatia.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperor* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Zweibelterm.

Blackheart is another fine example of the variation within stability that the Alphatian

system provides for. I am told that in some lands Blackheart is considered a dark pit of wickedness, but I can assure you that Blackheart is as friendly as any other Alphatian kingdom. Blackheart is home to wizards who come here to build laboratories away from meddling eyes, allowing them to practice magics not considered fashionable elsewhere. Here, by custom, each aristocrat's estate is run like its own nation, with its own laws, keeping supervision over its own subordinates. The King, Belgoth, only intervenes if the wizards become too destructive, but even then wide latitude is permitted. Blackheart truly exemplifies the freedoms of the aristocracy, as they may have as many liberties and rights as they can gain by magic, without restriction or imposition except by someone who proves himself superior through his own innate force.

As a result, the kingdom is dotted with labs, wizard's towers, hidden underground laboratories and has become a critical center of magical research in Alphatia, a realm at the forefront of the pursuit of magical excellence. This shows just what true freedom for those who can benefit from it can bring to a society. While the subjects of many of these experiments are not volunteers, of course, everyone recognizes the benefit of these researches in the advancement of magical knowledge. If there is one danger in Blackheart, it is the forests, which are filled with failed experiments expelled from estates by wizards and escapees. None the less, Blackheart is a most popular place for reclusive Alphatian spellcasters to live.

Blackheart has one major settlement, Shraek, a foreboding and imposing city warded by a curtain of black obsidian more awesome than anything the pitiful Azcans can dream of. Here is where the king presides and where meetings and exchanges take place. *[Though Zweibelterm seems to like this place, I find it a lot more ominous. Where Arogansa is an unfortunate example of what Alphatia can be, Blackheart is really a stain of shame upon the empire, where wizards can capture and experiment on innocents with impunity, even supported by the*

nation's authorities. I value the pursuit of magic as much as the next Alphatian, but here the effort goes too far even for me and I know that many other Alphatians feel the same way though most hesitate to express that opinion in public. Freedom and liberty to pursue the studies of magic are fine ideals, but just as often, if indeed not more so, Blackheart seems to be a place where that right is violated as often as it is followed and it is a place where a philosophy of "might is right" seems to flourish. I'm not at all surprised that the Shiye-Lawr elves to the south have strong feelings against this nation. I'd recommend anyone to stay well clear of this place or you could end up being the next experiment of one of the wizards who live here... or the dinner of one of those experiments—possibly even a horrible one that failed and was then let loose to roam the forest. Aritmanes.]

Don't Miss

I would actually caution to most readers that Blackheart is the one kingdom in Alphatia that should be avoided. But if you do visit, Shraek is certainly the site you should see. It is unlike most Alphatian cities in that it is dark and gloomy rather than shining and beautiful. You will need a guide, as by order of the king the city's streets are twisted and winding, crossing and re-crossing each other. Buildings are built wherever there is room, with disturbing fashions of architecture. The population of Shraek consists mostly of those operating its businesses (hidden libraries that charge steep fees for admission, taverns, inns, discrete meeting halls, alchemist and poisoner's shops, zzonga dens by the score, sages offices and a very busy crematorium for disposal of the bodies of the recently deceased) and mercenary adventurers.

Do Miss

Most of Blackheart if you're uninvited. The inhabitants come here for seclusion and tend not to like people wandering around their lands without leave. Elves especially should exercise caution here, as they are often harassed due to the traditional friction between Shiye-Lawr and Blackheart. You should also take care in the Ugly Wood, as it

is known to have dangerous monsters wandering therein which beset the unwary and unprepared.

BRUTE-MEN (Lands of the)

Location: Southern hemisphere of the continent of Iciria, north of Lake Menkor, south of the World Spine Mountains, east of the Sea of Rax. HW

Area: 49,883 sq. mi. (129,195 sq. km.).

Population: 200,000 living in clans of 10-60.

Languages: Ka-na-to (a.k.a. Brutish), Neathar.

Coinage: None (barter only).

Taxes: None.

Government Type: Independent clan groups led by chieftains with the support of shamans.

Industries: Hunting and gathering.

Important Figures: Na-Do (Chief of the Fang Cave Clan, male, brute-man, F9), Ug-rum (Shaman of the Fang Cave Clan, male, brute-man, S8).

Flora and Fauna: Grasses, coniferous trees, sheep, goats, rock baboons, bats, bears, carrion crawlers, mountain lions, smilodons, dinosaurs, dragons, giant lizards, mastodons, woolly mammoths, pterosaurs, purple worms, rats, giant scorpions, shadows, snakes, sphinxes, giant spiders, troglodytes, jackrabbits, armadillos.

Further Reading: *Hollow World* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Theukidikies the Historian of Corisa.

The Brute-Men live in a wild and untamed region, but are themselves a gentle, even timorous people.

The Land

The lands of the Brute-Men are a hilly, untamed and untamable wilderness of stone and rock. Cool winds blow out of the nearby mountains and the soil here is thin and

unproductive at best. Many dinosaurs roam through the area, as well as other creatures large and small.

The People

Again, these are not people as such, they are beasts or brutes. They appear somewhat like humanity, but with heavy hair (almost like fur), sloping foreheads that give them an appearance of stupidity that belies their craftiness and large jaws and mouths like an ape's. They dress in animal skin vests and loincloths and speak a rough and barbarous language. They live as hunters and gatherers, simply and without any trace of civilization. But they do have arts and an awareness of the Immortals, painting the caves and rock walls with simple but expressive motifs depicting hunts and honoring the Immortals.

The Brute-Men are remarkably gentle and pacifistic, fighting only when threatened or attacked. They live in caves, moving occasionally if the hunting goes badly or the tribe grows too large. They follow the Immortal Ka-gar, but some are said to follow a darker Immortal known as Tha-to. The shamans who act as priests of these Immortals can be very powerful.

EADRIN (Kingdom of)

Location: Southeast rim of the floating continent of Alphatia, wedged between Arogansa in the west and Randel in the north. HW

Area: 49,883 sq. mi. (129,195 sq. km.).

Population: 90,000, including Archpoint (pop. 15,000). [*Population figures are tentative, pending census. Ed.*]

Languages: Alphatian (Arogansan dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher. Slaves are counted as the property of the owner and the product of their labor is taxed as income for the owner. Additional taxes include a

lodging tax, though it is lower than that found in Arogansa.

Government Type: Monarchy, member of the Alphatian Empire.

Industries: Agriculture (especially grain), tourism.

Important Figures: Idon II (King, elf, male, F9/M10).

Flora and Fauna: See Alphatia.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperor* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Zweibelterm.

Eadrin is what happens when an elf is selected to do an Alphatian's job. The result is a kingdom that is nothing more than a pale imitation of the splendor and success of Arogansa. Everything is like Arogansa, only not quite as much and even the plantations are not as well kept. Even the food is bland and mediocre (yes, I did taste it once and learned from that experience not to let it pass my palate again!). As a result of this deficiency in quality, Eadrin has to cater to wealthy but unsophisticated common rabble. It's a nice enough place for such people I suppose, more even than they deserve. But people of true taste and refinement will pass Eadrin by and stick with Arogansa. The inhabitants of Eadrin seem to sense their inferiority by comparison with Arogansa and there is disaffection from them and an effort to try and surpass them. But it remains the case that what can be found in Eadrin can be found in superior form in Arogansa. Therefore, I shall not waste any further space on this poseur-kingdom.

Note that the capital's name used to be Archport, but the king changed it recently as there is no longer a sea for it to serve as a port of. Archpoint thus more accurately describes its present condition, as a point sticking out over the void. *[I've always found Eadrin to be a likeable place. It lacks the luxury of Arogansa, but then it also lacks the extreme attitudes of Arogansa's aristocracy and harsh treatment of the commoners, which has often kept me away from Arogansa as I found myself unable to close my eyes to the hardships that the lower classes*

were subjected to there and which then ruined the time I spent there. Eadrin has less luxury and the landscapes aren't as beautiful as in Arogansa, but in my eyes that has always been a strength here, as the landscape wasn't as manipulated or engineered as in Arogansa, which gives it a much more realistic feel and natural beauty. Eadrin is really quite a beautiful place in its own right and I've always had a better time there than in Arogansa myself (and their food really isn't as bad as Zweibelterm suggests). Most foreigners would find Eadrin a nice place to visit, I think. Aritmanes.]

FORESTHOME (Kingdom of)

Location: Northeast rim of the floating continent of Alphatia, between Bettelyn in the south, Arkan in the north and Frisland and Alphas'ar in the west. HW

Area: 296,554 sq. mi. (768,075 sq. km.).

Population: 85,000 (90% human, 10% elven), including Greenwood (pop. 15,000). *[Population figures are tentative, pending census. Ed.]*

Languages: Alphatian (Arborean dialect), Elvish (Shiye-Lawr dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp). Foresthome also mints an electrum coin called the *arbor*.

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher. Slaves are counted as the property of the owner and the product of their labor is taxed as income for the owner. Logging is limited, due to elven influence, with permits and licensing fees required beforehand before any timber can be culled.

Government Type: Monarchy, member of the Alphatian Empire.

Industries: Agriculture, fishing, logging.

Important Figures: Kikania (Queen, human, female, M12).

Flora and Fauna: See Alphatia.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperor* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Gerta Knutsdotter.

Foresthorne is a heavily timbered kingdom and one of Alphatia's largest in size, though smallest in population. The elves keep to the forests, while the human Alphatians live along the coasts of Llyn Lake and the banks of the Eastfollow River. Many also reside along the rim of the continent, though migration from that precipice to the interior lands of Foresthorne seems to be happening. The forests are heavily regulated to prevent over-culling and depletion of these resources, with strict punishment of those who fail to observe these restrictions. The region between Llyn Lake and the continental rim is devoted to agricultural plantations, while the lake itself is the source of much of the fish caught in Alphatia these days. Those looking for relaxing pastoral beauty need look no further than Foresthorne, one of the most naturally beautiful parts of Alphatia.

Don't Miss

The city of Greenwood is unusual in several respects. Built along the Eastfollow River, most of its large buildings are constructed out of stone, but shaped to resemble towering redwoods. The more humble structures are built amidst live trees, so that from a distance Greenwood almost resembles an elven city, appearing as part of the forest. What gives it away are some of the more extravagant artistic touches the Alphatians are known for. This gives it a distinctiveness all its own, a blending of two aesthetic styles.

FRISLAND (Kingdom of)

Location: Northwest corner of the floating continent of Alphatia, bracketed by Arkan and Foresthorne in the east and Blackheart in the south. HW

Area: 160,000 sq. mi. (414,720 sq. km.).

Population: 80,000, including Shiehl (pop. 15,000). [*Population figures are tentative, pending census. Ed.*]

Languages: Alphatian (Frisian dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp). Frisland mints no other coins.

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher. Slaves are counted as the property of the owner and the product of their labor is taxed as income for the owner. Frisland also imposes export fees on timber, agricultural produce and livestock.

Government Type: Monarchy, member of the Alphatian Empire.

Industries: Agriculture, fishing, logging.

Important Figures: Edjer the Twisted (King, human, male, M17).

Flora and Fauna: See Alphatia.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperor* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Gerta Knutsdotter.

Frisland is another large but sparsely populated kingdom, where the people live almost like my own Antalian people. It is said by some that their lifestyle was strongly influenced by a people known as the Yanifey, who are said to have once inhabited Alphatia in the distant past. This might explain why their lifestyle is different from that of most Alphatians and the Yanifey must have lived much like the Antalians do. The city of Shiehl, built on the shores of the lake of the same name, is an exception to this generalization, as it is more like other Alphatian cities. Frisland's other settlements are mostly built between the mountains and the continental rim, just like most Antalian villages are built between the mountains and the shores of the Ostzee. The lands of Frisland, despite its temperate climate, even resemble those of the Antalian Wastes in some respects, with evergreen forests and scrub plains prevailing.

Don't Miss

While not the source of mineralogical wealth like the southern portion of the range, the northern Kerothar Mountains are majestic, with river valleys cutting into them which almost made me homesick. This is a

largely unspoiled wilderness, with varieties of flora and fauna usually found in colder regions seemingly acclimatized to thrive in temperate Frisland.

GENTLE FOLK (Elf-Lands of the)

Location: Continent of Iciria, east of the Azcan Empire, west of Alphatian Neatharum, near the Neathar lands. HW

Area: 500 sq. mi. (1,295 sq. km.).

Population: 10,000.

Languages: Elvish (ancient dialect), Neathar.

Coinage: None (barter).

Taxes: None.

Government Type: None.

Industries: None (hunter/gatherers).

Important Figures: Drianna (poet, elf, female, F1).

Flora and Fauna: Despite its abundant forests, the lands of the Gentle Folk are devoid of most examples of hostile animal life normally found in that environment. Dinosaurs and other predators are kept out by Immortal magic. Plant life is typical and rich, the elves doing little to exploit or harm it. Found within their forests is the somnastis plant. In many ways similar to the zsonga bush, some of the elves chew its leaves to gain its effects. Unlike the zsonga bush, the somnastis plant is not passive and can and will entrap its plunderers for consumption. Aside from that, only a few treants and other solitary forest creatures call the forests home.

Further Reading: *Hollow World* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Dellebram.

Since first coming into contact with the Gentle Folk last year, the Alphatians have learned much of these elven people. Though primitive by Alphatian and elven standards, they are nonetheless of the elven race and deserving the noble recognition of their brethren.

The Land

The valley region “claimed” by the Gentle Folk is covered by a vast ancient forest. By following the rune-covered poles that line its parameter, one can pick out its borders. With its ancient oaks and untouched landscape, one would think it a place of beauty. To some degree this is true, however the wilderness has an overriding aura of deep oppression. The elves have no central authority figure, so they do not really have the need for a capital. Habitation is mostly centered along the banks of the kingdom’s river. Strangely enough the elves have no name for this body of water, nor do they seem to see the need in giving it one.

The People

The Gentle Folk are elves, deriding from the ancient Truedyl Clan. Physically they are indistinguishable from other elves. However, they lack the active lifestyles often associated with the elven race. They dress in modest clothes and wear no ornamentation. Their mannerisms are slow and express little emotion, except for a general unhappiness. For the most part the Truedyl Elves are hunter/gatherers, foraging for their foods and crafting modest possessions out of the sense of need. Each elf seems to fend for herself for her daily needs, trading for items she has to have. Whereas other elves focus their attentions on nature and “being elves,” the Truedyl focus upon the arts and a study of philosophy. Usually the philosophy aspect can be readily seen in the art produced. These philosophical pursuits often focus upon mundane and inconsequential subjects. The Truedyl do not venerate Immortals, however their pacifist and artisan nature has drawn the patronage of both Alphatia and Koryis.

One interesting Truedyl Elf is Drianna, a rather young individual. Though she shares much of the attributes of her fellow Truedyl, she does seem to have some desire to ponder matters of some substance. Rationalization of one matter opens a new series of questions to be analyzed. Drianna often records her logical concepts in verse.

Of course, these poems are sad, morbid and even nonsensical.

Recent History

Like all Hollow World inhabitants, the Truedyl Clan has its ties to the Surface World. As far as we have been able to deduce, the elves were once part of the elves that lived near the Broken Lands. Members of their clan discovered a powerful Blackmoorian artifact, setting it off. The explosion killed most of those directly involved in the discovery. It also sent clouds of toxic materials. Fleeing this second and lesser Great Rain of Fire, the elves went underground. Some of these elves, among them the Truedyl, eventually emerged from the underground. Life in their subterranean environment had been difficult—the effects of the toxic clouds upon their young, hostile monsters and feelings of guilt had left them a shattered people devoid of typical elven spirit. These elves developed the philosophy of “The Still Way.” Loosely defined as a mixture of inactivity to avoid repercussions from their actions and rationalization to come to terms with past matters and avoid enacting similar ones in the future.

For years, the Truedyl lived upon the surface in this manner. The Immortal Alphatia took notice of them and began measures to rebuild their mental and physical stature as elves. This movement was thwarted by humanoid incursions. Unable to protect themselves, the elves faced eradication. Reluctantly, Alphatia transplanted them to the Hollow World. This move preserved them, however it made their mindset and state of decline permanent. In the Hollow World the Truedyl have lived in peace with Immortal magic keeping predators away. For this, the Gentle Folk have unwittingly gained the respect and awe of the neighboring Neathar, who hold them in high reverence for this perception of might and invincibility.

In AY 2015 [*AC 1015. Ed.*], the Truedyl encountered the Alphas. Though such a meeting was inevitable, it was by mere chance of the fugitive Zandor that they

came to the attentions of the Alphas. With the Immortals Alphas and Koryis as their patrons, it was only fitting that the Alphas people offered their mortal patronage. This patronage has extended itself to Alphas’s [*the Immortal. Ed.*] earlier desires to rebuild them as true elves. As such, Eriadna has dispatched members of the Shiye-Lawr Clan to “show them” how to be elves. She also sent members of the Alphas and Koryis clergies to educate them regarding that aspect. Unfortunately such efforts are stifled by the effects of the *Spell of Preservation*.

Don’t Miss

There really is not a great deal to see in the Truedyl Valley. It’s possible that its untouched wilderness and ancient forests could draw the attentions of forest folk or those of the druidic persuasion. The Shiye may even see it as being reminiscent of their own lands on the Alphas continent so that visiting Shiye should feel right at home. Scholars will also find the Truedyl full of knowledge. Though their mannerisms, demeanor and oppressive nature are handicaps, the Truedyl have extensive knowledge of their environment and its attributes.

Do Miss

There are few dangers within the Valley. Predators are kept out by Immortal magic. Likewise, the Gentle Folk are of no real threat. One will find them indifferent to most visitors, yet obliging enough to provide assistance if it is needed. If anything a visitor will be more of a threat to the Truedyl than they are to the visitor.

GREENSPUR (Kingdom of)

Location: Southwest spur of the floating continent of Alphas, west of Arogansa.
HW

Area: 90,787 sq. mi. (235,140 sq. km.).

Population: 565,000, including Eagret (pop. 90,000). [*Population figures are tentative, pending census. Ed.*]

Languages: Alphatian (Eagren dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp). Greenspur mints platinum *staters* and electrum *spurs* as well.

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher. Slaves are counted as the property of the owner and the product of their labor is taxed as income for the owner. Fees are also imposed on the purchase of arms and armor (though these taxes are waived for soldiers serving in the kingdom's or empire's forces) and excise fees on agricultural exports.

Government Type: Monarchy, member of the Alphatian Empire.

Industries: Agriculture, military.

Important Figures: Sildreth II (King, human, male, C15).

Flora and Fauna: See Alphatia.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperor* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Zweibelterm.

One of the embodiments of Alphatia's might, Greenspur's capital of Eagret is home to the largest *skyship* base in the entire world. Greenspur cleaves close to Alphatian traditions—while the warriors serving Alphatia are treated justly according to their due, they are still kept at hand and not allowed to get above their station as in benighted Stonewall. Greenspur thus achieves the proper balance of things, keeping to the laws and maintaining the natural order and not losing the appropriate distinction between respected servants and the master-classes. Greenspur can thus serve as an example for places like Stonewall that have nearly Thyatianized and be a model for a successful and prosperous kingdom, while these other places are just hives of teeming and hungry rabble. Greenspur's lands resemble its other fine features, consisting as they do of fertile lowlands, gently rolling hills and pleasant forests and glades. The fertility of the land is brought to fruition on

the plantations by diligent and obedient slaves and servants. This kingdom and its capital of Eagret are one of the true showcases of Alphatia.

A note to travelers destined for Greenspur. Every inhabitant and visitor must carry identification papers indicating their name, location of residence, current job and (for guest-papers) duration of visit. The kingdom's guards and security forces can demand that these papers be produced at any time (though they usually only do so when they believe something untoward is happening). So be sure to keep your papers on you at all times during your stay here.

Don't Miss

The imperial *skyship* base at Eagret. Though for obvious reasons of national security, especially to prevent additional skyjacking attempts, access to the base itself is limited, one can still get a good view of it from afar. There you shall see the manifest might of Alphatia, the rows of ships under construction or maintenance in the docks. If you are fortunate, you shall see one or two flying aloft, sailing the very skies.

HAVEN (Kingdom of)

Location: Southwestern rim of the floating continent of Alphatia, west of Vertiloch, south of Shiye-Lawr and Stoutfellow, fronting the Aaslan void. HW

Area: 245,424 sq. mi. (635,650 sq. km.).

Population: 895,000, including Dovor (pop. 15,000). [*Population figures are tentative, pending census. Ed.*]

Languages: Alphatian (Aaslan dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp). Haven mints platinum *frescoes* and electrum *medallions* as well.

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher. Slaves are counted as the property of the owner and the product of their labor is taxed as income for the owner. Additional surtaxes are imposed on sale of art, but not art supplies.

Government Type: Monarchy, member of the Alphatian Empire.

Industries: Agriculture (grains, fruits, vegetables), art and artistic education, cattle and sheep.

Important Figures: Kryndylya (Queen, human, female, C20), Mylertendal (Famous Artist, human, female, M20).

Flora and Fauna: See Alphatia.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperor* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Zweibelterm.

Haven is the most elegant jewel in the constellation of Alphatian kingdoms. Even in its current marred state with Aasla in ruins, Haven shines more brightly than any other nation. Haven is my home and I am born of Aasla, but there are none who with justice can contradict my description of my fatherland, as all who visit it will be impressed by its natural beauty, the splendor of its artistic decorations and the social order which makes this flourishing of art and magic possible in the first place. The refined and sophisticated tastes of Haven's discerning aristocrats is renowned across the world. Crumbled Vertiloch and rustic Alphas'ar may claim to be the heart and soul of Alphatia, because they are (or were) the seat of the imperial government, but all who visit Haven know that their claims are empty, for we are Alphatia's true heart and true soul. Whenever anyone thinks of Alphatia, Haven is the first nation that comes to their mind, for Haven is Alphatia. *[I find Zweibelterm to be a bit too fascinated with his home nation here, but I can scarcely deny that Haven is a major source of artistic expression in Alphatia, though I find it quite odd that he fails to mention the wizard Mylertendal who has kept alive the love for the artistic here and helped it grow in the last three centuries. Since Mylertendal is a known follower of my own Immortal patron, Alphatia, the people of my order have heard much of her and have the greatest respect for her and her achievements. Still, the philosophies of Alphatia have spread to all nations of the empire and Haven hardly has a monopoly on the arts as Zweibelterm seems close to suggesting here. Aasla, before its sad destruction,*

was not quite as beautiful or marvelous as Sundsvall, for example, although it was remarkable for another city to be such a close second in splendor to the imperial capital and I'm not trying to belittle the achievements of the people of Haven, just point out that their achievements are not quite as unique as Zweibelterm comes close to suggesting. Aritmanes.]

Haven is large, but not unpopulated as is Foresthome. Haven's population is large, but not crowded as in Stonewall. Haven's people are refined, not rubes like Frisland or coarse like Randel or insolent like Stonewall. Haven is the perfect epitome of Alphatian civilization. This is why the envious and nasty Glantrians destroyed our brilliant capital of Aasla first. None the less, a new capital now rises at Dovor, inland from the precipice of the continental rim, at the confluence of the Alphas and Ast Rivers.

Haven's towns and country estates are all decorated in the style of Alphatian art, its industrious laborers till the lands of Haven's plantations, producing a surfeit of produce which enrich their masters, thus allowing both art and magic to be studied to their highest peak in all the world. Even the streets of Haven are constructed in artistic patterns, as if they were a mosaic.

Alas, one scar blights Haven's beauty—a reminder of the crude and cruel barbarism of foreigners. Glantrian dogs, envious of our achievements, did burn the most exquisite of cities. Aasla is now a charred necropolis of ash, broken walls, shattered statuary and decaying corpses. Aasla, placed as it is on the rim of the continent, a port where there is no sea, will likely not recover. Especially since so many of its inhabitants are dead or scattered. But Alphatian power and pride is unquenchable—as I said, a new shining city is being constructed at Dovor. Aasla will remain an example of the destructive wickedness of barbarous people, while Dovor will show what Alphatians are made of.

Don't Miss

The queen's castle, located halfway between Dovor and Aasla, rivals and I would

say even surpasses the imperial palace in splendor and artistic beauty. It is covered in statuary, gilding, ornate flourishes, gleaming spires, frescoes, mosaics and other art.

ICEVALE (Elf-Lands of)

Location: Northern mountains of the continent of Iciria, east of the Midworld Gate, north of the Neathar lands, south of the Beastman Wastes. HW

Area: 216,160 sq. mi. (559,855 sq. km.).

Population: 100,000 living in clans of 100 to 1,000, including the town of Tuathar (pop. 5,500).

Languages: Elvish (Icevale dialect), Neathar.

Coinage: *Sol* (gp), *lun* (sp), *ston* (cp).

Taxes: Levies of funds, in-kind products and labor on an ad hoc basis when needed.

Government Type: Monarchy influenced by clan leaders.

Industries: Furs and leather products exchanged for food, wine and precious metals.

Important Figures: Rollodir (King, elf, male, F12), Bergeya (Queen, elf, female, M13).

Flora and Fauna: With its frigid arctic mountainous clime, the region boasts a sizable population of creatures normally found therein. Moose, bears, reindeer, beavers, foxes and wolves are the most obvious. More dangerous beasts such as white dragons can also be found.

Further Reading: *Hollow World* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Theukidikies the Historian of Corisa.

The elves of Icevale live amid the craggy peaks of the northern mountains. Though the climate is harsh, their spirits are light.

The Land

The Icevale elves live in sub-arctic mountain and hill country, always covered in

snow. Pine trees and other evergreens cover the hills and the slopes of the mountains up to the tree line.

The People

This area is populated with elves, forming themselves into a kingdom. The only evidence of their habitation is usually a small cabin which, when entered, proves to be the antechamber of a network of artfully crafted caverns warmed by elven magic, which form the dwellings and communities of the Icevale elves.

These elves, like the Schattentalen, are a vigorous race of warriors, but unlike the dark and malevolent Schattentalen they are bright and fun-loving. These elves are tall for their race, hardy and strong. Most are light in complexion and blond of hair, with eyes of blue or green. The men cut their hair short and go beardless, while the women wear their hair long. Among the Icevale elves, the sexes are considered equal, with no distinctions among them. The elves wear furs and deerskin garments, with boots lined with down to protect against the cold.

Though they are capable warriors, the Icevale elves do not devote their lives to combat and warfare. They live as hunters and trappers, subsisting mostly on meat, though they also fiercely protect their forests and mountains against despoliation. They travel by dogsled, snowshoes, or by ski. They also use these as forms of entertainment and sport, holding skiing and dogsled races, as well as archery contests.

They like to perform mischievous pranks on unwary travelers, hiding from view while doing so. Some of these pranks can be quite dangerous, as when they destroy provisions, but they seem to mean no harm by them and if the wanderers take it in stride and do not become enraged, the elves may invite them to guest with them.

If they have a dark aspect, it is that they abhor imperfections in their offspring and sometimes cast such out to die of exposure. Others are permitted to grow, but are shunned and these often leave Icevale as soon as they are able to. The Icevale elves

are organized into a loose kingdom presided over by a king, but most matters are handled locally by clan leaders. Only dire problems, such as a war or major disaster, are decided upon by the king.

Don't Miss

The main community of the Icevale elves and the capital of their kingdom, is a small but beautiful town, Tuathar (previous notations that Argandir was the capital are incorrect; Argandir is actually a ruin, a town destroyed long ago by the Beastmen). This town is largely underground, in a mountain. But it is not cramped or dark like many subterranean settlements; the chambers are soaring and spacious, well lit by magical effects. The rock itself seems to have been shaped by magic or elven art or both into fine features, almost like filigree.

JENNITES (Tribelands of the)

Location: South central plains of the continent of Iciria, north of the Sea of Yr, south of the Tanagoro Plains, between Nithia and Milenia. HW

Area: 180,000 sq. mi. (466,200 sq. km.).

Population: 400,000 living in tribal groups averaging 1,000 members.

Languages: Jennite, Neathar.

Coinage: None (barter only).

Taxes: Tribes levy goods and corvée labor based on need.

Government Type: Semi-independent clans ruled by chiefs occasionally unified by a *chagan* (*khan*).

Industries: Cattle raising, horse breeding, goldsmithing, raiding.

Important Figures: Trudar (King, human, male, F15), Rathyka (Queen, human, female, Dr15).

Flora and Fauna: Steppes grasses, aurochs herds, giant beetles, bugbears, lions, chimeras, cockatrices, dinosaurs, dragons, hill giants, gnolls, griffons, hippogriffs, horses, giant lizards, giant locusts, manticores, ogres, pegasi, giant scorpions,

sphinxes, trolls, aardvarks, wolves, cats, bulettes, giant ants and especially rabbits.

Further Reading: *Hollow World* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Theukidikies the Historian of Corisa.

The Jennites are a nomadic horse people who infest the plains between Milenia and Nithia, following their herds.

The Land

The lands of the Jennites are a vast steppelands, mostly flat but broken by the occasional range of hills or copse of trees. They lay in the temperate zone of southern Iciria, but cold winds blow hard from the south. These lands are lush in grass and thus make good ranges for cattle and other animals and provide plenty for herdsmen or hunters. If it were not for the Jennites, who cleave hard to nomadic ways, they would also make good croplands, as the Milenians will one day prove—mark my words. These lands run all the way from the banks of the Dagol River in the west to the deserts and wastes on the eastern edge of the Plains of Teuz, bound by the Sea of Yr in the south and the jungles of the Tanagoro in the north, though the Tanagoro and the Jennites share (and clash in) some of the northeastern plains.

The People

These wide lands are home to the Men of Jen, or Jennites, a nomadic people seemingly born in the saddle. They make no permanent dwellings, but rather range over the land, following their herds of aurochs as they eat the grasses and pursuing the hunt likewise. As they deplete one area, they simply move on across the steppelands. Thus their dwellings are made to be temporary and mobile, easily taken down in one place and put up in another, like the tents of soldiers, but made to house whole families. These they move in wagons, with some wagons being set up as dwellings unto themselves,

with others being used to transport belongings and supplies.

The Jennites are a coppery-skinned people with dark hair and dark eyes, like the Azcans or Oltecs. The women wear their hair long, the men cutting it short but wearing long, spiky mustaches or short spiky beards. They dress in garments of wool and felt, to keep out the wind and damp, with women and men dressing alike, most unnaturally. Their women even fight alongside their men and their counsel is heeded in decisions. But, in the end, it is the men who rule, so they are not totally without sense. The Jennites are expert riders who trust to their mounts almost as much as they do each other and they are all very skilled in using the bow, which is their national weapon, from horseback. Strangely to my mind, they are also excellent goldsmiths, making fine golden jewelry of their wealth and wearing it in abundance. The Jennites have great scorn for those who do not ride and do not value infantry no matter how often they are beaten by our Milenian footmen.

The Jennites are great gift-givers, with the custom of exchanging gifts highly regarded among their people. This you should keep in mind at all times when meeting the Jennites, for if you do not offer their chief a gift and accept one in exchange, they will be highly offended and attack you for insulting them. If you do cleave to this custom, however, they will treat you as valued guests, welcoming you into their encampment as friends. It is a terrible thing to be captured by the Jennites in war, however, for they execute all captives with their swords. They follow the Immortal Tarastia and are very mindful of vengeance, leaving no slight unpunished. As a result, there are many feuds among them, most of which go back as far as those involved can remember, each blaming the other side for real or imagined slights. I must say, though, that they do have a keen sense of honor and justice and they do not punish arbitrarily or without cause.

The Jennites are ruled over by tribal chieftains or *chagans*, though these, rather than ruling with an iron fist, except in times of war or battle, listen to the advice of tribal

elders, especially the priests of Tarastia. Usually their tribes are disunited and fractious, feuding as described above. But occasionally a great and magnetic leader will arise among them, unifying them into a great and fearsome force. They then often ride forth to terrorize the surrounding nations in a great horde.

KOGOLOR (Dwarven Kingdom of)

Location: Eastern range of the World Spine Mountains the continent of Iciria, between the Brute-Men Lands and the Krugel Hordes. HW

Area: 133,021 sq. mi. (344,525 sq. km.).

Population: 500,000, including Kolmstat (pop. 28,000).

Languages: Kogolor.

Coinage: *Bifric* (50 gp), *gilder* (gp), *platen* (sp), *kupfen* (cp)

Taxes: Tithe of 10% of income to royal treasury, 10% tariff on all goods except food, plus additional exactions as needed in crisis and war.

Government Type: Monarchy influenced by clan leaders.

Industries: Timber, woodworking, brewing, furs, leatherwork, mining.

Important Figures: Bifric III (King, male, dwarf, F12).

Flora and Fauna: Mountain and hill vegetation, including aspen trees, evergreens, various underbrush. Animals that survive in these elevations include deer, elk, moose, goats, apes (white-furred carnivorous dwarf-eating apes), black and brown bears, beholders, mountain lions, dinosaurs, giant ferrets, giant weasels, giant hamsters, gnomes, griffons, pterosaurs, purple worms, rats, giant spiders, wolves. Humanoid races include giants (of the hill, stone, mountain and frost varieties), trolls, orcs, ogres, lycanthropes, minotaurs and yeti. Troglodytes are known to live underground.

Further Reading: *Hollow World* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Theukidikies the Historian of Corisa.

The Kogolor are a mountain folk, dwarves who live in the vales amid the peaks of the World Spine Mountains.

The Land

Perched atop the World Spine Range, the lands of the Kogolor dwarves are a rugged but beautiful mountain country. The snow-capped peaks soar over lush mountain vales covered with evergreens and cut by glittering streams of cold water. At the center of these gorgeous mountains, however, are a blasted lavascape around Mount Ronani, but even this area has an eerie beauty to it. To the northeast, several forts are built along the passes between the Kogolor lands and the Krugel Horde, to bar the way of attacks by those people into the Dwarven Kingdom. The Hordes do sometimes get by these defenses, however. As a result of this, the inhabitants live in walled towns, protected against attack. These are scattered throughout the Kingdom.

The People

The Kogolor Dwarves who inhabit this land are a stout and robust folk, hearty and gregarious. They dress in tunics dyed in bright colors, wearing coats to protect against the brisk mountain air. They wear doeskin shorts held up with suspenders, which they call *lederhosen* and top off the outfit with a short hat with a feather in it. Both men and women wear this outfit, which I find bizarre.

These are an outgoing, cheerful people, given to feasts and brewing and drinking beers, ales and mead. They embrace travelers as if they were long lost cousins, feting them, inviting them on hunts and encouraging them to regale the dwarves with tales of their journeys and exploits. The Kogolor Dwarves are good fighters, but unlike the Azcans or the Antalians, they are not obsessed with fighting. They live as loggers, craftsmen, trappers, herdsman and brewmeisters. The males govern, but they

allow their women to fight and own property.

They have a King, who rules from the capital of Kolmstat, but most matters are decided by town and clan leaders. About a quarter of the Kogolor live below ground, in caverns like the Icevale Elves, though with a different aesthetic sense. The rest live in orderly towns and villages above ground, pretty cottages set along hillocks and in mountain glades. These communities communicate with each other through a type of warbling song, which they call *yodeling* and can transmit messages very quickly across the mountains by this means.

Don't Miss

The Kogolor have one true city, the capital of Kolmstat. This is a city, small by Milenian or Nithian standards, but with a strong double-wall surrounding it and a multitude of stone buildings within it. It is built over a series of mountain springs, which the dwarves swim in and say are good for one's health. The ground below the city is riddled with caves and tunnels, so vast that they haven't all been explored. Where they might go, no one can say.

KRUGEL HORDE (Lands of the)

Location: Northeastern Iciria, west of the Ostzee, east of the Neathar lands, north of the World Spine Mountains, south of the Antalian Mountains. HW

Area: 428,163 sq. mi. (1,108,940 sq. km.).

Population: 300,000 scattered in numerous villages of 2,000 or less along the Great Mud and Yenidar Rivers, including Ubul (pop. 6,000).

Languages: Orcish (Krugel dialect).

Coinage: None; uses coins minted in other lands and barter.

Taxes: Military economy; exactions based on need.

Government Type: *Khanate* organized along military lines.

Industries: Light agriculture, horse breeding, raiding, mercenary warfare.

Important Figures: Geredek (General, male, orc, F20).

Flora and Fauna: Arid climate; cacti, ponies, bison, sheep, giant ants, basilisks, chimeras, cockatrices, dinosaurs, horses, giant lizards, manscorpions, manticores, giant scorpions, jackals, snakes.

Further Reading: *Hollow World* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Theukidikies the Historian of Corisa.

The Krugel Horde lives similar to the way of the Jennites, though they do build some towns along the muddy riverbanks in their blighted lands. They are a bestial, but disciplined people, thriving in their rugged environment.

The Land

The lands of these orcs are a scarred and blasted wasteland, more desolate than most of Nithia, fed by long and meandering rivers (the Great Mud and its tributaries), but these rivers are not as fertile as the single River Nithia. None the less, they do provide the lands with enough moisture to sustain life as the inhabitants live it; as pastoralists and in towns, rather than as farmers and in large cities.

Most of the lands are arid plains and scrub country, with a small desert (Izlirun) in the south and a larger one (the Desert of Boglucubul) in the northeast. The plains are home to scattered dinosaurs and small herds of bison, as well as scavengers such as hyenas. The drier regions are rocky rather than sandy, with broken rock formations and towering mesas, scoured by a hot breeze.

The People

Within these lands live the orcs of the Krugel Horde. They have sickly, yellowish-brown skin and heads shaped somewhat like those of the Brute-Men. The Krugel orcs,

both male and female, wear their dark hair long. They dress in leather garments over which they wear a rough cloth cloak that they call a *tabarko*. Topping off this somewhat ridiculous outfit is an equally outlandish hat, with a broad brim. This does have the advantage of keeping the sun out of one's eyes, however.

Like the Jennites to the far south, the Krugel orcs seem almost born in the saddle. They use a bow much like that of the Men of Jen, but their national weapon is a long spear or lance, used from horseback in a mass charge which can be quite fearsome. For the Krugel Horde is a militaristic kingdom, its people organized like a cavalry army. They maintain permanent towns, rather than being nomads like the Jennites and these towns are ordered like military encampments.

Like the Antalians, the Krugel enjoy nothing so much as raiding, though they do it exclusively by land on horseback, not by sea. They range throughout the region, raiding for wealth and for their livelihood. They have been known to range as far as the Azcan lands in these raids, but raid all the surrounding peoples with great frequency. They also hire themselves out as mercenaries in other people's wars, taking the opportunity to loot and pillage with wild abandon. Any intruder into their lands who does not come for the purpose of hiring mercenaries is set upon and attacked. Even their women behave in this fashion, knowing no proper circumspection. The Krugel Horde is governed by a strong king, who rules through chieftains who function as military officers. When the king shows any weakness, he is overthrown, killed and replaced at once by the strongest leader among the orcs.

KUBITT VALLEY

Location: Continent of Iciria, east of Traldar, north of Milenia. HW

Area: 500 sq. mi. (1,295 sq. km.).

Population: 5,000.

Languages: Alphatian (ancient dialect), Neathar, nixie and dryad.

Coinage: None (various acquired currencies and gems for hiring outside agents).

Taxes: None (collective society).

Government Type: Matriarchal monarchy.

Industries: Agriculture, foraging, military.

Important Figures: Zalmontis (Queen and General, kubitt, female, F13), Eraw (King, kubitt, male, F10), Zoranthi (Captain, kubitt, female, F6).

Flora and Fauna: Within the confines of the valley one will find an abundance of plant and wildlife typical of its terrain: foothills and tropical jungles. Animal life is compatible to the kubitts' lifestyle. For their size creatures such as birds and foxes are tamed and domesticated as beasts of burden. Predators do include various dinosaur types. The most notable predator is the thumper-lizard.

Further Reading: *Hollow World* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Dellebram.

The Kubitts' valley is a remote region, isolated from its neighbors. Knowledge of their existence has been a carefully guarded secret. Most neighbors aware of a people living in that area are under the perception of them being a giant race. However, as with every closely kept secret discovery was inevitable.

The Land

The domain of the kubitts is a lush tropical valley, surrounded by foothills. At the center of the valley is the sole settlement of the kubitts. Similar to a woodland elven settlement, the kubitts have built their buildings up in the branches of the ancient trees. Each tree may hold the homes of a score or more individuals. Each building and tree is connected with its fellows by a series of catwalks. The largest building within the tree village is the three-storied central hall.

From this vantage point, the kubitts can live with a certain degree of safety, its elevation keeping them out of reaches of even the most determined dinosaurs.

The People

The kubitts are a magically created race of diminutive persons, standing just under two feet in height. Despite their impish and nixie origins, they look like miniature "pure Alphatians." The kubitts are a warrior society, fully utilizing their surprising strength and leaping abilities. Despite their size, the kubitts have mostly mastered their environment and held it from interlopers. Their personal skills and mastery of traps and deception have led to the demise of many trespassers. The kubitts are matriarchal, following the edicts set by their warrior queen. This type of society was long ago established by the kubitts' Immortal patron, Vanya. Queen Zalmontis rules her people from the relatively massive central hall.

Recent History

Created by the Alphatian mage Korubazunth as his personal race of assassin and servants, the kubitts rebelled against their master and killed him. Under Alphatian law such an action would mean their death sentence. Fearful of this, the kubitts fled and with Vanya's assistance were transported to the Hollow World. There they used their Alphatian given talents to carve their niche in that world. Since the arrival of the Alphatians in the Hollow World, the kubitts have lived in a mixed state of fear and curiosity. Retribution for their past "crimes" and fascination with the culture that spawned them gave them reason to investigate their arrival.

In AY 2015 [*AC 1015. Ed.*] kubitt infiltrators were discovered and captured in the city of Haldemar, Alphatian Neatharum. Among them was Zoranthi, niece of the kubitts' ruler. Taken to the floating continent, Zoranthi and her compatriots were not executed—in fact, they were treated with a near celebrity status and

Zoranthi became a favorite of the empress. She has since spent the following months seeing as much of the land and people that created her people as she could.

Don't Miss / Do Miss

The kubitt enclave is in itself quite unremarkable. Its natural environs are not too dissimilar from other tropical regions on Hollow World. The main attraction is the kubitts themselves. However, given their secretive nature, observing them is one thing while surviving to tell the tale is another.

LIMN (Kingdom of)

Location: Ledge on the west central rim of the floating continent of Alphatia between the Kerothar Mountain Range and the precipice, south of Frisland and north of Stonewall. HW

Area: 9,977 sq. mi. (25,840 sq. km.).

Population: 225,000, including Trollhattan (pop. 30,000). [*Population figures are tentative, pending census. Ed.*]

Languages: Alphatian (Limn dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp). Limn mints no other coins but accepts all kinds of coins and other wealth as payment.

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher. Slaves are counted as the property of the owner and the product of their labor is taxed as income for the owner. An additional fee is charged to register monster variants created through experimentation. In order to encourage the kingdom to remain a haven for monsters, they have also imposed a surtax on "normal" beings (humans and demihumans) living here.

Government Type: Monarchy, member of the Alphatian Empire.

Industries: Magical experimentation (especially modification and creation of monsters).

Important Figures: Drushiye (King, elf, male, F9/M10), Mellora (Queen, dryad).

Flora and Fauna: See Alphatia.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperor* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Zweibelterm.

Limn is a truly interesting kingdom. Among an empire where most kingdoms can trace their existence back through the centuries, Limn is very young, second only to Stoutfellow in the lateness of its foundation, having existed for little more than a century. Another oddity is the kingdom's size. Limn is the smallest kingdom in area by far, no larger than some of the petty fiefdoms that barbarian nations are composed of. However, Limn does have a significant population, though it too is unusual. Limn's population is largely monstrous non-humans. They do, at least, cleave to the proper order of things in that their social system follows the Alphatian model, with the skilled (spellcasters) at the top and the untutored forming the servile classes. In other respects, the kingdom is quite exotic, with monster mores predominating (for example, when you visit, be sure to put on an imposing show of your power, lest you be molested by aggressive or bored monsters). Limn is surely an example of the diversity found in Alphatia but absent in more unenlightened places and everyone should visit it at least once to see its quaint culture, though as a person of taste I wouldn't recommend actually living among them.

MAKAI ISLANDS

Location: Equatorial waters of the Atlass Ocean, west of Iciria, south of the Merry Pirate Seas. HW

Area: 7,436 sq. mi. (19,260 sq. km.), including Makai Island, 6,075 sq. mi. (15,735 sq. km.).

Population: 11,000.

Languages: Neathar.

Coinage: None (barter only).

Taxes: None.

Government Type: Simple tribal monarchy.

Industries: Fishing, pearl-diving, hunting and gathering.

Important Figures: Kalakaua (King / Tribal Chief, human, male, F9).

Flora and Fauna: The jungle growth found here is typical to tropical rainforests, including bamboo. Fruits include coconuts, papaya, guava, pineapple, bananas and exotic nuts. Sugarcane, taro and sweet potatoes are cultivated. Flowers are abundant on the islands, with hibiscus and orchids being the most common. Reptiles (normal and giant) and birds are more common than mammals. Lizards—especially geckos, snakes and dinosaurs—can be found here. Tropical birds include parrots, macaws, flamingoes, sea birds, chickens and the *nene*, a type of goose. The only mammals found are small rodents, wild boars and dogs. The sea is rich with oysters and other shellfish and seaweed is plentiful, along with corals of all types. The corals attract many varieties of brilliantly colored fish. The seas also hold turtles, dolphins, whales, crabs (normal and giant), sea snakes, rays and sharks. Aquatic dinosaurs and other sea monsters plague the waters, as well.

Further Reading: *Hollow World* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Leadyl Feadiel.

After escaping from the Heldannic stronghold of Stonehaven, I ended up on these pleasant islands, which was a complete reversal from being in a cold stone cell! The friendly people were extremely kind to me and took me in without hesitation, although they were curious. I spent several years here, working on creating a new spell book, or at least enough of one to get by. It proved impossible to re-write some of the more difficult magics without access to the proper parchments, inks and other components. Needless to say, it is still a work in progress.

The Land

The Makai are a chain of volcanic islands, which are a virtual paradise! The main island is quite large, with a variety of terrains. From pristine beaches, to rainforest and hills, the island rises to become more mountainous and is crowned by Mt. Kilethani, an active volcano over 10,000' high. There are plenty of lesser islands, too, all with their own unique charm. It rains here on a daily basis (and in fact, this is how the natives keep track of time), but it is a comfortable rain and usually not a torrential downpour. The regular rain reminds me of my homeland of Alfheim, but this rain seems natural, not conjured by some mighty spell. Occasionally, storms, or even typhoons, will strike the islands, however.

The People

What a pleasant and wonderful people these are! The Makai are a primitive tribe, considered to be Neathar, although they are not anywhere nearly as warlike as those tribes. They are very peaceful but will fight if threatened. They are amorous and affectionate, displaying their feelings openly and without shame. Both men (or *kane*) and women (*wahine*), wear only breechclouts or skirts, without shirts, or even shoes. Flowers are used to decorate their persons, in their hair, or as necklaces, called *leis*. The people make their living off of the land and especially, the sea. They are skilled pearl divers and fishermen, using unusual canoes, called outriggers, to travel the waters. They also gather fruits and nuts from the forests and grow sweet potatoes and taro in small gardens. The root of the taro plant is used to make *poi*, one of their staples. Personal possessions amongst the Makai are few and those that they do have seem to be considered tribal property. Items are freely taken (borrowed or stolen) back and forth as needed or desired between tribesmen. And none of them mind at all. This free exchange of property is their natural way of things.

The Makai are ruled over by the *ali'i*, who are their royalty. They are similar to the chiefs found in other Neathar tribes. Many

Immortals seem to be followed by the islanders, but none too fervently. Most are aspects of nature; the dominant ones are Kanaloa (the sea), Pele (a fire goddess), Papa (goddess of love) and Korotiku (this was the only one which I recognized). Priests, called *kabuna*, lead the people in rituals and give them guidance in religious matters.

Recent History

The Makai are most certainly related to the Ierendi people of the same name. It would seem that these Makai migrated to the Hollow World long ago, rather than the other way around. Their *kabuna* and other elders recognized some elements of my stories of the surface (such as night and the moving sun) from their most ancient legends. Apparently they believe that the old world passed away, but that they were spared and brought to the Hollow World.

Don't Miss

These islands are a paradise and their people are kind and heart-warming. They welcome peaceful travelers with a great feast, or *luan*. The food, friendship and celebration at such a feast is to be greatly admired!

MALPHEGGI LIZARD MEN *(Tribelands of the)*

Location: Swamps of Malpheggi, north of the World Spine Mountains, west of the Neathar lands, southeast of the Azcan Empire, continent of Iciria. HW

Area: 48,497 sq. mi. (125,605 sq. km.).

Population: 10,000 in clans of about 100 each.

Languages: Malpheggi (Lizard Man).

Coinage: None (barter only).

Taxes: None really.

Government Type: Autonomous clans led by chiefs.

Industries: Hunting and gathering; mercenary warfare (scouting).

Important Figures: Kiuss (Clan Leader, male, lizard man, S9).

Flora and Fauna: Bog vegetation, giant beetles, giant centipedes, crocodiles, dinosaurs, green dragons, giant fish, leeches (normal and giant), piranhas, purple worms, rats, giant slugs, snakes, giant spiders, giant toads and giant weasels.

Further Reading: *Hollow World* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Theukidikies the Historian of Corisa.

The Malpheggi are a reptilian folk, dwelling in the bogs and wetlands east of the Azcan lands.

The Land

This is a vast boggy wetland southeast of the Azcan lands, fed by many rivers. These swamps are cut through with brooks and streams and spotted throughout with ponds and stagnant pools. Many lizards, from dinosaurs to the most common sentient inhabitants, make this land their home, as do swarms of vicious insects. Vine-laden, moss-coated trees grow here and the swamps themselves are grown over with tall grasses and fronds. These grow even in the streams, which are sluggish enough to make this possible. The underbrush grows so thick that one must constantly hack a path through it to make progress and the rivulets are not consistently deep or continuous enough to make for a good means of travel through the swamp, one must frequently portage one's raft or canoe. The very air here is heavy with water and oppressively warm.

The People

Within the swamps live lizard men, as only they seem to find them hospitable. They are an aquatic race and dwell in huts of wattle and mud. They are tall, with scaly skin and sharp teeth like a crocodile's and webbed feet and clawed hands. Most are a deep green in color, though some pale albinos are to be found among them. They wear no clothing, having no sense of shame or

decorum, but attach their belongings to them with baldrics and belts.

The lizard men are suspicious of outsiders and even each other, living in small tribes or clans with no authority over them all. They hold the swamp against all intruders, stalking them stealthily. Sometimes they do hire themselves out as mercenary scouts to the Azcans and Schattenalfen, however, so they are occasionally willing to listen to an offer or bribe. These are a crafty people, but a misguided and backward one, for among them the women rule over the men, who obey. They do, however, have a hatred for all things Nithian, so they cannot be all bad.

MERRY PIRATE SEAS

Location: Equatorial waters of the Atlass Ocean, due west of Iciria. HW

Area: 56,811 sq. mi. (147,140 sq. km.), including Island of Baraga, 24,942 sq. mi. (64,600 sq. km.).

Population: 100,000 (90% humans, 10% hin).

Languages: Neathar, Traldar, Thyatian (archaic dialect), Heldannic, various other languages.

Coinage: *The eight* (8 gp), *the triangle* (gp), *the tenth* (sp), *the hundredth* (cp). Various foreign coins also in wide use.

Taxes: Varies. Examples include port fees for visiting ships, duties, tariffs, excise tax on vessels, income tax, or sales tax. Some islands will have no taxes whatsoever.

Government Type: Anarchic plutocracy; autonomous cities ruled by the wealthiest pirates and ex-pirates.

Industries: Piracy, shipbuilding, fishing, some agriculture, rum production, management of sheep, goats and some cattle.

Important Figures: Necco the Black (Pirate-King of Baraga, human, male, F9), Handlebar Emilio (Pirate-King of Puerto Morillos and Captain of the Black Raven, human, male, F12), Carola the Grappler

(Captain of the Leap of Faith, human, female, T14).

Flora and Fauna: The islands are home to tropical birds, reptiles (including dinosaurs) and small mammals (especially rodents), plus feral versions of larger animals which have escaped captivity. Fruit trees, grasses, vines, ferns and agricultural grains and crops all grow on the islands. The fruits found on various islands include pineapple, mango, papaya and guava. Besides grain, sugar is the most common crop, but produce is also grown; coffee is found on some islands. The seas hold abundant fishing stocks, crabs, dolphins, whales, sharks, rays, aquatic dinosaurs and even the occasional dragon turtle.

Further Reading: *Hollow World* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Leadyl Feadiel.

I have been studying the Merry Pirate Seas for some time now, as this has been my home since I left the Makai. In fact, it was a pirate ship, the Lucky Lass, under the command of Captain R. Morgan, that brought me from those pleasant islands to the town of Floresque. The pirates are an interesting people and they have welcomed me, despite the fact that elves are only known to them through their legends. I plan on remaining for at least a few more months before continuing my journey through the Hollow World.

The Land

The Merry Pirate Seas, are not really a land at all, but are an equatorial region of the Atlass Ocean. Nevertheless, there are numerous islands here, which make up the far eastern end of the Anathy Archipelago. The archipelago is formed by the massive mountains of the World's Spine, which circles the entire Hollow World at the equator, entering the deeps of the sea. Many of the islands are quite large and the soil is good for growing crops or natural vegetation, which is abundant. However, in addition to the main islands, there are countless smaller islands scattered

throughout the seas. These smaller isles range from decent-sized islands that can support small settlements, to islets and even sandbars. The smaller islands are sometimes not even found on the best local charts. Of the greater islands, the largest is the Island of Baraga. Baraga is quite mountainous and the interior is very rugged and wild. Cool freshwater streams drain down from the mountains to the sea. The lower regions of Baraga are covered in jungle, or are cultivated land. Two pirate cities are located on this main island, Floresque and the city of Baraga, which is considered the capital of the Merry Pirate Seas. Floresque is an older town of about 5,000, while Baraga is a large, somewhat modern city, of 30,000 inhabitants.

The weather in this region is very pleasant, reminding me of Minrothad, back home. The constant red sun is not overbearing, though and cool sea breezes make it quite comfortable. In general, the skies are clear or dotted with a few fair weather clouds, but it is not uncommon for fierce storms to sweep the region. The waters themselves are clear and blue. Surprisingly, the seas to the north of the equator are warmer and more tropical than the waters right near the equator. The equatorial waters are cool, but not cold; they also tend to be rich with fish. The warm tropical waters are crystal-clear and are home to a myriad of brilliantly-colored fishes, especially near coral reefs or atolls. I was able to study one of these reefs with the aid of a *water breathing* spell—quite amazing!

The People

The Merry Pirates are a mixed people, descending from a variety of ethnicities. There are humans of ancient Traldar descent, Thyatians, Ostlanders and Ierendis, plus people from other surface world and hollow world regions. An eclectic mix, indeed! These humans have, for the most part, intermixed over the centuries and blended together. However, there are ethnic minorities that remain distinct, such as the buccaneers of Puerto Morillos (Savage Coast descent) or the darker-skinned pirates of

Kota-Jayang (from a region of which I have never heard). There is also a sizable hin minority, also believed to have originated from the Ierendi Isles. The method of these peoples' migration to the Hollow World eludes me, but there can be little doubt that they originated on the surface of Mystara. The version of Thyatian spoken here is an ancient dialect, but it is Thyatian, none the same. Some speak it with a distinctive Ierendi accent. The hin speak this accented tongue and know little, if any, of the Lalor language commonly used in Norwold. The pirates also speak Neathar, which seems to be the "common tongue" of the Hollow World. Walking through a Merry Pirate city can be a lesson in human architectural history. Dwellings range from crude huts, to fine homes made of wood or brick. The more modern styles are the most common, however.

The thing that binds the peoples of the Merry Pirate Seas together, is piracy itself. Piracy is the dominant industry and the dominant cultural trait of this region. Pirates are nobility here and their exploits and raids on foreign lands are celebrated like in no other. And celebrate, they do! Taverns and alehouses are filled with boisterous, hard-drinking pirates, all attempting to outdo each other in one way or another. Whether it is who can drink the most, sing the best song, or attract the prettiest girl, everything the pirates do is a competition. And they have fun doing it. Indeed, they do not call them the Merry Pirates for nothing. Mostly, the pirates are men, as a lot of captains have superstitions about women at sea. But, there are women who overcome this bias to join a pirate crew, or even to command their own ship. These are a most individualistic and chaotic people. None of them will even dress alike, there being no clan symbol or insignia to bind them together. Each one dresses in strikingly colorful tunics, sashes, trousers and the like. Footwear ranges from slippers, to high boots and they wear their hair in every way imaginable! Everything is a matter of personal choice. Needless to say, some pretty outlandish costumes can be found here.

The pirate individualism is apparent on board their ships, as well. Although the captain is the commander of the ship, many decisions are made by taking a vote, rather than through direct orders. In fact, many captains are elected by their crews, much like it is done for various offices back in Darokin. The most successful and well-liked captains sail under the same crew for many years (or circles, as they say down here), but others are voted out (or worse) if they fail to produce booty. Despite this trend, there are other captains who command in the more traditional manner, or even through sheer terror. This, like everything else in these waters, varies greatly from ship to ship. Each ship has a set of articles, or laws, which outline the rights and responsibilities of each pirate, including the captain. Pirates sign a ship's articles and swear an oath to uphold them when they join a ship's crew. These oaths are taken very seriously by the pirates and those who break them are dealt with harshly. I will not elaborate on the many varieties of punishments here, but pirates who break their oaths are quite often put to death. This sense of honor extends throughout the Merry Pirate culture and is applied to many other aspects of life in the seas. All sorts of agreements and contracts, both written and spoken, are used by pirates and landlubbers alike, before business transactions are conducted. The lack of official laws or strong central authority make this necessary, I believe.

Each Merry Pirate city is its own independent state, ruled by a pirate king, or a council of such kings. These kings wield power through the wealth and influence amassed over their careers of piracy. However, although called kings, they are not royalty in the same sense as the king of Alfheim is, for example. Instead, they use their vast fortunes to control those around them, put down their enemies and live lives of decadence. Very little "ruling" of the common people is done, nor is it needed; pirates and landlubbers take care of themselves and their own. Coin flows freely between individuals, with little interference from the "government." I admire freedom,

but the lack of controls here can accurately be described as anarchy.

The pirates take to the seas in a variety of vessels. Sometimes galleys or even longships are used, but sailed ships, based on Ierendi designs of several centuries past, are by far the most common. Some pirates prefer fast, lightly-armed cutters or sloops, with one mast. Others choose to sail three-masted frigates or barquentines ("barqs"), which can still out-sail a galley while bringing much more artillery to bear. The brigantine, or "brig," is a two-masted vessel which blends maneuverability with a mid-sized battery of artillery and an adequate cargo hold. Individual modifications and custom designs of these basic ship types are common.

On-board ship, pirates wear little or no armor and only officers carry weapons larger than daggers. Before engaging an enemy target, all pirates will don full weapons. Favored weapons include the cutlass, rapier, boarding axe, club and crossbow. There are mages among the Merry Pirates and it is rumored that some may have *wands of fireballs* and knowledge of artillery spells, but I have not witnessed this myself. I have not seen these magics cast anywhere else in the Hollow World, ever since my own spell book was stolen from me when I was captured by the Heldannic Knights.

Recent History

There are few historians among the Merry Pirates, which has made it more difficult for me to determine their actual history. As I mentioned previously, the various ethnic groups which make up the pirates have somehow emigrated or been brought to the Hollow World from the surface. The oldest traditions of the Traldar tell of the "old world's" destruction and the other groups also have distorted views of history. There are elements of various legends and tales, especially among the longer-lived hin, that strongly point to outer world origins, perhaps even involving Immortal intervention.

In any event, since arriving in the Hollow World, the pirates have enthusiastically taken

to their home. They have made enemies of their neighbors with their constant raiding. The Milenians, Azcans, Traldar and Schattenalfen all count the Merry Pirates as their enemies. Only the friendly Makai, with whom the pirates frolic and feast, welcome them as friends.

Don't Miss

Baraga, the "capital" of the Merry Pirate Seas, is the most modern city I have seen in the Hollow World. The crafty, old pirate, Necco the Black, controls this hub of pirate culture. The city is walled and defended by various artillery devices and the harbor entrance is also protected by sharpened spikes. Ships enter and leave Baraga each sleep. Pirates return from their exploits with treasure to be spent and goods to be sold. The most expensive and luxurious entertainments are found here, along with plenty of the more affordable taverns and sailor's watering holes. Food, clothing and other wares from all over the Atlass Ocean can be bought in Baraga. Pirates indulge in all sorts of self-gratification and debauchery in this town. The music and drinking never cease, all through the never-ending day. Women dressed in scant attire await arriving ships and seek out the most successful and wealthy pirates. Such practices are not frowned upon and are even encouraged! This is certainly not Alfheim!

Do Miss

Sharkfin Sea lies between Puerto Morillos and Kota-Jayang. This is not the place for a swim, as the waters are infested with ravenous sharks. Pirates greatly fear shipwrecks or falling overboard here.

Another place to be avoided are the islands to the north-west of Kota-Jayang, where it is rumored that the fearsome *karakara*, or "orcs of the sea," make their abode.

MILENIA (*Empire of*)

Location: Southwestern coast of the continent of Iciria, east of the Southern Atlass Ocean, north of Lake Agrisa, south of

the River Silvius, west of the Jennite lands.
HW

Area: 400,450 sq. mi. (1,037,165 sq. km.).

Population: 3,000,000 including Corisa (pop. 250,000), Demtor (pop. 75,000), Dophius (pop. 50,000), Emperor's Walk (pop. 30,000), Laroun (pop. 100,000), Tyrnus (pop. 150,000) and numerous towns and villages.

Languages: Milenian (distantly related to Traldar).

Coinage: *Platinum emperor* (50 gp), *gold emperor* (10 gp), *silver emperor* (1 gp), *copper emperor* (1 sp), *platinum medallion* (5 gp), *gold medallion* (gp), *silver medallion* (sp), *copper medallion* (cp).

Taxes: 20% income tax, 10% tariff on all goods except food and clothing.

Government Type: Imperial republic; elected senators select emperors for life but no hereditary rule.

Industries: Agriculture, crafts, mining, herding (cattle, sheep, goats), horsebreeding, textiles (wool and linen), fishing, shipbuilding.

Important Figures: Adronius (Emperor, human, male, normal man), Amnethon of Corisa (High Magus, human, male, M20), Dagos of Xarda (Lord High Priest, human, male, Pr18 of Halav), Helentia (Lady High Priest, human, female, Pr17 of Petra), Myrina (Empress, human, female, Pr18 of Matera), Pythion of Dophius ("King" of Milenia, human, male, M12), Krameos of Tyrnus (Senator, human, male, F7), Strabos (Slave and Leader of the Kleonites, human, male, Pr10 of Koryis), Tythus (Lord High General, human, male, F18).

Flora and Fauna: Aerial servants, Amorian hounds, Agrisian jellyfish, shaggy aurochs, Zargosian bats, Zargosian changelings, goats, ponies, sheep, basilisks, brown bears, giant beetles, boars, centaurs, chimeras, cockatrices, dragons, dryads, ghouls, cloud giants, storm giants, mountain giants, cyclopskin, griffons, hags, harpies, hell hounds, hippogriffs, hobgoblins, hydras, lions, manticores, medusae, minotaurs, ogres, owlbears, pegasi, skeletons, snakes,

sphinxes, giant spiders, stirges, treants, trolls, unicorns, wolves, wyverns and zombies.

Further Reading: *Hollow World* boxed set, HWR3 *The Milenian Empire*, previous almanacs.

Description by Theukidikies the Historian of Corisa.

The people of Milenia have created a vast and powerful empire holding the lands between the Atlas Ocean and the Sea of Yr. Milenia is a center of civilization, art, scholarship and learning, a land revering the Immortals but not in thrall to Them.

The Land

The area inhabited by the Milenians ranges along the coastal areas of the Southern Atlas Ocean, from jungles in the north along the Silvius River to the hills and mountains in the south along Lake Agrisa. Almost any type of terrain can be found within this region, save for deserts, but most of the land are plains tilled as agricultural lands by Milenian farmers and slaves. The Milenian Empire is bordered on the north by the southern spurs of the Twa Mountains, in the south by the Emperor's Rampart and to the east by the Bahl Masiv, though the empire is making a strong push to conquer all the way to the rich lands around the Dagol River. The dinosaurs that are found elsewhere throughout the Hollow World are almost entirely absent from Milenia, due to the diligent efforts of the imperial forces to keep them from rampaging through these lands.

Instead, the countryside is dotted with cities, towns, monuments and estates. All Milenian communities are protected against barbarian raids with strong stone walls. The common dwellings are of whitewashed mud brick or wood, with tiled or shingled roofs. The more impressive villas and palaces are of marble-dressed stone, with glorious columns and statuary. Paved plazas and agoras serve as markets and meeting places, where political and philosophical matters are discussed.

Most of these communities are built along the shores of the Atlas Ocean, or in the Gulf of Corisa and on the banks of the rivers that run through Milenia, especially the Dophius River. To the north of this river are the broad Plains of Argos, some of the richest growing lands in Milenia. The river runs out of the large, fog-bound Lake Agrisa. The waters of Lake Agrisa are unusually warm, which causes the fog when the water touches the cold air of the region. Aquatic dinosaurs do swim in the lake, which has also been known to have many unusual disappearances.

Around the northern shores of the lake, the area that is controlled by Milenia, are many forests and hills, including the Great Woods of Drosonai and the Hills of Bachaea. These are given over to pastoralists, herding sheep and cattle and to hunters. Downstream along the Dophius River, where it empties into the Gulf of Corisa, lies Milenia's greatest city and imperial capital. In the lands around this metropolis there are many temples, shrines, monuments and estates. The Pelaian Road runs south to Pelai, bracketed on both sides by rich farms, gradually giving way to the Forest of Pyos to the west and the Forest of Isopydos to the east. The city of Pelai sits on a plain between the Emperor's Rampart Mountains and the Strait of Agoras. Just across the straits is the Island of Amora, which has likewise been conquered and settled by the Milenian people.

The People

The inhabitants of Milenia are a cultured, civilized folk, with olive complexions and usually brown hair and eyes, though some are blond or redheaded and some few have blue eyes. Milenians keep fit and trim through regular exercise, which is popular throughout the empire. This keeps not only their bodies but their minds fit and healthy as well. As a result, athletic competitions are very popular in Milenia, held regularly in most cities. Milenian men wear their hair short and prefer beards over being shaven like Nithian barbarians, while Milenian

women wear their hair long, but up in curls and coils atop their heads rather than unkempt down their backs. The men prefer crisp tunics decorated with dyed motifs, as best as they can afford, while women wear gowns of fine linen, the finer the better if their husbands or fathers are able to afford it.

In Milenia, the men rule while the women are demure and circumspect, keeping to the house and hearth. Women may not own land and do not practice the arts of war or politics, though some become respected clerics and midwives. They do not fight as the over-bold women of other nations sometimes do, though there are some impertinent women who try to break these well-founded customs.

Milenians, alone of all peoples, have given much thought to philosophical matters and as a result have created a highly evolved civilization, where scholarship is respected and the arts (from statuary and painting to theater) have reached their highest peak of achievement. As a result of our philosophers and the wisdom they have produced, we have created a singular civilization with a highly evolved political process. At the bottom are the slaves, including enslaved Milenians but also Jennites, Tanagoro, Traldar and Nithians captured in war. But these are not slain like the Jennites do with their captives, or sacrificed as the Azcans do. Though they are expected to serve their masters loyally, they are accorded protection in the law, to prevent abuse. The Milenians do not permit them to be maimed or slain without cause and are allowed to have some belongings of their own. Some slaves are quite learned and are used to tutor children or even adults. Others are entrusted with important tasks. But most, including almost all the outlander slaves, are menial workers, on farm estates or, worst of all, in mines.

Above the slaves are the common Milenians, those who do not own land but who might aspire to. These are free men, the backbone of the empire. They do not vote as they are not citizens, but they serve the empire in its armies and as taxpayers. They hire themselves out as laborers or craftsmen

on farms and in businesses and are the majority of Milenians and are not bound to any master as such and can become citizens simply by purchasing property. Some suggest that they should be given citizenship as a body, making even non-property holders citizens, but I do not think this is either necessary or wise.

This is because all those Milenians who own or buy land become citizens, thus giving them a distinction and, even more importantly, a direct stake in the empire as they own part of it. This is a class unlike that of any other nation within the Hollow World, for here the enlightenment of Milenian philosophy shines forth. Citizens participate in political affairs, standing for office and voting for candidates. This means that we do not have an aristocracy based on blood or birth, but rather are able to select the most capable people to run the empire. By this means the leaders of the cities are selected and the senators of the empire are elected. Those senators in turn elect the emperor and pass laws. The emperor decides the policies of the Milenian people, under the advice of the senate. Thus we have a nation where the people (*demos*) rule, though the portion who are directly involved in these political matters are only a segment of the Milenian people, we see how different this is from how the Nithians or Azcans decide things. The empire of the Milenians is not ant-like, as the Azcans are, or bound by mystical superstition as the Nithians are.

Don't Miss

The Acropolis in the city of Corisa, an elevated mound surmounted by glorious temples and statuary depicting the Immortals.

NEATHAR (Thousand Tribes of the)

Location: Northern hemisphere of the continent of Iciria, north of the World Spine Mountains, south of the Icevale Mountains,

between the Krugel Horde and the Azcan Empire. HW

Area: 712,219 sq. mi. (1,844,645 sq. km.).

Population: 3,000,000 in about three thousand tribes averaging 1,000 members each.

Languages: Neathar.

Coinage: None; barter only.

Taxes: None really (ad hoc tribal levies based on need).

Government Type: Autonomous tribes governed by chiefs with monarchical authority.

Industries: Hunting and gathering.

Important Figures: Zorok (Toralai Chieftain, human, male, T13).

Flora and Fauna: As a predominantly jungle region, the Neathar lands see an abundance of conventional native plant and animal life. Without a consolidated government to provide security, hostile creatures are also in abundance. Cave bears, giant insects, boars, great cats, giant lizards, dinosaurs, crocodiles, leopards, tigers, smilodons, giant leeches, lizard men, snakes, giant spiders, troglodytes, wolves and humanoids can be readily found.

Further Reading: *Hollow World* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Theukidikies the Historian of Corisa.

The Neathar consist of thousands of small tribal bands living as rustics in the woodlands and glades of northern Iciria, in a wide band between the Azcans in the west and the Krugel Horde in the east.

The Land

The lands inhabited by the Neathar tribes are the broadest of lands, larger than the Azcan, Nithian, or even Milenian Empires in size. But the tribes are fragmented and disunited, forming not one nation but many hundreds or even thousands of independent tribes. These tribes live in all types of terrains, except coastal lands and deserts. Most of it is jungle lands, but there are large

areas of plains, mountain valleys and hill country within this band of territory. Several noteworthy rivers run through these lands as well, from a branch of the Great Mud River in the east to the Nogai River in the west. These are well-watered lands, thick with vegetation even in the plains. These lands are also among the thickest with dinosaurs and other monstrosities as well, which hunt and are hunted by the Neathar.

The People

The Neathar are savages, living in tribes of a few hundred to a few thousand members. They do not build large settlements and live instead in small villages of thatch huts. The Neathar are a tan people, with blond, red, or brown hair and usually with brown eyes. The men cut their hair short and usually go bearded, though some wear mustaches; the women wear their hair long. The Neathar dress in rough garments fashioned out of animal skin, the men dressing in loincloths and the women in skirts and vests. Married women wear earrings, while single women do not.

The Neathar live as hunters and gatherers, little more advanced than the Brute-Men. Each Neathar tribe has its territory, where it dwells and hunts and fights neighboring tribes for access to prime hunting or lush gathering lands. The Neathar are a warrior people, venerating the hunter and fighter and, like the Azcans, a boy is not considered a man until he has scored a victory over an enemy. Indeed, one such means is also used to gain a spouse, as the custom of kidnapping a mate from a nearby tribe is found among all the Neathar and is considered a particularly great achievement. The Neathar do not value scholarship much and have no written language. Like the Neathar people, their language, shared among all the tribes, is simple and easy to learn. Possibly because of this, their language is widely used throughout the continent for communications between people of different nations.

The Neathar tribes are governed by chiefs, who are almost always men, though there

are some exotic tribes where the women rule and still others where leadership is shared by a married couple. Each village also has tribal priests and the Neathar venerate many Immortals. The ones most commonly worshipped seem to be the same ones found among the Antalians, however, which I guess is appropriate considering the two peoples share many of the same warrior outlooks on life.

NEATHARUM (Kingdom of, a.k.a. Alphatian Neatharum)

Location: Continent of Iciria, west of the Gentle Folk, amid the Neathar lands. HW

Area: 95,609 sq. mi. (247,627 sq. km.).

Population: 33,000: 11,000 Alphatians (including 500 gnomes and 500 dwarves) and 22,000 Neathar (Nogai tribe).

Languages: Alphatian (Randellyn dialect, official and Alatian dialect), Neathar.

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher.

Government Type: Semiautonomous monarchy, member of the Alphatian Empire (presently under imperial governor administration).

Industries: Military, raiding, agriculture.

Important Figures: Trikard (Governor, human, male, C17).

Flora and Fauna: As with most jungle environs in the Hollow World, Neatharum is covered with plants and animals native to tropical regions. Dinosaurs were once in abundance in this area; however, most have been hunted or pushed out into the more remote areas of the kingdom.

Further Reading: *Hollow World* boxed set, *Wrath of the Immortals* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Dellebram.

Neatharum is part of the Alphatian Empire in the Hollow World. Had it not

been geographically separated, it would have been included in the section detailing the other Alphatian kingdoms. In comparison to other Alphatian kingdoms Neatharum is rather backward. Regardless, it is an Alphatian kingdom and the empire's toehold on the terrain below.

The Land

Neatharum is a jungle region on the continent of Iciria. The Alphatian presence has altered the region very little—the Alphatians have only razed certain areas to make room for the capital of Haldemar, the mining town of Dogrel and a scattering of small farming communities. Though much jungle remains, the wilderness is far less threatening than before. Alphatian troops, mages and adventurers have all contributed to eradicate any threats from the dinosaurs that once were abundant in the area.

The kingdom is ruled from the capital city of Haldemar. Little more than a town, the capital now boasts stone defensive battlements. Haldemar is the bastion for the kingdom's armed forces. Aside from its regular troops and garrison forces, the capital hosts a complement of fifteen *skyships* and their crews. The majority of the kingdom's Alphatian and demihuman populace lives within the capital, safely within its defenses.

The People

As its name denotes, Alphatian Neatharum, is made up of two primary peoples. The ruling elite are of course the Alphatians. These Alphatians are troops and colonists sent by Empress Eriadna to subdue the locals and settle the lands. They are very militaristic, a tendency held over from the early days of conquest and nurtured by their maintaining control of the area. They are unique from their counterparts on the floating continent in that they know of Alphatia's true history; for this reason, the Alphatians of Neatharum are kept away from the general populace of Alphatia.

The kingdom also boasts a gnomish and dwarven minority. Previously they had been part of the crews that had created and maintained The Pit, which allowed easier travel between the two worlds. When that shaft was compromised, many were stranded in the Hollow World. These demihumans are often considered part of the Alphatian elite—though not spellcasters (and for some of them, not even Alphatians, but from the flying city of Serraine), their higher intellect and craftsman skills have earned them that right.

Prior to the arrival of the Alphatians, Neatharum had been home to the Nogai tribesmen. Quickly subdued by the Alphatians, the Nogai have since seen their position within Neatharum vary. At first they were enslaved and toiled to the whim of their occupiers. With Alphatia's rebirth in the Hollow World, Empress Eriadna gave them their freedom back. Though free, the Nogai are little more than what they were before the Alphatians arrived—the Spell of Preservation has kept them from adopting the more sophisticated lifestyles of the Alphatians.

Recent History

In AY 1965 [*AC 965. Ed.*] Prince Haldemar of Haaken discovered the way of passage into the Hollow World. Manipulations enacted by the dragon Synn sent Haldemar 35 years into the future. Regardless, he reported his findings, including the presence of Heldannic Knights, to Empress Eriadna. The empress initiated means to assert an Alphatian presence in the Hollow World. With The Pit on Aegos completed, the emerging Alphatians began establishing themselves in the Hollow World. They began subduing the native Neathar, meeting the Heldannic forces and colonizing the occupied regions.

During the Great War, The Pit collapsed and contact with the Alphatian Empire was severed. Under the military rule of General Dogrel the colonists expanded their holdings, enslaved tribesmen and stabilized their place in Hollow World. Until Alphatia's

rebirth in AY 2010 [*AC 1010. Ed.*] Neatharum was alone in a hostile environment. With the rebirth came proclamations from the imperial throne: the Nogai slaves were freed and future Neatharum expansions forbidden. Dogrel struggled at these restrictions, often ignoring them. This led to his removal as King of Neatharum and his being replaced by Governoress Ezreilla in AY 2015 [*AC 1015. Ed.*]. Dogrel has since been given a commission in the imperial armed forces back on the floating continent.

Under Ezreilla's administration, Neatharum has continued its existence. Peace with neighboring Neathar and coexistence with the Nogai are her crowning achievements and goals. Earlier deficiencies within the Neathar armed forces have been remedied by the appointment of Commander Trikard to oversee the kingdom's military needs. Trikard has since replaced Ezreilla as governor, though he has announced his intention to step down and be replaced by a suitable king or queen.

Don't Miss / Do Miss

There really isn't a great deal of attractions in Neatharum. The local Neathar are uncouth barbarians and the Alphatians there are lacking the refinements of the Alphatian Continent. As with any jungle the climate is hot and humid, so visitors are encouraged to dress lightly for their own comfort. One could find the varieties of dinosaurs interesting and worthy game. But there are few left within Neatharum and those that remain are in the far reaches of the kingdom. One could find amazement in the jungles, as their expansiveness is sure to hold some remarkable traits worth seeing. However, like the dinosaurs one will have to go out looking for them.

NITHIA (Empire of)

Location: Southeastern Icaria, west of the Bay of Adoth, north of the Great Southern Shield Mountains, south of Lake Menkor,

east of the Plains of Teuz along the River Nithia. HW

Area: 687,277 sq. mi. (1,780,045 sq. km.).

Population: 4,000,000 including Tarthis (pop. 350,000), Dashur (pop. 100,000), Hapta (pop. 75,000), Menkara (pop. 200,000), Ranak (pop. 45,000) and numerous towns and villages.

Languages: Nithian, Neathar.

Coinage: *Eye* (gp), *hawk* (sp), *beetle* (cp).

Taxes: Additional corvée labor in the flood season for monument building.

Government Type: Imperial theocratic monarchy (all *pharaohs* must be clerics).

Industries: Agriculture (rich along the Nithia River), textiles (linen), mining (gold).

Important Figures: Ramose IV (*Pharaoh*, human, male, Pr16 of Rathanos), Al-Belak (Southern King, human, male, T12), Djemun (*Nomarch* of Menkara, human, female, T15), Al Fatmah Nikita-Ahmed (Vizier of Internal Security, human, female, F18), Khnemet-urt (Delta King, human, male, Pr9 of Pflarr), Permon (Priest and Vizier human, male, C8, the only non-specialty priest in Rathanos's clergy).

Flora and Fauna: Among the many monsters and animals are oxen, horses, sheep, goats, giant ants, rock baboons, bandits, giant (scarab) beetles, camels, carrion crawlers, lions, dragons, efreet, gargantua, gargoyles, gelatinous cubes, ghouls, gnolls, lichs, giant lizards, manscorpions, mummies, purple worms, rats, rocs, flame salamanders, scorpions, skeletons, snakes, sphinxes, living statues, stirges and zombies.

Further Reading: *Hollow World* boxed set, HWR2 *Kingdom of Nithia*, previous almanacs.

Description by Theukidikies the Historian of Corisa.

The Nithians are a city-building folk, a nation of teeming peasants tilling fields along the length of the River Nithia, serving their *pharaoh* and his priests, rulers of unlimited authority. It is a land where superstition, not philosophy, rules.

The Land

The Nithian *Pharaoh*, in his arrogance and temerity, claims all the land he or his representatives can see, but we will discuss not these spurious claims but only the actual territory occupied by the Nithians.

This whole land is hot and arid. Therefore, almost all Nithians live along the banks of the river of the same name. This river runs out of the Great Southern Shield Mountains, winding its way north for over a thousand miles until it empties into Lake Menkor. The Kingdom of Nithia is the gift of the River Nithia, as were it not for this river and the fertility it brings to the valley, the kingdom would be as dry and inhospitable as the wastelands to either side of it. Irrigation canals are dug out from the river by the Nithians on either bank, making it possible for them to water their crops.

But the river, which floods twice a year and thus waters the lands along its bank, makes settlement here possible. The Nithians till the lands made rich and fertile by the river and build large cities along its length. The northern part of Nithia, where the river broadens out into a delta, is a region of broader fertility still, fed by rains sweeping off of Lake Menkor. Here are not only farmlands, but also lands for herdsmen and shepherds as well. This area forms the Delta Kingdom of Nithia, while the region upriver along the banks of the river forms the Southern Kingdom of Nithia.

To each side of the area made fertile by the River Nithia are wastelands and deserts, where the cruel wind blows hot and dry, but in many areas flat and hard-baked, allowing the Nithians to range across them in their chariots. The wind scours the sand and sometimes, eerily, seems to sculpt it into fantastic shapes, like beings or creatures, which it is said that some of the Nithian adepts can manipulate as golems.

In this region also there are, however, vast badlands full of rocky, broken terrain and blighted box canyons with walls of clay and rock, where mesa-like rock formations seem to rise in the shape of a natural pyramid. Many wealthy Nithians have their tombs

built out in these regions and tomb robbers and other bandits are a danger to the unwary here.

In the east this country eventually ends at the mountains known as Pflarr's Wall, while in the west it gradually becomes less arid, until the steppes and plains of the Jennites are reached.

The People

The Nithians are a short, dusky-skinned people with dark hair and eyes. The men cut their hair short and are beardless, while the women wear their hair long, but often they wear elaborate wigs. Most men wear nothing but a loincloth or skirt-like garment, while the women wear linen dresses. Some palace slaves of both sexes are dressed in nothing but a belt. Wealthy Nithians also wear garments of fine cotton or linen, often very sheer and transparent, or dyed in bright colors.

Nithia is ruled by an absolute ruler, who is called *pharaoh*, whom the Nithians obey as if he were an Immortal, which he claims to be. Under him are two kings, one administering the Delta Kingdom and the other the Southern Kingdom. All Nithians live to serve their Immortals and their *pharaoh*, whom are considered one and the same and are ruled through a vast bureaucracy of priest-scribes and noble functionaries known as *nomarchs*, all of whom ultimately obey the wishes of the *pharaoh*. Thus the Nithians are governed almost as minutely as the *Azcans* and all life in Nithia centers around the *pharaoh* and his religious apparatus, the priesthood of the Nithian Immortals. Even Nithian artists work in groups and seem to have no individuality themselves, but work collectively and produce objects, venerating their *pharaoh* or the Immortals, which look like they were made by one person.

Under the rule of this administration are the Nithian people, their commoner landowners, the peasants who are bound to the land they work or the business they serve and the slaves. The slaves are divided into two categories, one being war prisoners and captives, who as non-Nithians are

considered barely human. The other are the hereditary slaves, which may be house servants and are treated better than the captive slaves.

Average Nithians live in flat-roofed, one-story houses made of sun-baked clay or rough stone coated in hardened mud. They are designed to let breezes through, which keeps the house from being too hot but which also blows dust throughout the structure. Thus, during windy seasons, Nithians prefer to sleep on the roof of their house, under a covering to shield them from the sun, rather than in the house itself. Most of these houses are sparsely furnished and only the wealthy have tables or chairs, most people making do with reed mats or benches made out of rock or hardened mud. But almost every home has at least one chest in which the people can store their belongings.

The wealthier Nithians have access to various household magics, which keep them in comfort but can also make them soft and indolent, as they are served by not only slaves but have common tasks done for them by magic rather than by diligence.

The Nithians have several cities, but there is no civic life as the Milenians know it, with politics and policy discussed among the people. Instead, the cities of the Nithians revolve around the temples of their Immortals and upon constructing huge monuments to them and their *pharaohs*. Nithia abounds in monuments of all types, which are quite wondrous to behold. These range from the palaces of the *pharaoh*, the kings, the *nomarchs* and prominent priests, to the famous pyramids. Obelisks and huge statues are also commonplace and Nithian society seems dedicated to creating these impressive monuments. Work on them is usually done during the flood seasons, when the river is high, so the farmers, who are not working their lands then, can be directed by the *pharaoh's* ministers to move stone and work on these structures. Large barges, including *hover barges*, are also used to move stone up and down river for this purpose. Nithia rivals Milenia in the number of its monuments and artistic buildings and outdoes Milenia in the sheer scale of these

projects, though I believe Milenia has more artistic refinement and realism in its own and more individuality is expressed in Milenian art and architecture.

OLTECS (Kingdom of the)

Location: North central World Spine Mountains, continent of Iciria, south of the Neathar lands, west of the Kogolor dwarves, east of the Schattentalen. HW

Area: 110,851 sq. mi. (287,105 sq. km.).

Population: 500,000 including Manac (pop. 25,000) and several other towns.

Languages: Oltec, Neathar.

Coinage: None (barter only).

Taxes: Levies in kind of goods and corvée labor.

Government Type: Loose monarchy with heavy theocratic influence.

Industries: Agriculture (especially corn), herding (sheep, goats).

Important Figures: Monpac the Sunwatcher (King, human, male, Pr14 of Oztzitiotl).

Flora and Fauna: Mountain vegetation, aspen and evergreens, underbrush of various kinds, black bears, panthers, smilodons, dinosaurs, hill giants, giant lizards, mountain giants, ogres, pterosaurs, snakes, stirges and yeti.

Further Reading: *Hollow World* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Theukidikies the Historian of Corisa.

The Oltecs are a people living in mountaintop communities, of superficial aspect they are similar to the Azcans, but their culture is unique.

The Land

The Oltecs live in the forested foothills of the World Spine Mountains, just south of the jungles of the Neathar. The Manac River runs through the heart of the Oltec lands and the capital of the Oltecs, a city of the

same name, is built on hills overlooking this river. These hills are rich in gold and copper and this provides the Oltecs with a means of trading with the Kogolor dwarves, with whom they exchange copper for tin, so that they can forge bronze.

The Oltecs have carved their hillsides into ledges and steps upon which they plant their crops. This style of agriculture is unique to the Oltecs, but it is also uniquely suited for this hilly region. The hills here, like those of the Kogolor dwarves and the Schattentalen, are riddled with caves and caverns going deep into the earth. There are also many canyons and crevasses where the Oltecs can find safety from rampaging dinosaurs.

The Oltecs have marked their territories with huge heads of carved stone. These they place around their cities and towns, which are always built on hilltops as Acropolis. They build walls all around their cities and villages, made of rough, squarish stone, shaped and fitted together so that they stand without needing mortar and indeed they are fitted so carefully and precisely that one cannot slip a knife-blade between them. Outside the walls deep ditches are dug and lookout towers are constructed to overlook the valleys below, as the Oltecs have to be constantly vigilant against the attacks of their enemies, the Azcans and the Schattentalen.

The People

The Oltecs look a lot like the Azcans, being a copper-skinned people with dark hair and eyes. Both men and women wear their hair long, the men binding it with decorated headbands while the women wear it in ponytails or bind it up with combs. The Oltecs wear shift-like tunics, often belted, of dull tan (though the wealthier sometimes dye it in brighter colors).

Indeed, the Oltec language is akin to the Azcan language, as if they were once one people, though the Oltecs' dialect is less harsh-sounding to the ear. But other than these similarities, the Oltecs are a very different people from the Azcans. They worship the Immortals Oztzitiotl, the Sun-Prince and Kalaktatla, the Amber Serpent,

rather than the Immortals of the Azcans. They have a king, who is called The Oltec, but he does not govern as ruthlessly over the Oltec people as the Azcan ruler does, but rather governs them in a light manner, more akin to how the king of the Kogolor dwarves rules. A hereditary prince, who likewise rules leniently, governs each Oltec town and village. Oltec warriors are skilled, but their nation is not a militarized one like that of the Azcans and they are not interested in conquering their neighbors. Indeed, the Oltecs greet visitors in a peaceable and friendly manner. The Oltecs are a simple people, who enjoy dancing and storytelling but aren't sophisticated in theater and music. It is indeed a tranquil, but somewhat boring land, unless you find the occasional Azcan or Schattentalen raid exciting.

RANDEL (Kingdom of)

Location: Broad plain on the southeastern rim of the floating continent of Alphatia, north of Eadrin, east of Theranderol, south of Bettelny. HW

Area: 187,560 sq. mi. (486,780 sq. km.).

Population: 130,000, including Rardish (pop. 18,000). [*Population figures are tentative, pending census. Ed.*]

Languages: Alphatian (Randelny dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp). Randel also mints a platinum *sword* and an electrum *shield*.

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher. Slaves are counted as the property of the owner and the product of their labor is taxed as income for the owner. Randel also imposes surtaxes on the hiring of mercenaries by other kingdoms, with the tax varying by kingdom (low for kingdoms that Randel favors, higher for other kingdoms). They also impose excise taxes on wines, both imports (to keep them from competing with local vintages) and exports. Finally, they also place additional fees on military students from

other kingdoms, though this has largely lapsed since the sinking.

Government Type: Monarchy, member of the Alphatian Empire.

Industries: Wine, military forces, military training.

Important Figures: Junna (Queen, human, female, Pr13 of Alphatia).

Flora and Fauna: See Alphatia.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperor* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Zweibelterm.

Randel is the source of some of the empire's finest wines, finest troops and most obnoxious louts. The connection between alcohol, militarism and loutish behavior should be obvious. But what makes the Randel (as they prefer to be called) so insufferable is their unconscionable tendency to lecture our highest councils on what it means to be an Alphatian at every opportunity (so a wise chairman affords a member from Randel few opportunities to speak at any length). This would not be quite so bad, except that, like their friends in Stonewall, the Randel are infected with a severe case of Thyatianism unbecoming to a true Alphatian. They eschew and sometimes openly scorn traditional Alphatian virtues such as independence and freedom and a respect for one's betters and obsess instead about imposing conformism and duty and order and discipline to an unbecoming degree and seem to support a centralizing tendency that would sweep away the traditions of local autonomy which made Alphatia great, as well as giving the untalented masses far too much license. Their servile classes don't even seem to consider themselves servile at all, but are insolent and impertinent to almost the same degree as the rabble of Stonewall. Furthermore, the Randel are not culturally sophisticated, but instead have the bawdy and ribald sensibilities of a warrior culture. Other than that they are like the mountain range in their kingdom: all gray in drabness.

What makes us put up with these boors? Well, for one thing, excellence of their vintages of wine make it possible to suffer their existence. For another, their ready willingness to fight with skill and die on Alphatia's behalf. For, despite their character being so different, they consider themselves the best of Alphatians and are near fanatical in war, forming the vanguard of the imperial armies. Perhaps this is why there are so few Randel today, which is another thing that makes it possible to abide them: if you stay away from their kingdom and avoid hanging out near barracks and déclassé establishments, you're not ever likely to run into one of them. [*Zweibelterm's scorn for Randel is quite obvious and some of his comments quite harsh, yet most of his descriptions are correct. I don't much care for Randel's militaristic traits myself, but I would like to add that they are "willing to fight and die for the empire," as Zweibelterm puts it, simply because they are patriotic Alphatians and unlike Zweibelterm I do respect them for that, although their militaristic posturing is foreign to me. Aritmanes.*]

Don't Miss

For those who go in for that kind of thing, try to arrange a tour of Randel's military academy. They might, if you have the proper contacts, permit you to watch a training exercise by their forces, but they tend to be very tight about such things and you are likely better off observing covertly if possible. If you try this, though, don't get caught, as the Randel will consider you a spy and they treat such very harshly.

SCHATTENALFEN (*Kingdom of the*)

Location: Northwestern World Spine Mountains, continent of Iciria, south of the Azcan Empire, west of the Oltecs, east of the Traldar. HW

Area: 175,976 sq. mi. (455,780 sq. km.).

Population: 600,000 including Issarthyl (pop. 60,000) and several other towns.

Languages: Elvish (Schattenalfen dialect, similar to the Shadow Elven dialect).

Coinage: *Mountain* (gp), *pyramid* (sp), *stone* (cp).

Taxes: 10% tithe in coin, 15% tariff on all goods, 10% toll on commodities transported through the kingdom, plus levies in kind, surtaxes and corvée labor based on need.

Government Type: Theocratic monarchy; kings and queens must be priests of Atzanteotl.

Industries: Agriculture, crafts, mining.

Important Figures: Catriata (Queen, elf, female, F10/M10/C8), Caryldian (General, elf, male, F10/M10).

Flora and Fauna: Basilisks, bats, black bears, brown bears, giant beetles, beholders, black puddings, carrion crawlers, mountain lions, smilodons, giant centipedes, chimeras, dinosaurs, dragons, gelatinous cubes, stone giants, hill giants, gray oozes, green slimes, giant lizards, ochre jellies, pterosaurs, purple worms, rats, trolls, giant weasels, yellow molds.

Further Reading: *Hollow World* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Theukidikies the Historian of Corisa.

The Schattenalfen are a cruel, mysterious race of mountain-dwelling elves. Where the Icevale elves are light-hearted, the Schattenalfen are a grim and somber folk, living in vast underground chambers.

The Land

This is another mountain land along the World Spine Range, a region of craggy, snow-capped peaks and rugged foothills, riddled with caves and caverns. The lower foothills are forested as they descend to the north. The land is otherwise similar in its rustic beauty to the lands of the Kogolor dwarves or the Oltec Kingdom.

The People

These lands are inhabited by a race of elves, which, much like many Icevale elves,

live in the caverns. But in most other respects they are unlike the Icevale elves. They not only live in caverns, but also prefer to live deep within them and do not spend much time on the surface except when conducting raids and attacks on neighboring lands. The Schattentalfen are very pale skinned, more so than even other elves, being almost albino, while their hair likewise is white or steel gray rather than golden and is worn long and unbound by both sexes. Their eyes, the only thing that distinguishes them from albinos, are cold blue or gray, with some pale green or even a sickly yellowish hue.

When operating on the surface, the Schattentalfen dress in heavy, covering garments to shield themselves from view and also from the rays of the sun, which they find uncomfortable and loathsome and even harmful. Inside, they wear slightly less concealing garments, but still dress heavily against the cold of their caverns.

The Schattentalfen religion and art are like those of the Azcans, or at any rate as the Azcan religion until recently, in that the Schattentalfen still follow Atzanteotl. They build their cities in a style somewhat similar to that of the Azcans, but all underground in huge caverns and the Schattentalfen are excellent engineers, diggers and miners. They are governed by a king and queen, who rule from their city of Issarthyl and appoint governors to rule in their names over the other cities and towns of the Schattentalfen. Approximately one in ten Schattentalfen live in Issarthyl, which is centered on a plaza surrounded by the temples of Atzanteotl and the royal palace.

The Schattentalfen treat men and women equally and yet even more oddly, they take their family names from the wife and property is handed down from mother to daughter rather than from father to son. When they marry, the man leaves his clan and joins that of the wife. They also expose and leave to die, any child who is born with a deformity and exile the elder members of their communities. Most of these exiles die in the wilderness.

Despite their similarities in faith and custom, the Schattentalfen have always hated the Azcans and have fought numerous wars against them. This dislike seems to have only grown fiercer since the Azcans' religious upheaval and revolution. It is quite likely that they will launch another war against them soon. When not fighting the Azcans, they make raids against the Oltecs, Neathar and even the Kogolor dwarves. In these wars and raids they sometimes use flying creatures, known as flapsails, as mounts, dropping torches and other flammables on their enemies.

SELHOMARR (Empire of)

Location: Continent of Suridal, western regions. HW

Area: 256,410 sq. mi. (664,100 sq. km.), including Ilarnnian Autonomous Region, otherwise area is 248,094 sq. mi. (642,255 sq. km.).

Population: 5,000,000, including the capital, Calimnis (pop. 350,000).

Languages: Lhomarrian (official), Ilarnnian, Neathar.

Coinage: Various denominations of the *alin*, corresponding to cp (1 *alin*), sp (10 *alinni*), gp (100 *alinni*) and pp (1,000 *alinni*).

Taxes: 25% of yearly earnings and 10% of estimated land value collected yearly on *Gallotar 27* (corresponding to *Kaldmont 27*).

Government Type: Constitutional monarchy; regional nobility has considerable power.

Industries: Agriculture (Selhomarr's climate ensures there is almost always a surplus for export), common spices, fishing, leatherworking, mining (copper, silver and tin mines), woodworking.

Important Figures: Tamaris (Emperor, human, male, F12); Dinaría (Empress, human, female, Dr3), Gallos the Aged (Respected Philosopher and Historian, human, male, T4), Mirinasi (High Emissary, human, female, Dr15), Thessia (High Priestess, human, female, Pr29 of Xeron).

Flora and Fauna: In Selhomarr one can find plants and animals common throughout the temperate regions. Towards the south, great stands of pine, maple, birch and evergreens blanket the hilly terrain as it rises to become the Lhomarrian Range, the largest mountain range on Suridal. Further north, beyond the great Forest of Garithor, oaks and poplars replace the coniferous trees, until the forests give way to the great Plains of Aymira. Here, tall grasses dominate the landscape, save for the forested hills of the Tylierian Peninsula, where the famed *dillianora* trees may be found. In the northern regions of Selhomarr, across the Bay of Lokam, many of the trees in the Veroxith and Lorethii Forests are fruit-bearing, providing ample yields of apples, peaches, pears, oranges and other fruits. To the east, surrounding the city of Annurios, the great Korvoris Forest is populated by hardy stands of oak, ironwood and yew.

In terms of animal life, Selhomarr is equally blessed. Herds of aurochs and buffalo roam the Plains of Aymira, while foxes, wolves, birds, giant rats, deer and other beasts make the forests their home. In the swampy regions, insects of all sorts buzz about, as snakes slither about their business. Also common in the region are monsters known to inhabit temperate zones, such as giant ants, giant bees, displacer beasts, dragons, griffons, hydras, owlbears, pegasi, purple worms, rocs, various undead and other beasts, as well as such bizarre plants as grab grass, strangle vines, vampire roses and whip weed.

Further Reading: *The Empire of Selhomarr* by Geoff Gander, previous almanacs.

Description by Taleris, son of Trestian.

I am happy to present to you a glimpse of the wondrous Empire of Selhomarr, the center of an ancient culture that has existed on Suridal for almost as long as our people have been recording history. As a member of the Lighthouse community, I was approached by others to share some basic information about my land, which, because

of its location, has relatively little to do with events on the main continent of Iciria.

The Land

Selhomarr is a temperate land located on the fertile western shores of the continent of Suridal, centered around the Bay of Lokam. It is bounded by mountains to the southeast and to the north and forests to the east. It is broken up into three pieces: the northern shore of the Bay of Lokam, the eastern reaches and the city of Annurios and finally the southern portion, which makes up the bulk of Selhomarr's landmass.

Having been settled for a very long time, much of Selhomarr is currently being farmed, or otherwise supporting a vast network of cities, towns and villages, all connected by paved roads, save for those outlying regions. Where regions do not receive enough rain, complex networks of irrigation canals and ditches have been dug and several cities and towns have aqueducts leading down from the hills and mountains, supplying them with all the water they need. Despite this fact, though, there are still many areas of the empire, mainly towards the south and east, that remain untamed. In some places, particularly along the hinterlands of the Forest of Garithor, small fortresses and towers have been built, to protect nearby communities from what lurks within.

The People

The first thing that must be remembered about Selhomarr is that, unlike many other nations, it has more than one distinct people living within its borders. By far the most numerous group is the Lhomarrian people, of which I am a member. It was us who built much of the empire and named it Selhomarr, which literally means "New Lhomarr," or "New Land of the Sea." The bulk of our armies are Lhomarrian in origin, as are most of our administrators. The other, much smaller, group consists of the Ilarnnians, who are a different people entirely. Most Ilarnnians live in the Ilarnnian Autonomous Region, a nation within a nation in which

they constitute the majority and in which they follow their own laws and speak their own language. The people of Selhomarr are peaceful and prosperous; they enjoy a hard day's work and give their best effort to everything they do. They are a people of explorers, warriors and philosophers, whose inquisitive nature has taken them all over the Hollow World. Their towns and cities are clean and orderly and their stone buildings are gracefully decorated with bright frescoes of beautiful scenes.

Though it may seem that all people do in Selhomarr is work and attend to their duties, this is not so. We also love to sing, dance, indulge in sports—especially in the venerable game of *dillianath*, among the Lhomarrians—, tell tall tales and enjoy great feasts. All the people of Selhomarr, especially the Lhomarrians, look for opportunities to celebrate something, whether it is a good harvest, a birth, a marriage, or a great personal accomplishment. While the Lhomarrians tend to be open to others, as well as sociable, the Ilarnnians are far more reserved and their celebrations tend to be more restrained. They are far less open to outsiders, though not hostile to them and many prefer the company of their own people. It is said that many Ilarnnians see themselves as far more refined than their more numerous Lhomarrian neighbors, though I personally have not run into anyone expressing this opinion.

Among the Lhomarrians themselves there are several sub-groups, each of which has its own traditions and customs and its own outlook on life. Despite these differences, most citizens of Selhomarr consider themselves Selhomarrians first.

The people of Selhomarr are rather fair-minded in comparison to other peoples. We do not practice slavery, nor do we impose cruel punishments for minor crimes. In our society, both men and women are accorded the same respect and the same rights, though each gender has certain responsibilities not shared by the other. Though not perfect by any means, the society of Selhomarr is, in my opinion,

considerably more enlightened than many others.

Finally, the people of Selhomarr are united by their faith in Xeron, the one true Immortal. Xeron is the force behind the eternal sun and He is the one who created this world so long ago. It was by His mercy that we were brought to this new world and it is under His protection that we grow strong as a nation. Though other Immortals do exist, they are as faded shadows to the might of Xeron, who is known by some other peoples as Ixion.

Recent History

The Empire of Selhomarr has existed peacefully on Suridal for thousands of years, interacting with its neighbors through trade and diplomatic contacts on a relatively frequent basis. This was not always so, however. Our legends tell of a time, now lost in the ages, when our people fought against a great menace, foul lizard-like beings who lived only for destruction and suffering. It was a time of great heroes and great deeds, but also of tragedy, for in the dying days of that age our old world was destroyed and only by the grace of Xeron, our patron Immortal, were we brought here to begin anew.

During the long years since then, Selhomarr has grown and prospered, developing ties with the other nations of this world that wish them and exploring the many strange lands that lie here. There have been conflicts with the Antalians to the north and with the Krugel Orcs and the Azcans of Iciria, but on the whole Selhomarr has maintained peaceful relations with every people it has met. So it has been for many centuries—a period of slow and steady growth.

More recently, domestic events have taken a turn for the worse. Three circles past a great fire arose in our central plains, devastating many villages and forcing many to go hungry, as our crops were reduced to ashes in the blaze. Only now, as we have begun to recover, a militant group of Ilarnnians grows restive in the north,

demanding a homeland of its own. Making matters worse, the normally peaceful dragons who inhabit the mountain ranges that gird our homeland have become far more aggressive and on one occasion last year a great red wyrm flew out of its lair and did great damage to the cities of Rethnaris and Dirdassos. Since then, a calm of sorts has descended upon Selhomarr once more, but for how long no one knows.

Don't Miss

Selhomarr has more than its share of sights to see! The capital, Calimnis, is a notable site in itself, with its long series of canals spreading like a spider's web throughout the city and its ancient, well-decorated buildings represent the various building styles that can be found throughout the nation. With its many boulevards and squares and its vibrant inhabitants, Calimnis is a place that must be seen!

Within the city itself, the Great Temple of Xeron and the Imperial Palace are architectural feats in themselves and both house a wealth of information on the history of the peoples of Selhomarr, as well as many artifacts from the distant past. Both buildings stand across from each other in the main plaza and their graceful spires are visible above all other buildings in the city.

Also notable is the Imperial Map Collection, located at the Imperial Museum of Antiquities, which houses one of the most complete and accurate maps of the coastal regions of the Hollow World, as well as a well-preserved map of Old Lhomarr that was brought to this world millennia ago. For those seeking to learn more of this world, almost all the geographical information one might need is contained therein.

Another interesting place is the Great Forest of Marinnir, with its wondrous *dillianora* trees, which are found nowhere else in the world. In these lands the locals pick the silvery berries of these beautiful trees and with them make the renowned cakes, potions, ointments and breads known all over Selhomarr for their quality. It is said

that a traveler can walk for great distances and go for long periods without food, by subsisting only on the slightest portion of the legendary foods and drinks made from this rare berry. Though the process of making these foods is a secret, the sheer beauty of the landscape and the hospitality of the people, make this place well worth the visit.

Finally, no visit to Selhomarr would be complete without a tour of the lovely city of Dirdassos, where visitors can sample the wonders of Ilarnnian culture, such as the legendary performances of the tale-weavers, whose graceful moves can recite whole epics without the aid of words.

Do Miss

While the heartland of Selhomarr is quite safe due to long periods of settlement, there are still regions of the empire that should be avoided if at all possible. First, the many mountain ranges that gird much of the nation house wild beasts of all sorts, including red dragons and griffons. Not for nothing do we regularly patrol these borderlands to ensure that nothing does harm to our citizenry.

Another region the unwary should avoid are the treacherous Bogs of Disania. For as long as our history has been documented, this fetid land has always resisted attempts at settlement. Those who venture within rarely return and those who do come back tell tales of undead and worse, roaming about. It is also known that a great black dragon makes its home within the bogs, said to guard a treasure hoard of incredible wealth. Many a would-be treasure hunter has gone in search of the beast, only to meet with sorrow.

The Forest of Garithor is also known to house dangers. There have been numerous sightings of green dragons flying over the trees and many travelers have been mauled by owlbears, displacer beasts and their ilk.

SHAHJAPUR (*Kingdom of*)

Location: The largest island of the Anathy Archipelago, between the continent of Jomphur and the Merry Pirates. HW

Area: 80,000 sq. mi. (207,200 sq. km.).

Population: 2,500,000 including Dharsatra (pop. 450,000) and the capital of Amtha (pop. 200,000) and numerous other towns and villages.

Languages: Sindhi.

Coinage: *Guru* (platinum piece, 25gp), *rupee* (gold, 5gp), *bhani* (electrum, 1gp), *kbundar* (sp), *piaster* (cp).

Taxes: Legalized plunder: tax farmers contracted to send a specified sum to the central treasury and keep whatever they take beyond that sum as their pay.

Government Type: Military monarchy heavily influenced by theocratic gurus.

Industries: Agriculture, textiles (especially silk), tea, spices, teak, incense, mining.

Important Figures: Koriktodeva Raya (Grand *Mogul*, human, male, F20).

Flora and Fauna: Teak, bamboo, broadleaf foliage. Tigers, crocodiles, wild dogs, elephants, baboons, mongooses, cranes, snakes of many varieties, water buffalo.

Further Reading: *Hollow World* boxed set, HWA3 *Nightstorm*, previous almanacs.

Description by Theukidikies the Historian of Corisa.

The Shahjapuri inhabit an island realm and are noted for the rigidity of their social classes and the extreme poverty of the commoners combined with the wealth and power of the rulers. They are a priest and cult-ridden society, a theocracy like that of Nithia.

The Land

Shahjapur is an island nation, but not a seafaring one. This kingdom covers the largest island in the Anathy Chain, an equatorial island lush with vegetation. It has a mountainous interior, but with high

plateaus rather than sharp peaks. The lowlands are rich in tropical forest and jungle and grassy plains. The forests consist of bamboo and teak, as well as underbrush. This jungle nears the sea in many areas, but other coastal zones consist of salt bogs where nothing grows. Shahjapur is crisscrossed with a network of rivers and streams to a greater extent than even the lands of the Azcans, though the Shahjapuri do not make as much use of it for transport. Still, they do use small boats and river barges in some areas. The streams are instead lined with rice paddies, orchards and fields of millet and jute. The lushness of this land allows the Shahjapuri to, if barely, grow enough food to support their large population.

About three fourths of the year, Shahjapuri is sunny and hot. Just as it seems about to dry the land out into a parched desert, it starts to rain. This rainy season lasts throughout the winter period and occasionally fierce storms will lash the land and seem to nearly flood it. There are some rocky deserts in the interior of the country where this rain does not reach, however.

The People

The Shahjapuri are dusky-skinned natives, slightly lighter skinned than the Nithians, with black hair and eyes. Most Shahjapuri are very thin, starving wretches. Wealthy Shahjapuri are more robust, with physiques like that of the Azcans. Most Shahjapuri wear very little—cotton nappies or simple wraps around their groin, but the richer persons wear fine, colorfully dyed garments of silk.

Most Shahjapuri lead constricted lives, rarely venturing outside of their own neighborhoods or thinking much about philosophical matters (the exception being the *samdus* and priests). Few leave their communities, except once or twice in their lifetimes for a religious pilgrimage and discussion of civic and political matters is not engaged in (for this reason, they rank as barbarians, along with the Nithians and the Azcans, other nations that have no civic

life). The Shahjapuri are organized into a rigid social hierarchy, their caste system. Priests are on the top, followed by the rulers of the land and their administrators and soldiers, then the landowners, merchants and craftsmen form their own caste, followed by the common laborers. Forming another layer of society, not officially considered a caste but in effect suborned below them all, are the untouchables, the unclean ones who are limited to doing the worst jobs and relegated to living in filthy shantytowns outside the cities. These can never interact directly with those of a higher caste. But the Shahjapuri at least know the proper role of women in society, keeping them in the home and performing female tasks.

Shahjapuri cities consist of a multitude of humble abodes, but also some splendid architecture. Temples and palaces and the abodes of the wealthy generally have spires and arches, as well as globular or onion-shaped domes that are a wonder to behold. Their visual arts and paintings are almost as good as those of even the Milenians, illustrations of great realism and beauty.

The kingdom is ruled by a king known as the grand *mogul*, whose authority is nearly absolute, considered second only to the priests', who keep themselves to spiritual matters, however, leaving the political sphere to the grand *mogul* and the other *moguls*. Thus, the power of the grand *mogul* is unchallenged and unlimited. The kingdom is divided into provinces or districts governed by a *mogul* and the noble hierarchy of Shahjapur is very systematic, based on providing a specified number of soldiers. Shahjapur's system of taxation is particularly vile; tax farmers, known as *darmani* (hyenas) are contracted to deliver a specified sum to the treasury and are "paid" by allowing them to keep whatever they collect beyond that specified sum. This system is, of course, very abusive and kleptocratic.

SHIYE-LAWR (Kingdom of)

Location: Forests north of Haven, east of the Kerothar Mountains, south of Blackheart and west of Alphas'ar. HW

Area: 91,785 sq. mi. (237,725 sq. km.).

Population: 55,000, including Alfleish (pop. 12,000). [*Population figures are tentative, pending census. Ed.*]

Languages: Elvish (Shiye-Lawr dialect), Alphatian (Vertilian dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp). Shiye mints no other coins.

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher. Slaves are counted as the property of the owner and the product of their labor is taxed as income for the owner. They also impose excise taxes on exports to other kingdoms and severe surtaxes on those non-elves who are (rarely) permitted to live within the kingdom.

Government Type: Monarchy, member of the Alphatian Empire.

Industries: Crafts (jewels, woodworking, leathercraft, goldsmithing).

Important Figures: Acrosihiye (King, elf, male, F10/M11).

Flora and Fauna: See Alphatia.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperor* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Gerta Knutsdotter.

It is said, according to the histories of the Alphatians which I believe to be most accurate, that five centuries after the Landfall of the Alphatians near what would become Sundsvall, the Shiye-Lawr elves were permitted to migrate to Alphatia and establish a kingdom here, swearing loyalty to the empire but living in their own ways. Many Alphatians seem somewhat irritated by the Shiye, on account of the occasional raids they make on nearby kingdoms, but also apparently for another reason. According to those who believe that Alphatia was once elsewhere and was destroyed in a recent war, the Shiye elves were opposed to the war and did not give their usual loyalty to the empire.

This may contribute to the impression most Alphatians have of them being not only cunning but malicious and it is true there is an air of mystery about them and they are highly insular. These elves and the Alphatian people share similar tastes and attitudes towards life overall and many Alphatians also point out that their presence has enriched their empire, but while also seeming content that the Shiye largely keep to their own kingdom. Many Shiye are respected as skilled artisans. Some of these have helped with artistic and architectural projects in Haven and Alphas'ar. These are held in particularly high regard and their style blends well with that of Haven's own artists. The rest of the Shiye keep to themselves in the depths of the forests.

[The Shiye have always been a mystery to me. They are a valuable addition to the empire, but sometimes they act in strange ways. I was constantly surprised at their resistance to aid the empire during the war with Glantri, yet I understand well their hostility toward their neighbors in Blackheart, which has frequently caused problems within the empire as some of them went on quests of vengeance against Blackheart after some monstrosity of a failed experiment caused havoc in their forests. Still, after the war, the elves seem to have returned to their former support of the empire and the fact that they prefer to keep to themselves is to be respected, I think. After all, Alphatia is strong because we pursue our individual strengths, so most of us are content to let the elves do what they are good at, which is their unique arts and magic. Aritmanes.]

STONEWALL (*Kingdom of*)

Location: Ledge wedged between the Kerothar Mountain Range and the west central rim of the floating continent of Alphatia, south of Limn and north of Stoutfellow. HW

Area: 15,963 sq. mi. (41,345 sq. km.).

Population: 1,340,000, including Draco (pop. 500,000). *[Population figures are tentative, pending census. Ed.]*

Languages: Alphatian (Dracos dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp). Stonewall mints no other coins.

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher. Slaves are counted as the property of the owner and the product of their labor is taxed as income for the owner.

Government Type: Monarchy, member of the Alphatian Empire.

Industries: Military.

Important Figures: Koblan Dracodon (King, human, male, M14).

Flora and Fauna: See Alphatia.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperor* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Gerta Knutsdotter.

Stonewall is a rugged land located off the western slope of the Kerothar Mountain Range. The lands of Stonewall are kept fertile by the waters of three rivers that run off the mountains, dividing the kingdom roughly into thirds. Most of Stonewall's settlements are built along these rivers and the largest ones lay where the rivers run off the rim of the continent. Stonewall is one of Alphatia's smallest kingdoms in size (only nearby Limn is smaller), but it has the highest population of all the kingdoms and Alphatia's most heavily populated city, Draco. This seems to be due to how commoners are treated here, which is better than anywhere else in Alphatia. Thus more people want to live here, despite some of the relative hardships. Stonewall seems to have subsisted on trade to a higher degree than other Alphatian kingdoms, however, exporting goods in and in return importing large amounts of food to feed its high population. The sources of this food (and the markets for Stonewall's goods) seem to have vanished, however, bringing hardships to the population. As a result of these conditions and apparently a growing fear of famine, people have started to emigrate from Stonewall, if reluctantly and with some sorrow.

Stonewall is possibly the most hospitable (or even the only hospitable) Alphatian kingdom for outsiders. They seem to lack some of the more severe forms of contemptuousness towards outsiders, in addition to holding non-spellcasters in greater respect than in other Alphatian kingdoms. Non-spellcasters are still limited to gentry status, but they aren't oppressed here. This latter seems to explain Stonewall's popularity among Alphatia's common classes and may have also led to a greater openness. In Stonewall, expressions of arrogance towards "barbarians" are no more extreme than is found in Nithia or Milenia. Indeed, in Stonewall, alone among Alphatia's kingdoms, the same set of laws applies to all persons, aristocrat and servant alike, regardless of status. Stonewall uses Alphatia's aristocrat code exclusively and insolence is not a crime here. This fair application of laws seems to be one of the things that makes Stonewall attractive to commoners. But, on the other hand, there are relatively few spellcasting aristocrats in the kingdom. Only mages who agree with the kingdom's philosophy live here and in Alphatia they are few. However, there are more temples here than anywhere else in Alphatia. The founder of Draco wanted to create a place where Alphatia's common classes could find opportunity and seems to have succeeded in doing so. It thus seems to me a shame that the kingdom has fallen upon hard times and people are forced to move back to those kingdoms they left in the first place.

[Stonewall is an infectious sore blighting the skin of Alphatia, but thankfully the mountains form a barrier between them and the rest of us. Several imperial units are stationed here, however and one can only hope that when the troops return to their homes the mores of Stonewall don't rub off on them. Zweibelterm.]

[Zweibelterm's opinion of Stonewall is quite common among wizards of Alphatia, I'll admit. Many of them believe that this nation is a stain on the empire that should be wiped out as soon as possible, yet I feel that its existence has solved more problems than it has caused. It may be looked upon

with scorn by wizards, but at least it gives those who are not happy about Alphatian society in general a place to live—though they don't embrace the imperial pursuit of art and magic, they are still a part of the empire and letting them have this place of their own is probably a good idea so that people who value the more traditional values of the empire, like Zweibelterm and myself, can pursue these as we like. I wouldn't like to live in Stonewall myself, but I feel more comfortable knowing that people with their philosophies have a place of their own so that they won't trouble the rest of us. Aritmanes.]

Don't Miss

Stonewall does have the largest remaining city in Alphatia, the city of Draco. If Sundsvall was the City Built by Magic, then Draco is the city not built by magic—this city was built by and for warrior types and other commoners. Yes, there are a number of wizard-created towers and spires in Draco built in the style of other Alphatian cities. But space and consideration has also been made for the needs of more average folk, for while these people might be tolerated in kingdoms like Greenspur, only Stonewall likes them and thus Draco has been designed with deliberate concern for their needs. Draco's arts and architecture are not as extravagant as those of kingdoms like Haven, but there is a simple and sincere humanity in them. Draco's people are the salt of the earth in Alphatia, being tough like my Antalian people, but friendly.

STOUTFELLOW (Kingdom of)

Location: Western spine of the floating continent of Alphatia, running due north-south along the Kerothar Mountains in roughly the shape of an inverted single-bladed axe. HW

Area: 88,542 sq. mi. (229,325 sq. km.).

Population: 58,000 (29,000 dwarves, 14,000 hin, 15,000 gnomes), including

Denwarf-Hurgon (pop. 30,000). [*Population figures are tentative, pending census. Ed.*]

Languages: Dwarvish (Denwarf-Hurgon dialect), Alphatian (Dracos dialect). Gnomish and Lalor are also spoken, though this is uncommon.

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp). Stoutfellow mints platinum *kagyars* as well.

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher. Slavery does not exist here, as it is against the policy of the demihuman inhabitants. Additional taxes include duties imposed on the export of metals and gems.

Government Type: Monarchy, member of the Alphatian Empire.

Industries: Mining, craftsmanship, engineering.

Important Figures: Buthra Bofadar (Queen, dwarf, female, F12).

Flora and Fauna: See Alphatia.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperor* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Zweibelterm.

Stoutfellow was created less than eighty years ago, when Tylion IV recognized a growing need for master craftsmen in Alphatia. Various demihumans were induced to settle, but there was some reluctance until he promised them their own wide kingdom. As a result, Stoutfellow was born. Due to the concessions Tylion IV granted to the demihumans, there are a number of odd peculiarities in the Kingdom of Stoutfellow. First, they do not fit into the pattern of Alphatian society and law, but rather govern themselves in a manner similar to that of Rockhome, with dwarven rather than proper Alphatian law. Dwarven customs predominate and the same laws are applied to both the talented and untalented, so those Alphatian aristocrats used to receiving their proper due should be aware of this discrepancy and deficiency when travelling here and virtually no Alphatians live here (the population is almost exclusively demihuman) as a result of its outlandish

social structure. The kingdom's sole major settlement is built in dwarven style, buried in the earth, submerged in rock and stone, rather than constructed of soaring towers in the Alphatian manner. But the demihumans (dwarves, gnomes and hin) of Stoutfellow make up for these drawbacks through their skill as artisans and engineers. Indeed, many have proved to provide instrumental service not only in the creation of the empire's new capital at Andaire, but in rebuilding in Haven as well. Plus, there is something in their attitude that makes it less onerous to accept them than it does the people of Stonewall, as they always seem properly respectful and courteous. Stoutfellow thus forms not only a welcome addition to Alphatia, which was in sore need of expert craftsmen, but is a buffer between Haven and the cyst of Stonewall.

TANAGORO (Kingdom of the)

Location: South central plains and forests of Iciria, south of the World Spine Mountains, west of Nithia, east of the Twa Mountain Range, north of the Jennites. HW

Area: 243,873 sq. mi. (631,630 sq. km.).

Population: 500,000 scattered among a thousand or so villages.

Languages: Tanagoro.

Coinage: None (barter only).

Taxes: Levies in kind of goods and corvée labor as decided by village elders.

Government Type: Loose monarchy; most decisions made by village chiefs.

Industries: Agriculture, herding (cattle).

Important Figures: Korolo Togoro (King, human, male, F17).

Flora and Fauna: Aurochs, giant beetles, boars, bugbears, lions, cheetahs, smilodons, cyclops, dinosaurs, elephants, griffons, giant lizards, manscorpions, manticores, medusas, minotaurs, mummies, pterosaurs, giant scorpions, snakes, sphinxes, giant spiders, giant apes.

Further Reading: *Hollow World* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Theukidikies the Historian of Corisa.

The Tanagoro are a plains- and jungle-dwelling folk, a warrior race of surprisingly astute and skillful storytellers.

The Land

The Tanagoro live in a vast stretch of plains (which they share and fight over with the Jennites) and jungle (which they hold on their own), running in a long band parallel to the World Spine Mountains between the Twa Mountain Range in the west to the deserts of Nithia in the east. The plains are hot, savanna-like, watered just enough to keep the grasses growing that support the herds of aurochs (and the dinosaurs that roam the region eating them, the grasses and each other). It rains more in the north and west, thus resulting in the jungle lands of rainforests. Several rivers run through this region, interspersed with hills, with hills likewise running along the northern edge of the plains themselves.

The People

The Tanagoro are a dark-skinned people, darker than any other race, with tightly curled black hair and dark eyes. They are tall, lean men, who wear little more than loincloths of linen or even animal skin. They are, however, a skilled people, farming the plains and herding aurochs and they are crafty warriors. But they are a tribal people, living in small villages, in huts made out of thatch.

Their culture is simple and unsophisticated, devoted to herding and farming and praying to their Immortals. The Tanagoro men rule and hunt, while the women farm and keep the home. But both fight and one cannot say that they do not excel in the arts of war, for many a time they have successfully thwarted attempts to subdue them. But they have no central leadership or sense of unity and this shall be their downfall.

THERANDEROL (Kingdom of)

Location: Center of the floating continent of Alphatia, north of the Aaslan void, sandwiched between Haven and Theranderol. HW

Area: 123,710. mi. (320,410 sq. km.).

Population: 183,000, including Errolyn (pop. 20,000). [*Population figures are tentative, pending census. Ed.*]

Languages: Alphatian (Theran dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp). Theranderol mints no other coins.

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher. Slaves are counted as the property of the owner and the product of their labor is taxed as income for the owner.

Government Type: Monarchy, member of the Alphatian Empire.

Industries: Agriculture, cattle and sheep herding, logging.

Important Figures: Eldrethila (Queen, human, female, M20).

Flora and Fauna: See Alphatia.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperor* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Zweibelterm.

If I were to pick one word to describe Theranderol, it would be “typical.” Save for the fact that it is the ancestral homeland of Alphatia’s imperial family and is ruled by Eriadna’s daughter, there is little which makes Theranderol stand out as exceptional. It is governed effectively, taxes are collected in a timely manner, corruption is kept in check and the nation’s armies have managed relief projects with aplomb. But Theranderol’s people do not stand out when compared to those of Haven or even Arogansa. They are diligent, but somewhat dull. Similarly, the land itself is pleasant and productive enough, being composed of pretty lowlands that hold prosperous plantations and of fair forests and pastures. The land is clear of monsters except around the Grey Mountains. But even these

features, nice enough as they might be compared with other lands, do not stand out as exceptional in Alphatia. The forests of Foresthome are more impressive than those of Theranderol, the grasslands of Arogansa more beautiful. Alphatia does need a place to provide people of sound disposition and good breeding to provide effective government, so Theranderol has provided a vital role (again, with the lapses of Tylion IV and the notorious Zandor excepted), but this does not make for much excitement.

[Though these descriptions are essentially correct, I'm not sure the people of Theranderol would appreciate Zweibelterm's comments. The fact is that the nation is one of the few places in the empire where there is little trouble, so this nation should really be seen as a standard for other nations to follow. The authorities are minimal, yet perform their duties effectively with little or no trouble, so many Alphatian nations could learn a thing or two here. Aritmanes.]

TRALDAR (Kingdoms of the)

Location: Western spur of the World Spine Mountains, continent of Iciria, large peninsula between the Southern Atlas Ocean and the Gulf of Aztlan, west of the Schattenalfen, east of the Merry Pirate islands. HW

Area: 84,524 sq. mi. (218,915 sq. km.).

Population: 500,000 in several independent kingdoms, each centered on one town averaging 5,000 residents.

Languages: Traldar, Milenian, Neathar.

Coinage: None (barter only).

Taxes: Levies in kind of goods and corvée labor as determined by kings.

Government Type: Autonomous and fractious monarchies in a loose alliance.

Industries: Agriculture, herding (sheep, goats, cattle), mining, fishing, piracy.

Important Figures: Tiradon (King of Corescos, human, male, F18).

Flora and Fauna: Black bears, brown bears, beholders, boars, bugbears, lions, smilodons, centaurs, chimeras, cockatrices,

giant crabs, cyclopskin, dinosaurs, dolphins, dragons, dragon turtles, dryads, gargoyles, hill giants, stone giants, cloud giants, storm giants, mountain giants, gnolls, gorgons, griffons, hags, harpies, hippogriffs, hydras, liches, giant lizards, manticores, medusas, mermen, minotaurs, pegasi, phoenix, pterosaurs, rocs, skeletons, snakes, sphinxes, giant spiders, unicorns, wolves, zombies and especially rabbits.

Further Reading: *Hollow World* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Theukidikies the Historian of Corisa.

The Traldar share some things in common with the civilized Milenians, but they are a feuding and squabbling people, who spend their time stealing chickens and raiding their neighbors rather than asking questions about the mysteries of the cosmos.

The Land

The Traldar live in rugged, forested mountains along a series of peninsulas that jut, like stubby fingers, into the Atlass Ocean, marking the western end of the World Spine Range and bifurcating the Atlass Ocean between north and south. Despite their equatorial location, the weather is cool and temperate, moderated by both the mountains and winds blowing in off of the sea. The lands are not fertile like those of Milenia but are adequate for the crops and olive groves of the Traldar and for their herds of sheep and goats and the fishing in the surrounding seas is good.

Though the region is small, its meandering coastline means it has a long seashore and most Traldar cities are located near it (though often a few miles from it, with a satellite port village—a legacy of their experience with and as pirates). The main town is usually located on a hill nearby, with a walled palace and temple area at the summit and the town surrounding it also walled.

The People

The Traldar people look like Milenians, but with slightly lighter skin, with brown and red hair being common but also some blond-haired members, which are regarded as special. Both men and women wear their hair long, with the men often sporting beards or mustaches and the women wearing their hair in tails if married but unbound as maidens. Both sexes wear tunics and sandals, with the men's garment reaching their knees but the women's worn like a gown, all dyed in bright colors. The Traldar speak a language somewhat similar to Milenian, but the Traldar are not Milenians, as much as they try to ape our ways.

The Traldar nation is divided into numerous squabbling petty city-states, each ruled by a tyrant or king. They make their living growing crops, herding, fishing, exporting wine, olive oil and wool and raiding each other and their neighbors. Their culture resembles the Heroic Age of Milenia from the time before the empire in that they, like the Antalians, revere foremost brave and great warriors and the virtues of the hero and their epics and bard's tales center on the deeds of these heroes. Like the Antalians they begin training in the warrior arts at a very young age, but they also cultivate exercise and fitness like the Milenians do. They are also excellent sailors, making up in skill what their ships lack in technology, sacking towns up and down the coast, but mainly those of the Azcans, who are not a seafaring people. In confrontations with the nearby Merry Pirates they usually come out on the losing end, as they do with the fleets of the empire, but none can doubt the courage of their seamen.

As I said, the Traldar nation is disunited and squabbling, with there always being a war pitting one or more cities against another. But there have been times in history when the Traldar have been united behind one king, or in a league, in the face of some danger to their lands. Such leagues and kingdoms generally last until the threat is gone and then the Traldar go back to feuding among themselves. The faith of the

Traldar centers around Halav and Petra and is not too different from the religion of Milenia, though somewhat more rustic and with backwards rites, smaller temples and less beautiful shrines.

VERTILOCH (*Kingdom of*)

Location: South central portion of the floating continent of Alphatia, east of Vertiloch, south of Bettelbyn, west of Randel and north of Arogansa. HW

Area: 49,384 sq. mi. (127,905 sq. km.).

Population: 620,000, including Ashar (pop. 15,000). [*Population figures are tentative, pending census. Ed.*]

Languages: Alphatian (Vertilian dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp). Vertiloch mints no other coins.

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher. Slaves are counted as the property of the owner and the product of their labor is taxed as income for the owner.

Government Type: Monarchy, member of the Alphatian Empire.

Industries: Formerly government, currently subsistence agriculture.

Important Figures: None currently (Eriadna now resides in Alphas'ar).

Flora and Fauna: See Alphatia.

Further Reading: *Dawn of the Emperor* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Gerta Knutsdotter.

Vertiloch is the location of the former capital of the Alphatian Empire. Vertiloch is a long, narrow kingdom set astride the Greenlake River, with a large bog (the Haunted Swamp, which overall is larger than the Malpheggi Swamp) in the south and lush landscapes in the north. Alphatia's former imperial capital, Sundsvall, is now a ruin. Vertiloch's population seems to have declined considerably as a result of either the earthquakes or the apocalyptic cataclysm

that came in its wake. It seems that until recently the population was three times higher than it is now. Many seem to have been killed in the destruction of Sundsvall and the aftermath, but others simply seem to have succumbed as a result of famine.

This famine seems to have resulted because, although Vertiloch's lands are good, set on both sides of the banks of the Greenlake River, the kingdom seems to have been designed as a showcase of Alphatian power rather than put to agricultural use. The lands are very carefully sculpted and decorated, but as a result the kingdom was apparently not self-sufficient, but rather imported food and imperial tribute from elsewhere to sustain its prosperity. The source of this seems to have disappeared and the people of Vertiloch are having a hard time surviving. This is exacerbated by the fact that the kingdom's government, the parts that weren't destroyed when Sundsvall was, relocated to Andaire in Alphas'ar and have concentrated on restoring an imperial government apparatus and capital there, depriving Vertiloch of its traditional authorities. Also, the Alphatians seem to be concentrating on a major build up of expensive *skyships* and military restructuring and as a result they have somewhat neglecting relief efforts in Vertiloch and elsewhere.

The kingdom's current administrative center is the large town (or small city) of Ashar, located not far from the ruins of Sundsvall at a fork in the Greenlake River. But Eriadna, Alphatia's Empress, is also the Queen of Vertiloch in addition to ruling Alphas'ar and she spends almost all her time at the latter kingdom. Ashar's population includes some refugees from Sundsvall, but most of the wealthiest and most prominent survivors who had the resources to do so seem to have moved to Andaire, along with the imperial guard and other troops which would otherwise be a means of reviving Vertiloch's economy as a result of the commerce that their presence would generate.

[Finally we come to my own homeland—the greatest nation of Alphatia, the crown jewel. How

the mighty have fallen... Today Vertiloch is a sad shadow of past glories, the capital of Sundsvall in ruins, the land ravaged by the war and famine plaguing our once-fair nation. Though the empire was rescued by the Immortals, a large portion of Vertiloch has died and likely will not live again. My nation is still quite beautiful as many of the empire's artistic achievements still grace much of it, though our greatest works were lost with Sundsvall and so what remains is more of a monument to what was lost to those of us who remember. That way, what has survived is tragic rather than joyful and we find that we cannot appreciate these except as memorials of our former splendor, so hailing the inevitable dusk as our nation falls apart. It is difficult to express these emotions, so I'd better not try. One of the greatest sorrows is that our very queen, Empress Eriadna, seems so oblivious to the hardships of the people of Vertiloch and has done little to aid us. Many, in fact, have left our nation for newly-founded Alphas'ar, but there are still those of us who love our nation too much to just let it become a victim of the war and resettle to build anew in Alphas'ar. I just hope that the empress changes her mind. Aritmanes.]

Don't Miss/Do Miss

Sundsvall, which the Alphatians called the City Built by Magic, was built at the site of the Landfall of the Alphatians on Mystara according to their oldest histories and was the imperial capital since that time, for over two millennia. It was a vast, sprawling metropolis and wondrous city, with the streets laid out in the pattern of a spider web, with the imperial palace at its center. Given its size and the apparent number of its buildings, it seems to have had a population larger than that of Corisa or Tarthis, or even Dharsatra in Shahjapur. Depending upon which version of Alphatian history one believes, it was either destroyed in an epic earthquake around the time the sun went dark, or leveled by Alphatia's enemies during a major war. Squatters and scavengers, as well as monsters, are known to infest the ruins of Sundsvall, picking through the rubble for valuables. Apparently some Alphatians think Sundsvall should be rebuilt, while others want to keep it as it is and make it a hallowed site, a sort of

monument to the dead. Given Alphatia's magical construction methods, the more common buildings could be reconstructed quickly, but it would be impossible to restore the massive and glorious monuments of twenty centuries of construction that were destroyed. Given this the Alphatians seem to have decided to make Andaire their current and future capital, the new showpiece of their empire. A new and different Sundsvall may be built in time, but things will obviously never be the same, as change is the only thing that time guarantees.

This does make Sundsvall a wonderful site to study and I learned much about the Alphatians in my explorations of the ruins—including, I believe, things they would have preferred that I not discover about them (having found some seemingly lost libraries with stores of knowledge). Indeed, when I first inquired about visiting the site, they forbade it and I had to use my skills as an explorer to sneak in covertly and avoid the occasional patrols which police the site in an effort to clear out the squatters and scavengers. These patrols seem to have some other purpose as well, being particularly heavy around certain areas, but I was unable to discover what secrets they might be protecting. Because of this, I would caution those who wish to explore these ruins for themselves, as the Alphatians seem very hostile to such inquiries and given what happened here I must say I understand their feelings. But the demands of scholarship outweigh such considerations. But you should be aware of another danger as well—according to the squatters I talked with, mysterious disappearances are common here, for some unknown reason people have been known to vanish, never to be seen again. These might be tall tales based on disappearances that occurred in the wake of patrol sweeps and roundups, but the scavengers swore that something more was happening, that sometimes their companions would enter a building but then never emerge and not ever be found, even though no patrols were anywhere nearby.

Famous People

Though conversion guidelines for reformatting your Mystara campaigns for use with the new 3rd Edition D&D game are not quite complete, here is a taste of what some famous NPCs in and on Mystara might look like under the new rules system. Two of these characters partake of a brand new Prestige format class—the *buraiya*—, which can be found exclusively in this year's almanac as well!

Note: Skills and feats do not include bonuses or penalties due to ability scores, armor, equipment, or feats.

Distinguished Dead

Alebane, Ogre King of Xorg in Orcland.

Alebane, the notorious and self-styled “king” of ogres, plagued the nations of the Old World for many years. Once a vassal of the orc-king Thar, Alebane subsequently formed armies of his own on several occasions and harassed civilized lands. He was finally laid low by the dwarven hero Norred Blackbeard, on Klarmont 9 of last year. Remnants of his goblinoid army are still roaming in Rockhome territory and his holding of Xorg has been annexed by the ruler of Orcland, Governor-General Tlatepetl. Alebane was reportedly 40 years old.

Catherine, Queen of Bellayne.

The ruler of the rakasta nation of Bellayne was laid to rest on Flaurmont 22, following her death five days earlier. The cause of her death is not known, but it is suspected to be natural in origin (she had been ill for some time). Queen Catherine ruled for nearly two decades and was much beloved by all her subjects.

Deguerrand, Gerard, Seneschal of Morlay-Malinbois in Glantri.

Deguerrand was given the position of

seneschal in Prince Malachie du Marais's household shortly after the death of his brother, Claude. Claude Deguerrand was also an employee of Prince du Marais in previous days. Gerard, evidently secretly a werewolf, was slain while assisting the terrorist group known as *Les Loups de la Guerre* on Flaurmont 20, AC 1016. His death has brought much unwanted attention to the lycanthropic residents of Morlay-Malinbois.

Draeh, Rebel Jennite Leader of Verdan in Esterhold.

Draeh, leader of secessionist Jennites in Esterhold, was slain Kaldmont 13, while leading an attack on the city of Faraway. It is feared that his death may further harm relations between Jennites and Alphatians in Esterhold.

Dromedon, King of Aegos in Nayce.

In one of the truly epic battles of recent history, King Dromedon slew a powerful magical beast called by some a burrower. The creature had been wreaking tremendous havoc in the Sea of Dawn ever since being dredged up beneath the depths of Pittston on Aegos and Dromedon had clashed with it several times. During the final conflict on Fyrmont 9, Dromedon was slain by the tremendous energies the fight generated. He was 51 years old.

Grimm, Stellmann, Norwold Scholar.

Grimm was one of two sages who undertook a search for the crown of the first emperor of Thyatis in AC 1013. His body was discovered in an inn in Port Hatti in Thyatis on Ambyrmont 22, AC 1016. Witnesses at the inn prior to his death report he claimed to have finally found what he had sought for years.

Gylharen, King of Wendar.

The sorcerer-king of the northern realm of Wendar was treacherously slain by the clanmaster of the Long Runner clan of elves. On Fyrmont 7, AC 1016, Clanmaster Beasthunter slew the king of Wendar during

celebrations of a national festival. Beasthunter's subsequent whereabouts are not precisely known. We at the *Mystaran Almanac* have not been able to accurately ascertain King Gylharen's age at the time of his death, due to conflicting reports.

Kadan, Khan of the Kiyats in Ethengar.

The 63 year old *khan* of the Kiyat tribe died of natural causes on Flaurmont 11 of last year. Before his death, he passed on the rulership of the Kiyats to Manghai *Khan*, husband to Kadan's eldest daughter. With this decree, the existence of the Kiyat tribe was effectively ended as they were merged with the Murkit tribe of Manghai *Khan*.

Linton, Lucius, Astinius and Calen, of Linton House in Darokin.

On Vatermont 25, AC 1016, Lucius Linton and his two eldest sons were assassinated by agents in the employ of prominent Minrothaddan guild masters. Linton's youngest son, Corwyn, narrowly avoided a similar fate. The loss of several of its most important members and the opportunistic tactics of Minrothaddan merchants have caused Linton house to drop from the number two ranking in Darokin to number four. Lucius was 83, Astinius was 59 and Calen was 56 years old.

Nordenshield, Thrais, Clan Head of Skarrad in Rockhome.

Evedotar Nordenshield was executed on Vatermont 5, 1016 by goblinoids and renegade dwarves under orders of Bifia Lyrrast. Lyrrast and her husband, Duric were cast out of the Hurwarf clan and exiled from Rockhome in 1011, after an unsuccessful bid for rulership of the nation. Thrais Nordenshield was 74 years old.

Oaxapotli and Tlachtatlatlan, Imperial Heirs to the Azcan Throne.

The only surviving sons of the deceased Emperor Mochtlapac and brother to his similarly deceased successor, Emperor Azcotica, were slain on Thaumont 10, AC

1016. Both men were ritually sacrificed to Atzanteotl on the orders of His High Priest Chupicuaro. Chupicuaro subsequently attempted to install himself as emperor but was defeated by the forces of Otziltipac. The high priest of Atzanteotl is still at large.

Ranalfir of Halfanel's Haulage Co. in the City of Stars.

Ranalfir was the youngest son of the shadowelf Halfanel, founder of the haulage company of the same name. In Aengmor following his escort of a merchant from the underground to the surface, Ranalfir was killed under mysterious circumstances. Authorities in Aengmor are offering a reward of 500 *brights* for information leading to the capture of his killers; his father Halfanel is offering 1,200 *brights* for same.

Stepanov, Dimitri, Hard-ball Player of Karameikos.

The Karameikan youth was killed, apparently a victim of the terrorist group known as the Alfheim Avengers, on Fyrmont 17 of last year. He was a rising star in the hard-ball arena and had a brilliant future ahead of him. He was 19 years old.

Zuberi, Slagovich Naval Commander.

The Yavdlom native, who was commissioned to lead the navies of Slagovich by that nation's margrave, was found dead in his bed on Eirmont 9, AC 1016. Hojahan mercenaries are suspected, though rumors persist that Zuberi may have somehow escaped his fate.

Adventurers, Mages and Priests

Ioannes Rosattas, Lord of Verge.

Ioannes was a successful officer of the Thyatian Ministry of Trade for many years, before overzealous investigators wrongfully seized his properties and imprisoned him and members of his family. The corrupt officials were eventually caught by Emperor Eusebius and Rosattas exonerated, but not before he managed to escape Thyatis and claim asylum in Karameikos. Since then, the disaffected Rosattas has elected to stay in the kingdom and was recently granted the dominion of Verge. Born: AC 975. Hair: Blond, now gray. Height: 5' 3". Eyes: Green. A childhood bout of kobold flu has left Rosattas with severe arthritis.

Male human Ari5: HD 5d8+5; hp 24; Init -3; Spd 30; AC 8 (Dexterity penalty, *ring of protection* +1); Atks +3 melee (1d4/crit 19-20, dagger); SV Fort +2, Ref -2, Will +8; AL LN; Str 10, Dex 5, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 16.

Languages: Thyatian (Karameikan dialect), Traladaran, Elvish (Vyalia dialect).

Equipment: *Ring of protection* +1, *cloak of elvenkind*.

Skills: Appraise +8, Bluff +5, Diplomacy +8, Gather Information +7, Innuendo +5, Listen +6, Read Lips +6, Ride +4, Sense Motive +7.

Feats: Iron Will, Skill Focus: Diplomacy, Skill Focus: Appraise.

Feldian Lehenard, Officer in the Grand Army of Glantri.

Feldian is a mundaner—a person with no magical aptitude—, which makes him a second-class citizen in Glantri. Nevertheless, he managed to win the heart of Princess Juliana Vlaardoen many years ago. Though the Black Eagle has also taken an interest in her, Feldian is determined to fight for his love. Born: AC 983. Hair: Brown. Height: 5' 11". Eyes: Green. A handsome man, but completely unaware of the fact. When not in uniform, he dresses very simply.

Male human Ftr7: HD 7d10+7; hp 53; Init +1; Spd 30/20; AC 11 (Dexterity bonus) or

21 (full plate, large shield, Dexterity bonus); Atks +11/+6 melee (1d8+2/crit x2, masterwork long sword) or +12/+7 melee (1d8+6/crit x3, *heavy lance* +2); SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +2; AL LG; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 14.

Languages: Thyatian (Glantrian dialect).

Equipment: *Heavy lance* +2, *horseshoes of speed*, *potion of aid*.

Skills: Climb +2, Craft: Carpentry +4, Handle Animal +4, Jump +2, Ride +10, Spot +4.

Feats: Combat Reflexes, Mounted Combat, Ride-by Attack, Spirited Charge, Trample, Weapon Focus: Heavy Lance, Weapon Focus: Long Sword, Weapon Specialization: Heavy Lance.

Vincienzo di Randazzi, Baron of Ylourgne.

Vincienzo is the consummate gamesman—he will place bets on the slightest whim and he wins more often than not. He is particularly adept at games involving his summoned creatures and he was the champion dart-thrower at the Great School of Magic. Now he has turned his attentions to the greatest game in Glantri—politics. Born: AC 979. Hair: Black. Height: 5' 9". Eyes: Brown. Vincienzo always has a twinkle in his eye and his money pouch close at hand.

Male human Wiz/Conj10: HD 10d4; hp 31; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (Dexterity bonus); Atks +5 melee (1d4/crit 19-20/x2, dagger) or +10 ranged (1d4+1/crit x2, *dart* +1 of returning); SV Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +6; AL NG; Str 10, Dex 18, Con 11, Int 17, Wis 13, Cha 17.

Languages: Averoignian, Thyatian (Glantrian dialect).

Equipment: *Bag of tricks* (rust colored), *dart* +1 of returning (x2), *deck of illusions*, *rod of wonder*.

Skills: Alchemy +2, Bluff +5, Concentration +10, Craft (Woodworking) +3, Diplomacy +2, Knowledge (Arcana) +4, Pick Pocket +4, Profession (Gambler) +13, Sense Motive +4, Spellcraft +3.

Feats: Craft Wondrous Item, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Quicken Spell, Rapid Shot, Scribe Scroll, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Weapon Focus: Dart.

Most Wanted Infamous Villains

Basileios Zarides, Lord of Krakov.

Basileios was a corrupt Thyatian official who was forced to flee during Emperor Eusebius's governmental purges of AC 1013. Just before his illegal activities were exposed, he sought political asylum in Karameikos, posing as a wrongly persecuted noble. Since then, he has managed to bribe and connive his way into the ranks of Karameikan nobility. Born: AC 979. Hair: Black. Height: 6' 4". Eyes: Blue. Zarides is a tall rail of a man, constantly pale from lack of exposure to the sun and illness.

Human male Ftr1/Rog3: hp 18; Init -1; Spd 30; AC 9 (Dexterity penalty); Atks +3 melee (1d6/crit x2, short sword); SA Sneak attack +1d6; SD Uncanny dodge, Evasion; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +2; AL LE; Str 11, Dex 9, Con 7, Int 16, Wis 13, Cha 15.

Languages: Alasiyan, Ochalean, Thyatian (Thyatian dialect).

Equipment: *Circlet of persuasion*.

Skills: Bluff +6, Climb +4, Decipher Script +2, Diplomacy +3, Forgery +2, Gather Information +3, Handle Animal +4, Hide +2, Innuendo +3, Jump +4, Listen +2, Move Silently +2, Open Lock +2, Read Lips +2, Ride +4, Search +2, Sense Motive +2, Swim +4.

Feats: Alertness, Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus: Bluff, Weapon Focus: Short Sword.

Hara Rudraksha, Maharajah of Peshmir.

Eldest son of the *Maharajah* of Kadesh, Hara was groomed nearly from birth to join the ranks of the *buraiyas*. Keenly aware of his father's coldly pragmatic interests in his son, Hara grew to be a bitter, cruel man. Since the birth of his daughter in AC 1010, Hara's spirit has begun to lighten. Though he is still far from benevolent, his cruelty has tempered somewhat. His change of attitude, however, has put him at odds with his father and the cult of the *buraiyas*. Born: AC 980. Hair: Black. Height: 5' 11". Eyes: Green.

Hara wears his dark hair short and keeps a trim mustache. His right cheek bears a severe burn mark, legacy of a childhood punishment by his father.

Male human Ftr9/Bur3/Rog1: HD 9d10+4d6+26; hp 89; Init +3; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16 (Dexterity penalty, *scale mail* +1, *ring of protection* +2); Atks +17/+12/+7 melee (1d6+7/crit 18-20 x2, *unholy scimitar* +2), or +16/+11/+6 melee (1d4+4/crit 15-20 x2, *kukri* +1 of *wounding*); SA Sneak attack +1d6; SV Fort +9, Ref +7, Will +4; AL CN (E tendencies); Str 16, Dex 9, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 11, Cha 16.

Languages: Sindhi, Thyatian (Darokinian dialect).

Equipment: *Amulet of proof against detection and location*, *kukri* +1 of *wounding*, *ring of protection* +2, *scale mail* +1, *unholy scimitar* +2.

Skills: Climb +5, Disguise +3, Gather Information +3, Handle Animal +3, Hide +10, Intimidate +8, Jump +4, Knowledge (Nobility) +2, Knowledge (Religion) +4, Move Silently +10, Ride +4, Sense Motive +3.

Feats: Blind-Fight, Death Blow, Exotic Weapon Proficiency: Kukri, Improved Critical: Kukri, Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Point Blank Shot, Two Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus: Scimitar, Weapon Focus: Kukri, Weapon Specialization: Scimitar.

Spells: Currently, Hara Rudraksha does not receive spells from Kala. If his alignment should ever return to CE, he will cast spells as a 3rd level *buraiya* (-/1).

Kabir Rudraksha, Maharajah of Kadesh.

The *maharajah* once hoped to expand his dominion by marrying his son off to the daughter of the *Maharajah* of Peshmir and then assassinating him. Unfortunately, son Hara didn't play along with the plan. The two men are now bitter enemies and their dominions are embroiled in vicious civil war. Kabir is secretly the patron and leader of the *buraiyas*. Born: AC 957. Hair: Black, shaved bald. Height: 6' 1". Eyes: Gray. Though

aging, Rudraksha's dark eyebrows and short beard continue to give him a sinister look that is effective in intimidating his underlings.

Male human Bur10/Rog7: HD 17d6-7; hp 54; Init +5; Spd 30; AC 19 (Dexterity bonus, *amulet of natural armor* +4, *padded armor* +3); Atks +16/+11/+6 melee (1d4+1/crit 18-20, *assassin's kukri* +2), or +15/+10/+5 ranged (1d8/crit 19-20, *light crossbow* +2 of *distance*); SA sneak attack +9d6, death attack (DC 22), Spells; SD Uncanny Dodge, Evasion; SV Fort +4, Ref +13, Will +10; AL LE; Str 9, Dex 13, Con 8, Int 16, Wis 20, Cha 16.

Languages: Sindhi, Thyatian (Darokinian dialect), Hulean.

Equipment: *Amulet of natural armor* +4, *assassin's kukri* +2, *light crossbow* +2 of *distance*, *padded armor* +3, *ring of mind shielding*, *ring of regeneration*.

Skills: Balance +4, Bluff +8, Climb +3, Concentration +2, Decipher Script +2, Diplomacy +4, Disable Device +4, Disguise +7, Escape Artist +6, Forgery +6, Gather Information +12, Hide +12, Innuendo +5, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (Nobility) +3, Knowledge (Religion) +15, Listen +5, Move Silently +12, Open Lock +3, Read Lips +4, Search +3, Sense Motive +7, Spot +3, Tumble +2, Use Rope +2.

Feats: Alertness, Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Silent Spell, Still Spell, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus: Kukri.

Spells: -/4/3/3/2.

Prestige Class: *Buraiya*

Cult of Personality

“My first memory of the power of the *buraiyas*? It was the day of a funeral for a venerable member of one of Kadesh’s most important families. A junior member of the clan had crossed the *buraiyas* and such an offense cannot be lightly forgiven. As we all sat in remembrance, the corpse arose from its tomb and began to attack the living members of his family. It slew them all—men, women and children—ignoring all others present. When the last of the clan lay dying, the zombie collapsed and became a corpse again.

“I was six years old at the time.”—Hara Rudraksha, from his unauthorized biography *Karma Sutra: The Life of a Tyrant*.

The *buraiyas* are a cult of assassins dedicated to the service of the Immortal Kala, Patron of Death and Reincarnation. They exist to promote Her ideals through guile, intimidation and murder. The *buraiyas* are most active in the northern highlands of Sind, where they have existed for centuries. Many times, the ruling *Rajadhirajas* of Sind have attempted to exterminate the cult, but they have continued to prosper. Their tactics of assassinating important personages and replacing them, as well as their rumored abilities to call upon the divine powers of Kala to reincarnate the souls of their most successful leaders and installing them into key positions in the ruling castes, have kept the *buraiyas* from ever being completely eliminated. Members of the cult almost single-handedly dominate the *Mumlyket* of Kadesh and they have penetrated very

deeply into the ranks of neighboring Peshmir’s nobility as well.

All is not completely well with the *buraiyas*, however. There is at least one sect within the cult that opposes current leader Kabir Rudraksha’s regime. Led by Salmalin Mahavir (Clr5/Bur5/Rog2) and largely clerics of Kala, they seek to turn the *buraiyas*’ political interests to more sacred goals.

Fighters, rogues and clerics are the most common members of the *buraiyas*. Monks,

sorcerers and wizards are occasionally found in their ranks as well, mercenaries who have been indoctrinated into the higher ranks of the cult. Barbarians, druids, rangers, bards and paladins are unlikely to join the *buraiyas*.

<i>Buraiya</i>						Hit Die: d6			
Lvl	Attack Bonus	Fort. Save	Ref. Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per Day			
						1	2	3	4
1	+0	+0	+2	+0	Sneak attack +1d6, death attack, poison use	0	-	-	-
2	+1	+0	+3	+0	Karmic concordance (+1), uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC)	1	-	-	-
3	+2	+1	+3	+1	Sneak attack +2d6	1	0	-	-
4	+3	+1	+4	+1	Karmic concordance (+2)	1	1	-	-
5	+3	+1	+4	+1	Sneak attack +3d6, uncanny dodge (can't be flanked)	1	1	0	-
6	+4	+2	+5	+2	Karmic concordance (+3)	1	1	1	-
7	+5	+2	+5	+2	Sneak attack +4d6	2	1	1	0
8	+6	+2	+6	+2	Karmic concordance (+4)	2	1	1	1
9	+6	+3	+6	+3	Sneak attack +5d6	2	2	1	1
10	+7	+3	+7	+3	Karmic concordance (+5), uncanny dodge (+1 vs. traps)	2	2	2	1

Lvl: The level of the *buraiya*.

Attack Bonus: The *buraiya's* attack bonus, added to the character's normal attack bonus.

Fort. Save: The save bonus on Fortitude saving throws, added to the character's normal save bonus.

Ref. Save: The save bonus on Reflex saving throws, added to the character's normal save bonus.

Will Save: The save bonus on Will saving throws, added to the character's normal save bonus.

Special: Level-dependent class features.

Spells Per Day: These are divine spells (see the *Player's Handbook*, Chapter 12) that are prepared and cast just as clerics cast their spells. For all spell effects dependent on the caster's level, treat the *buraiya* as equal to his or her *buraiya* level.

Requirements

To qualify to become a *buraiya*, a character must fulfill all the following criteria:

Alignment: Any evil.

Move Silently: 8 ranks

Hide: 8 ranks

Knowledge (Religion): 4 ranks.

Special: The *buraiya* must be entombed for one week in a crypt.

Class Skills

The *buraiya's* class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are:

Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int, each skill taken separately), Decipher Script (Int, exclusive skill), Disable Device (Dex), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Innuendo (Wis), Intimidate (Cha), Intuit Direction (Wis), Jump (Str), Knowledge (Religion) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Open Lock (Dex), Pick Pockets (Dex), Read Lips (Int, exclusive skill), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Spot (Wis), Swim (Str),

Tumble (Dex), Use Magic Device (Cha, exclusive skill), Use Rope (Dex).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Class Features

Weapon and Armor Proficiency:

Buraiyas are proficient with the dagger (any type), dart, *kukri*, pick (any type), sap, short bow (normal and composite), short sword.

Sneak Attack: If a *buraiya* can catch an opponent flat-footed, he may strike a vital spot for extra damage. Any time the target would be denied a Dexterity bonus to AC (regardless of whether the target actually has a Dex bonus or not), or when the *buraiya* flanks the target, the *buraiya's* attack deals extra damage. The extra damage is +1d6 at 1st level and an additional 1d6 every two levels thereafter. This ability is otherwise identical to the rogue's sneak attack and is cumulative with any sneak attack capability the character has from other classes.

Death Attack: If the *buraiya* studies his victim for 3 rounds and then makes a sneak attack with a melee weapon that successfully deals damage, the sneak attack has the additional possibility of either paralyzing or killing the victim (*buraiya's* choice). While studying the victim, the *buraiya* can undertake other actions, so long as his attention stays focused on the target and the target does not detect the *buraiya* or recognize him as an enemy. If the victim of such an attack fails his Fortitude saving throw (DC 10 + the *buraiya's* class level + Intelligence modifier) against the kill effect, he dies. If the saving throw fails versus the paralysis effect, the victim's mind and body become enervated, rendering him completely helpless and unable to act for 1d6 rounds plus 1 round per level of the *buraiya*. If the saving throw succeeds, the attack is just a normal sneak attack. Once the *buraiya* has completed the 3 rounds of study, he must make the death attack within the next 3 rounds. If the death attack is attempted and fails, or if the *buraiya* does not make the attack within 3 rounds, 3 new

rounds of study are required before he can make another attempt at a death attack.

Karmic Concordance: Through his devotion to Kala and his awareness of the influence of Entropy, the *buraiya* can stave off the call of death. He gains a +1 bonus to saves versus death spells and magical death effects at 2nd level and an additional +1 every two levels thereafter. This is a supernatural ability.

Uncanny Dodge: Beginning at 2nd level, the *buraiya* gains the extraordinary ability to react to danger before his senses would normally allow him to become aware of it.

At 2nd level and above, the *buraiya* retains his Dexterity bonus to AC (if any) regardless of being caught flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker. (He still loses his Dexterity bonus to AC if immobilized.)

At 5th level, the *buraiya* can no longer be flanked. This defense denies rogues the ability to use flank attacks to sneak attack the *buraiya*. The exception to this defense is that a rogue at least four levels higher than the *buraiya* may flank and thus sneak attack him.

At 10th level, the *buraiya* gains an intuitive sense that alerts him to danger from traps. This ability grants the *buraiya* a +1 bonus to Reflex saves made to avoid traps.

If the *buraiya* has another class that grants the uncanny dodge ability, the *buraiya's* ability is determined by adding together his total class levels in the classes that grant the ability.

Spells: From 1st level and thereafter, the *buraiya* gains the ability to cast a limited number of spells. These spells are divine in nature, granted by the *buraiya's* patron Immortal, Kala and are subject to all rules on divine spells on page 156 of the *Player's Handbook* (including preparing and casting spells).

To cast a spell, the *buraiya* must have a Wisdom score of at least 10 + the spell's level. Thus, *buraiyas* with Wisdom scores lower than 10 may not cast these spells. *Buraiya* bonus spells are based on Wisdom and saves versus these spells have a DC of 10 + spell level + *buraiya's* Wisdom modifier

(if any). When the *buraiya* receives 0 spells of a given level, the *buraiya* may only receive bonus spells. A *buraiya* without a bonus spell for that level may not yet cast a spell of that level. The *buraiya's* spell list appears below.

Spell List

1st Level *Deathmatch*
 Detect poison
 Divine favor
 Inflict light wounds

2nd Level *Darkness*
 Death knell
 Inflict moderate wounds
 Undetectable alignment

3rd Level *Animate dead*
 Contagion
 Deeper darkness
 Inflict serious wounds

4th Level *Divine power*
 Inflict critical wounds
 Poison
 Reincarnate

Economica

Currency Exchange Fees

Currency	Fee	Currency	Fee
Almarrón	No Fee	Karameikos ²	10%
Atruaghin	No Fee	Kastelios	5%
Bellayne	5%	Minrothad	5%
Cimarron	No Fee	Nayce ²	5%
Darokin	5%	Narvaez	10%
Hillvale ¹	5%	Ostland	15%
Ethengar	No Fee	Rockhome ³	10%
Five Shires	5%	Sind	15%
Gargaña	5%	Soderfjord	No Fee
Glantri ²	10%	Thyatis	5%
Heldann	No Fee	Vestland ²	10%
Heldun	5%	Wendar	10%
Hule	15%	Ylaruam	30%
Ierendi ²	10%	Yavdlom	5%

Most nations add 5% surcharge to the regular fees for exchanging gems and treasures.

(1) Though Hillvale officially uses the Alphatian standard of currency, the Thyatian standard is often seen being readily used and accepted. Therefore the exchange fee is rarely observed and practiced.

(2) For gems and treasures, drop the usual 5% surcharge but double the exchange fee.

(3) 5% exchange fee maximum on gems and treasure. Gems are duty free (no import/export tax).

Economic Year (AC 1017) in Review

Continuing the service we began last year, we offer you a brief review of the economic year written by some of the most accomplished economic experts of Mystara.

For the first time, we are also able to bring you, our loyal readers, reports on trade in the mysterious Hollow World.

Old World and Beyond (courtesy of the Darokin Diplomatic Corps)

AC 1017 saw some promising developments in many areas, but some serious setbacks in others. The houses of Darokin have expanded their trade into most of Sind, though they face competition along the coast from the underhanded merchants of Minrothad and Thyatis. Trade in Ylaruam is still sluggish, well below prevailing levels under the enlightened Preceptor rulers, but at least there are some openings now and signs point to potential improvement in the future. The commerce of the houses of Darokin remains brisk in Karameikos, the Five Shires and even Glantri where continued sale of goods for rebuilding purposes combined with financial recovery from the Ethengar war has boosted trade to something close to previous levels. The new political situation in Tameronikas may allow a re-opening of Ylari markets.

While economic conditions in Thyatis have improved markedly over the past year, this has done less to improve the fortunes of Darokin's houses than it otherwise might have. This was due largely to two factors—first, continued trade friction during the early part of the year, during which the imperial government disgracefully discriminated against traders of the Western Defense League. Secondly, the continued retrograde policies of Eusebius in supporting native Thyatian merchants instead of allowing a level playing field.

Still, we are confident that continued pressure by the DDC on the Thyatians to open their market to fair competition will

eventually produce the desired results. Other opportunities have opened up in the meantime, as enterprising Darokinian traders have begun to penetrate the markets of Wendar to a greater degree and have likewise finally begun to expose the Shadow Elves to the benefits of trade. This has helped alleviate the economic crisis in Selenica somewhat, though things remain less than fully stable in the region. On the other hand, Vestland's membership in the Western Defense League is producing the hoped-for results, with Darokinian traders beginning to dominate the local markets. Trade with Rockhome has even improved significantly.

Sea-based trade remains sub-par for Darokin's merchant fleets, though the seafarers of House Linton have managed some recovery from last year's debacle. Still, market penetration by Thyatis and their Minrothaddan lackeys has left them in a dominant, almost monopolistic position with respect to sea trade. Eventually the Thyatians will confront the fact that closed economies tend to stagnate and only open competition leads to long-term prosperity. But, due to the short-term successes of their shortsighted policies, Darokinian coasters have chosen to concentrate on markets close to home, in the ports of the Five Shires, Karameikos, Vestland and even Soderfjord. In these areas, the potential of regaining significant market share in the sea trade is strong. House Linton's fortunes have improved in Ierendi as well. On account of these things, coupled with trade with Thyatis, necessary because of the size, significance and centrality of its markets, the enterprises of House Linton have returned to profitability. But pirates seem to plague the Sea of Dread and Ostlander raiders make the Western Sea of Dawn dangerous. Thus, sea trade is a very risky proposition. Only the significantly lower cost of moving goods by sea, which produces a much higher potential profit margin, makes these endeavors worth the high risk.

If Alphatian ports were a tempting marketplace last year, the same could not be said this year, as the economic hangover

from the sinking of Alphatia finally set in. This, coupled with the fact that the Thyatians and Minrothaddans have cornered most of the potential markets and the fact that, despite Nayce's wishful thinking on the matter, pirate activity remains a significant threat to honest merchants, makes ventures to Naycese ports unworthy of the risk of loss. Further increasing the undesirability of Naycese markets at this time is the fact that the pirates consistently sell captured crew and sailors into brutal slavery in Naycese kingdoms.

DDC Press Bureau, Darokin City, Kaldmont, AC 1017

Thyatian Empire (courtesy of the Prefect of the city of Thyatis)

The empire's economic recovery is proceeding briskly. Economic reforms that last year gave hope for future economic improvement have begun to bear fruit. This, coupled with a deliberate imperial policy directed towards the expansion of trade and the development of potential economic resources throughout the imperial heartland and its colonies, along with the alliance with Minrothad, has revitalized the fortunes of Thyatian merchant families. The empire has also used its influence to begin to develop a strong network of maritime trading bases to facilitate trade both within the empire and in friendly ports. A strong effort has also been initiated to create trade routes with far distant harbors, where Thyatian goods are unusual and which themselves have exotic products not commonly found in nearby nations. These ports are particularly valuable, because Thyatian and Minrothaddan merchants do not face the discriminatory trade practices of the Western Defense League in these markets.

Trade between metropolitan Thyatis and the Hinterlands of Davania, along with the City-State of Kastelios and the Thanegioth Isles, have begun to surpass the volume of trade prior to the Twaelar War. Peace with the Twaelar has opened that new market to trade, which the merchants of Seahome and the sea-elves of Actius especially have begun

to exploit. The re-integration of Ochalea and the Pearl Islands, along with what seems to be a period of stability on the Isle of Dawn for the first time since the Final Alphatian War, has allowed trade in these markets to grow significantly. So too, trade with allied Ostland and even in the Alphatian kingdoms of Nayce continues to expand. Trade with the lands controlled by the Heldannic Knights has become uneven as the year ends, as factional infighting leads to traders of various lands being in favor with one group but losing favor with another. Since the former patterns of trade, dominated by Darokinians, have been unsettled, this has created opportunities for those who are capable of seizing them. By playing both sides against the middle and making themselves indispensable intermediaries, imperial merchants have benefited from this.

While still in a state of recovery, trade in Thyatis is growing briskly. It has also been shown that on a fair playing field in neutral markets, like Yavdlom, the baronies of the Savage Coast, Nayce and coastal Sind, the efficient merchants of Thyatis are more than capable of holding their own against the traders of the Western Defense League. The houses of Darokin seem to do best only in their own protected markets and are being out-competed in ports beyond the league's pernicious influence.

As a result of these developments, many Thyatian ports have expanded their ability to handle increased volumes of trade. While some economic frictions exist, especially as the guilds of Minrothad adjust to Thyatian trade practices and vice versa, the future looks promising and the dark clouds have definitely lifted.

Office of Economic Information, Prefect of Thyatis, Kaldmont, AC 1017

Nayce (courtesy of the Minrothad Merchant Marine Guild)

The economies of Nayce have finally come face to face with the economic crisis they so long put off. Attempting to pretend that the loss of their largest and most developed market, the hub of trade in the region,

would have no effect helped them achieve apparent strength in the short run. But it has seemed to exacerbate things in the longer term. The available stock of reserves has been depleted, consumed over the previous years and economic reality in the face of a vanished Alphatian continent is beginning to set in. Though the Naycese information offices previously claimed trade was flourishing between their ports, this was mainly a shifting of stores of products produced in Alphatia, with little comparable production to replace them as these reserve stores became depleted. Thus, the kingdoms of Nayce now confront the bitter reality that the largest available market with the potential to even partially replace vanished Alphatia is in Thyatis. Low tariffs are now exposed as a necessity, a requirement to attract trade to the slumping markets of Nayce. Foreign merchants—especially those of Karameikos, Minrothad and Thyatis—dominate many trade-lanes, though with the recent cooling of relations between Karameikos and Nayce, the traders of Karameikos are not as common as they once were.

The kingdoms of Bellissaria have a very strong agricultural base, but aside from the Thyatian mainland and the now-beleaguered and somewhat destitute Alphatian ports holding out in Esterhold, there are few markets for this volume of produce now that the Alphatian mainland has vanished. For some years, this slack was taken up by providing food to support the over-large Naycese armed forces, but this has proven economically crippling in the long run. Conversely, value-added products—finished goods—once largely produced in the cities of the Alphatian mainland and then sold in the other kingdoms (in exchange for raw resources, like the agricultural produce of Bellissaria and the mineral wealth of Esterhold, though much of that was actually sent as tribute), are hard to come by. Only a few Naycese kingdoms have cities that produce such goods in quantities greater than local need, so few ports are able to export such goods profitably. Many Naycese kingdoms are opting for self-sufficiency as

part of their traditional decentralization, but this only serves to further depress the internal trade of Nayce and reliance upon foreign markets—goods imported from, say, scorned Thyatis and agricultural produce exported in exchange—is growing. This is further highlighted by the fact that several of Nayce’s more developed urban centers — especially the ones now controlled by Thothia—are increasingly less cooperative with other Naycese kingdoms, while other urban centers are hardly more than sleepy Bellissarian towns now burdened with handling an influx of settlers. Once the markets adjust to these settlers, the long-term prospects may be promising as a result of their arrival. But in the short term they strain an already tentative situation, especially since the normally insular Bellissarians are not always as welcoming to such an influx as the inhabitants of other lands might be. This has had the effect of delaying economic re-adjustment and the integration of the new arrivals into the pattern of commerce in the island continent that forms the core of Nayce.

Similarly, though the political economy may be changing for the better with the new development of a stronger decision-making authority, politics in Nayce have to this point contributed to the growing economic woes. Though the warning signs had been present for quite some time, these approaching difficulties were ignored and possible solutions put off for as long as possible. Meanwhile the council lavishly funded prestigious projects—such as expanded *skyship* and *submersible* construction (including the impressive *Torpin* project and now the *Reaver* class as well) and the massive efforts dedicated to building the undersea city of Torenal. This latter surely promises to enhance Nayce’s reputation as the worthy successor to Alphatia but seems otherwise superfluous and is a drain on limited funds. Meanwhile, economic reconstruction funds have been cut as funding for these projects have soared. This has been a hammer blow to trade, as supplementary exactions in addition to the nominal taxes have had to be levied on a seemingly ad-hoc and arbitrary

basis. This has led to uneven results, putting large burdens on some kingdoms which are expected to bear extra-ordinary military or construction burdens that others have avoided, leading to several financial crises. The principal, but by no means sole, example of this has been Aquas, which for some time has served as the true hub of Naycese activity and born an inordinate burden as a result, which has had a significant negative impact on that city's economic prospects, though it might otherwise be one of Nayce's more advanced cities.

Due to these factors, animals and meat once imported by Notrion through the port of Aaslin have become unaffordable as the grain markets there have collapsed, especially as agricultural places like Aegos have recovered their pre-war status and increasingly the people of Notrion are relying on local production. This has had a spread effect on the markets of Meriander and Dawnrim. And as strife in Norwold has continued, the markets for arms and armor have improved, but other imports have suffered as the people devote their resources to perseverance in the face of local dangers. Commerce in East Portage continues to be brisk, as it is a neutral transit point for many merchants and increasing Thyatian trade passing through the ports of Heldun and Aegopoli have caused a mild economic boom there as well. Heldun's ports, including Helskir, are rebounding in the wake of the Heldannic occupation, under the guidance of Queen Asteriela's reconstruction efforts. Those efforts benefit the nation because, unlike the rest of the Naycese area, resources aren't diverted to prestigious but fiscally unwise projects, like new undersea cities and extensive *submersible* and *skyship* construction. These are bright spots in an otherwise dismal economic period, as facilities on Bellissaria built to handle a volume of trade destined for Alphatia have finally had to make long-delayed cut backs to economize. Warehouses no longer used for goods, which are unavailable in any case, have instead been refurbished as housing for

refugees. It should also be pointed out that, unfortunately, an over-optimistic estimate of port capacities, whereby towns with hardly more people than Threshold in Karameikos were reported as having a trade capacity equal to Minrothad City, crept into prior economic reports submitted by the Naycese information office through the Naycese embassy in Karameikos. *[It is for the reason of overly optimistic but sometimes inaccurate reports in previous years that the Minrothad Merchant Marine's Guild is reporting on the area this year, rather than Nayce itself. Ed.]*

Sea of Dread (courtesy of the Minrothad Merchant Sailors Guild)

With the successful termination of the Twaelar War, as well as the colonization of the Thanegioth Archipelago, trade throughout the Sea of Dread has improved. Markets from Yavdlom to Ochalea are being developed by both the traders of Minrothad and our counterparts in the rest of the Thyatian Empire. This is despite the fact that dangers continue to plague seafarers in the central basin of the sea, the vast span of water between Brun and the Thanegioth Isles. The development of imperial way-stations has made this area somewhat safer for Thyatian shipping, but it remains less than safe for the vessels of other nations. This redounds to the benefit of Minrothad, as these facilities are available to our merchants as members of the empire, but denied to our Darokinian and Karameikan competitors.

Economic ties to the formerly hostile Twaelar, while still in their infancy, show much potential. So too the bases at the head of the Serpent Peninsula promise to open strong trade through the northern Sea of Dread from imperial ports to the lands beyond the region. The continuing rise to prominence of the tradesmen of Kastelios, far from undermining our own efforts in the region, has proved complementary to it. This has led to the further opening of markets to the southwest of Davania. So, though dangerous to the unwary, the Sea of

Dread continues to see the highest development of trade in the region.

Local Price Adjustments (as of the end of the year)

The following table works in accordance to the rules presented in both GAZ7 *The Minrothad Guilds* and GAZ11 *The Republic of Darokin*. For those without the above-mentioned products, assume that each +/-1 in the Price Adjustment column equals to a +/-10% in price for the mentioned goods. Yearly changes to prices are dependent upon what the events and circumstances of the year have wrought on the respective countries. Whether it was commitment of materials for a war effort, natural disasters, or any of the various trade difficulties, prices have been modified to reflect fluctuating prices.

Note that in places like Thyatis, most of the oil produced is either olive oil or fish oils.

This year we provide the merchant with an additional service, the “quality” indicator. This shows up in listings as ***Bold Italic*** and are products considered to be of exceptional quality produced by and available in the given market. These products receive a further +2 bonus when sold in other markets/ports, except those which export the same product. For example, when selling the wine of Vyonnes, one would add an additional +2 modifier to the sale price, thus if it was sold in Akorros, for example, the net bonus would be +4. This additional quality modifier would not apply in places that receive a negative modifier to the product. For instance, the Vyonnes quality bonus for wine would not apply in Arcadiapolis, since that town is a wine-exporter itself.

City	Nation	Class	Modifiers to Price Adjustment
Aaslin	Notrion (Nayce)	C	Grain -8, Meat -3 Wine +5, Textiles +2, Common Metals +4, Dyes +3, Glassware +3, Cloth +2
Abbashan	Ylaruam	D	Animals -2, Meat -2, Hides -2, <i>Mounts -2</i> Weapons +3, Armor +3
Actius	Thyatis (Thyatis)	C	Fish -2, Salt -2, Common Metals -2 Common Wood +3, Cloth +3, Textiles +3
Aegopoli	Aegos (Nayce)	D	Grain -3, Meat -3, Animals -3 Weapons +5, Oil +3, Glassware +3
Akesoli	Darokin	D	Fish -3, Porcelain -2, Tea -2, Pottery -2 Salt +2, Silk +3, Spices +2, Weapons +2
Akorros	Darokin	C	Fish -3, Hides -3, Meat -3 Cloth +2, Grain +1, Semiprecious Stones +2, Wine +2
Alchemos	Meriander (Nayce)	D	Grain -5, Meat -3, Common Wood -3, Precious Wood -2, Oil -4, <i>Dyes & Pigments -2</i> Textiles +2, Salt +1, Glassware +4, Silk +3, Pottery +1, Cloth +2
Alinquin	Dawnrim (Nayce)	D	Grain -5, Meat -4, Fish -3, Furs -2, Animals -2 Beer +1, Pottery +1, Wine +2, Glassware +1

Alpha	Alpha (Nayce)	C	Grain/Vegetables -5, Meat -3, Precious Wood -2 Ivory +5, Coffee +5, Weapons +4, Wine +3, Armor +5
Altendorf	Heldann	D	Animals -2, Dyes -2, Grain/Vegetables -2, Meat -2 Weapons +2, Armor +2, Pottery +2, Salt +1, Common Metals +1
Anchorage	Esterhold (Nayce)	D	Common Wood -3, Gems -2 Grain & Vegetables +2, Meat +2
Angorit	Yavdlom	D	Common Wood -2, Common Metals -3, Gems -3 Silk +3, Pottery +3, Weapons & Tools +3
Aquas	Aquas (Nayce)	C	Fish -3, Gems -3, Semiprecious Stones -3 Common Metals +2, Common Wood +2, Wine & Spirits +3
Argevin	Thyatis (Thyatis)	C	Salt -2, Dye & Pigments -3, Wine -2 Precious Woods +2, Porcelain +2, Spices +2, Tea +2
Arcadiapolis	Thyatis (Thyatis)	D	Wine -2, Oil -2 Common Metals +3, Hides +2
Athenos	Darokin	C	Gems -2, Glassware -3, Ivory -3, Meat -2, Monsters -2 Animals +2, Precious Wood +2, Porcelain +3, Textiles +2
Atruaghin	Atruaghin	E	Coffee -3, Mounts -2, Tobacco -4, Common Wood -2 Beer +3, Semiprecious Stones +3, Weapons +1
Baratpur	Sind	D	Salt -2, Mounts -2 Weapons +2, Common Woods +3, Fish +3
Bayville	Thyatis (Thyatis)	D	Animals -2, Meats -2 Common Metals +2, Semiprecious Stones +2
Beitung	Ochalea (Thyatis)	B	Silk -5, Grain -3, Animals -2, Porcelain -3 Precious Woods +3, Rare Books +3, Cloth +3
Biazzan	Thyatis (Thyatis)	C	Silk -2, Spices -2, Tea -2, Common Metals -3 Animals +2, Ivory +2, Rare Books +2
Blueside	Lagrius (Nayce)	C	Fish -4, Common Wood -3, Grain -2, Meat -2 Common Metals +1, Glassware +1, Porcelain +1
Bridgeport	Dawnrim (Nayce)	E	Fish -2, Coffee & Tobacco -3, Grain & Vegetables -3 Hides & Furs +3, Cloth +3
Bridleton	Thyatis (Thyatis)	E	Mounts -2 , Grain & Vegetables -2 Wine & Spirits +2, Cloth +2

Cairnport	Meriander (Nayce)	D	Grain & Vegetables -2, Fish -3, Meat -3 Cloth +3, Hides & Furs +3, Spices +2
Castellan	Soderfjord	E	Common Metals -4, Dyes -2, Semiprecious Stones -3 Armor +3, Fish +2, Pottery +2, Weapons +2
Coppertown	Dawnrim (Nayce)	E	Common Metals -4, Precious Metals -2, Semiprecious Stones -3 Weapons & Tools +3, Silk +3, Beer & Ale +3
Corunglain	Darokin	B	Gems -3, Monsters -2, Semiprecious Stones -3 Hides +3, Pottery +2, Weapons & Tools +3
Cove Harbor	Minrothad (Thyatis)	E	Cloth -2, Wine/Spirits -2 Common Metals +2, Common Woods +2
Cross Road	Ne'er-do-well (Nayce)	D	Grain -1, Common Metals -2, Animals -1 Weapons & Armor +2, Common Wood +2, Cloth +2, Textiles +2
Crownhaven	Notrion (Nayce)	E	Grain & Vegetables -6, Meat -4 Cloth +4, Pottery +4
Cubia	Ylaruam	E	Pottery -2, Dye/Pigments -3, Mounts -2 Grain +3, Meat +3, Hides +3
Darokin City	Darokin	A	Common Metals -2, Common Woods -3, Hides -2, Grain -3, Ivory -2 , Textiles -3, Beer -2, Tobacco -2 Gems +3, Monsters +3, Mounts +3, Precious Metals +4, Weapons +2, Precious Woods +2
Dawnpoint	Thyatis (Thyatis)	C	Fish -2, Animals -2, Pottery -2 Wine & Spirits +2, Common Wood +2
Dengar & Evenmur	Rockhome	B	Armor -2 , Gems -3, Weapons & Tools -2 Animals +4, Grain +4, Tobacco +3
Deirdren	Heldun (Thyatis/Nayce)	D	Common Metals -2, Monsters -3, Semiprecious Stones -2 Tea +3, Glassware +2, Pottery +2
Dolos	Darokin	D	Common Wood -3, Semiprecious Stones -2 Weapons & Tools +3, Wine & Spirits +3
Dubbo	Eirundrynn (Nayce)	E	Common Metals -4, Semiprecious Stones -3 Cloth +3, Textiles +3
Dunadale	Heldun (Thyatis/Nayce)	B	Porcelain -2, Weapons -2, Monsters -4, Gems -2, Grain/Vegetables -2 Tea +4, Ivory +4, Glassware +3
East Portage	Hillvale (Nayce)	C	Beer -2, Grain -2, Dyes & Pigments -2 Common Wood +2, Tea +2, Coffee +2

Edairo	Thothia (Nayce)	B	Grain -2, Fish -2, Common Wood -2, Wine -2 , Ivory -2 Cloth +2, Tea +2, Porcelain +2, Spices +3, Silk +3, Precious Metals +3
Ekto	Ekto (Nayce)	D	Weapons & Tools -3, Armor -3 Common Wood +3, Common Metals +3, Tea +2, Silk +3
Elstrich	Darokin	D	Animals -3, Meat -2, Grain & Vegetables -2 Cloth +2, Common Metals +3, Weapons & Tools +2
Ethengar (no set city)	Ethengar	E	Hides -3, Mounts -2 , Salt -3 Common Metals +5, Common Woods +4, Tea +3
Fabia	Ylaruam	F	Dye/Pigments -2, Silk -2 Fish +2, Common Wood +3
Faraway	Verdan (Nayce)	C	Gems -3, Semiprecious Stones -3, Precious Metals -3 Weapons & Tools +3, Armor +3, Grain & Vegetables +2
Favaro	Darokin	E	Animals -3, Grain -3 Beer & Ale +3, Common Metals +3
Feather Fall	Aeria (Nayce)	C	Grain -2, Meat -2 Common Wood +2, Oil +2, Silk +3, Glassware +2, Rare Books +2
Filtot	Ierendi	E	Oil -3, Salt -3, Grain -2 Rare Books +3, Meat +3, Monsters +3
Foreston	Thyatis (Thyatis)	E	Spices -2, Porcelain -3 Silk +2, Precious Metals +2
Fort Ballarat	Surshield (Nayce)	D	Monsters -3, Ivory -3 Weapons & Tools +3, Armor +3
Fort Merrelin	Surshield (Nayce)	D	Mounts -3, Grain & Vegetables -2, Fish -2 Weapons & Tools +3, Armor +3
Freiburg	Heldann	C	Animals -2, Porcelain -2, Common Wood -2 Armor +3, Oil +3, Weapons +3
Gapton	Minrothad (Thyatis)	F	Tea -2, Beer -2 Rare Books +2, Spices +2, Pottery +2
Garganin	Garganin	C	Animals -3, Spices -3, Tobacco -3, Ivory -3, Coffee -2 Silk +3, Pottery +3, Textiles +4
Glantri City	Glantri	B	Monsters -5, Rare Books -2 , Pottery -6 Gems +4, Glassware +3, Tobacco +3, Weapons +2
Glaugnor	Emerond	C	Precious Woods -4 , Gems -4 Wine & Spirits +3, Silk +3

Goldleaf	Thyatis (Thyatis)	D	Common Metals -3, Precious Metals -3 Oil +3, Meat +4
Grauenberg	Heldann	E	Animals -2, Common Metals -4, Hides -2 Oil +2, Salt +2, Fish +2, Weapons +2, Armor +2
Grey Bay	Thyatis (Thyatis)	E	Meat -3, Oil -2 Beer & Ale +2, Pottery +2
Hockstein	Heldann	E	Hides -2, Grain & Vegetables -2, Beer & Ale -2 Spices +2, Weapons +2, Armor +2, Common Wood +2
Harbortown	Minrothad (Thyatis)	C	Fish -2, Dyes -2, Animals -3 Spices +2, Meat +2, Wine +2
Hattias	Thyatis (Thyatis)	C	Meat -3, Hides & Furs -3, Animals -3 Beer & Ale +2, Weapons +2, Armor +2
Helskir	Heldun (Thyatis/Nayce)	C	Dyes -3, Salt -2 Fish +2, Hides +2, Coffee +4, Pottery +2
Hillcape	Thyatis (Thyatis)	E	Common Metals -2, Pottery -2 Meat +2, Tea +2
Hillfork	Thyatis (Thyatis)	E	Animals -2, Oil -2, Wine -2 Textiles +2, Weapons & Tools +2
Horken	Horken (Nayce)	C	Grain -3, Meat -3, Common Wood -2 Common Wood +5, Tea +1, Spices +1, Textiles +2, Silk +2
Ierendi	Ierendi	C	Fish -2, Precious Metals -2, Spices -2 Dyes +3, Cloth +3, Animals +3, Silk +2, Meat +2
Ilioloosti	Ilioloosti	C	Animals -3, Meats -3, Grain & Vegetables -2, Pottery -3 Silk +3, Armor +2, Weapons +2, Porcelain +3
Ionace	Ionace (Nayce)	D	Monsters -3, Gems -3, Precious Metals -3 Weapons & Tools +3, Armor +3, Silk +4, Wine & Spirits +3
Izmira	Emerond	C	Precious Woods -4 , Monsters -3, Spices -4 Silk +3, Porcelain +3, Wine & Spirits +4, Rare Books +3
Jaibul	Jaibul	D	Animals -2, Precious Metals -2, Oil -2 Silk +2, Wine +2, Spices +2, Rare Books +3
Jahore	Sind	C	Textiles -2, Silk -2, Fish -2, Gems -2, Precious Metals -2 Tea +2, Dye & Pigments +2, Common Woods +2, Mounts +3, Precious Woods +3

Jaboor	Ylaruam	E	Coffee -2, Oil -3, Glassware -2 Meat +3, Spices +4, Wine +2, Weapons +1
Julinius	Thyatis (Thyatis)	C	Salt -2, Dye & Pigments -2, Fish -2 Common Wood +2, Common Metals +2, Semiprecious Stones +2
Kantridae	Thyatis (Thyatis)	D	Grain & Vegetables -2, Fish -3, Wine & Spirits -2 Pottery +2, Glassware +2, Common Wood +2
Kastelios	Kastelios	B	Pottery -2 , Oil -3, Dye & Pigments -4 Common Wood +2, Cloth +3, Glassware +4
Karakandar	Sind	C	Fish -2, Semiprecious Stones -3, Precious Metals -2 Silk +2, Spice +2, Mounts +3
Katambwe	Yavdlom	C	Cocoa -3, Precious Wood -3, Spices -3 Silk +3, Cloth +3, Weapons & Tools +3
Kelvin	Karameikos	C	Glassware -2, Pottery -3, Precious Metals -2 Ivory +3, Meat +2, Cloth +2
Kendach	Hespiria (Thyatis)	C	Common Metals -3, Semiprecious Stones -3, Monsters -2 Weapons & Tools +3, Armor +3, Mounts +2
Kerendas	Thyatis (Thyatis)	B	Beer -2, Grain -3, Meat -3, Wine -2, Mounts -2 , Hides -2 Common Metals +3, Common Woods +2, Dyes +2, Oil +2
Khamrati	Sind	D	Salt -2, Animals -2, Mounts -2, Oil -2 Weapons +2, Grain +2, Common Woods +3
Kladanovic	Kladanovic	D	Fish -3, Mounts -2, Precious Metals -3, Gems -3 Common Woods +2, Spices +2, Silk +2
Kobos	Ierendi	E	Hides -2, Mounts -2, Fish -2 Ivory +2, Silk +3, Monsters +3
Kopstar	Glantri	D	Dyes -2, Oil -4, Precious Metals -3 Precious Woods +4, Semiprecious Stones +3, Spices +2
Lago Springs	Dawnrim (Nayce)	F	Common Wood -3, Common Metals -3 Weapons & Tools +3, Cloth +3
Landfall	Heldann	E	Hides & Furs -3, Monsters -2 Grain/Vegetables +3, Coffee +2
Latehar	Sind	E	Hides -3, Common Metals -2, Precious Metals -2 Weapons +2, Cloth +2, Beer +3
Lone Cove	Thyatis (Thyatis)	D	Wine & Spirits -2, Salt -2, Fish -2 Cloth +2, Meat +2

Luln & Halag	Karameikos	D	Beer & Ale -2, Common Metals -2 Cloth +2, Textiles +2
Machetos	Thyatis (Thyatis)	E	Animals -2, Grain & Vegetables -2, Wine & Spirits -2 Common Metals +2, Common Wood +2, Weapons & Tools +2
Mahasabad	Sind	D	Tea -3, Animals -2, Common Woods -2 Precious Metals +2, Semiprecious Stones +2, Books +3
Malfton	Minrothad (Thyatis)	E	Spices -2, Oil -2, Pottery -2, Grain/Vegetables -2 Common Wood +2, Meat +2, Beer +2, Cloth +2
Makrast	Thyatis (Thyatis)	D	Common Metals -3, Semiprecious Stones -3, Gems - 3, Armor -1, Weapons & Tools -1 Spices +2, Beer & Ale +3, Wine & Spirits +2, Oil +2
Marbletown	Lagrius (Nayce)	F	Semiprecious Stones -5, Common Metals -4 Rare Furs +3, Spices +2
Markos	Minaea	D	Common Woods -4, Precious Woods -3, Cloth -2 Wine +3, Weapons & Tools +3, Armor +3
Mesembria	Thyatis (Thyatis)	D	Wine -2, Oil -2, Fish -2 Hides +2, Salt +2
Minaea	Minaea	B	Pottery -2 , Oil -2, Cloth -2, Wine -3 Gems +2, Weapons & Tools +3, Silk +4, Porcelain +3
Minrothad	Minrothad (Thyatis)	B	Coffee -2, Tea -2, Beer -2, Fish -3, Dyes -2 Pottery +2, Cloth +2, Precious Metals +2, Gems +2, Common Wood +3
Mirros	Karameikos	C	Animals -2, Common Metals -2, Common Woods -2, Hides & Furs -3 Armor +2, Mounts +2, Rare Furs +4, Weapons +2
Mivosia	Mivosia	C	Animals -3, Meat -3, Precious Metals -3, Semiprecious Stones -4 Dye & Pigments +3, Hides +3, Wine & Spirits +3
Mkuba Mji	Yavdlom	C	Precious Metals -3, Common Metals -3, Grain & Vegetables -4 Glassware +3, Pottery +3, Silk +3
N'Goro	Yavdlom	D	Grain & Vegetables -2, Fish -3, Cocoa -2 Cloth +3, Weapons & Tools +3
Naral	Sind	E	Salt -2, Hides -2, Meat -2, Animals -2 Mounts +2, Common Woods +2, Cloth +2

Nemiston	Darokin	E	Common Wood -4, Beer & Ale -2 Weapons & Tools +3, Common Metal +2
Newkirk	Westrouke (Thyatis)	B	Dyes -5, Armor -3, Weapons & Tools -2, Common Woods -2 Coffee +3, Gems +3, Porcelain +2
Norrvik	Vestland	C	Salt -3, Silk -2, Weapons -2 Cloth +3, Ivory +3, Pottery +3
Ober's Mimbur	Five Shires	D	Common Metals -3, Precious Metals -2, Semiprecious Stones -3 Weapons & Tools +3, Cloth +3, Textiles +3, Common Wood +2
Oceansend	Heldann	D	Rare Books -2, Common Wood -4, Fish -2 Dyes & Pigments +2, Salt +2, Silk +3
Penhaligon	Karameikos	F	Common Metals -2, Beer & Ale -2 Weapons & Tools +3, Armor +2
Pilion	Thyatis (Thyatis)	D	Wine & Spirits -3, Animals -2 Cloth +2, Common Wood +3
Polakatsikes	Heldannic Davania	D	Animals -3, Grain & Vegetables -3 Common Metals +3, Ale & Beer +3
Port Hatti	Thyatis (Thyatis)	C	Hides -2, Animals -2, Oil -2 Cloth +2, Common Wood +2
Port Lucinius	Thyatis (Thyatis)	B	Fish -3, Oil -2, Dye & Pigments -2 Common Wood +3, Cloth +2, Beer & Ale +2
Port Marlin	Esterhold (Nayce)	D	Common Wood -3, Animals -2, Fish -3 Pottery +2, Beer & Ale +2, Coffee +2
Princetown	Lagrius (Nayce)	E	Fish -2, Grain & Vegetables -3, Wine & Spirits -2 Fine Porcelain +3, Silk +3, Gems +2
Raedestos	Thyatis (Thyatis)	D	Wine & Spirits -2, Oil -2 Common Metals +2, Common Wood +2
Rafielton	Aengmor	D	Monsters -2, Rare Furs -2, Rare Books -2 Grain +2, Meat +2, Common Metals +2
Raneshwar	Sind	F	Animals -2, Textile -2, Hides -2, Monsters -2, Precious Metals -2 Salt +3, Grain +3, Fish +3, Silk +2
Raven Scarp	Hinterlands (Thyatis)	C	Precious Woods -3, Spices -3, Monsters -3 Cloth +3, Armor +3, Weapons & Tools +3
Redstone Castle & Port Donaghadee	Redstone (Thyatis)	C	Armor -2, Weapons & Tools -2, Semiprecious Stones -2 Common Metals +2, Wine & Spirits +2, Hides +2

Retebius	Thyatis (Thyatis)	D	Animals -2, Hides -2, Rare Furs -2 Monsters +4, Weapons & Tools +2
Rifflian	Karameikos	E	Monsters -2, Common Wood -2 Beer & Ale +3, Textiles +2
Rock Harbor	Esterhold (Nayce)	E	Semiprecious Stones -3, Fish -3, Common Metals -3 Meats +3, Common Wood +3, Oil +2
Sambay	Sind	B	Cloth -2, Grain -3, Spices -2, Silk -2 Mounts +2, Dye & Pigments +2, Common Woods +3, Precious Woods +3
Sandapur	Sind	D	Spices -2, Grain -2, Animals -3 Mounts +2, Porcelain +2, Common Woods +3, Precious Woods +2
Sayr Ulan	Sind	B	Rare Books -2, Salt -2, Spices -3 Common Woods +3, Fish +3, Tea +3
Seagirt	Pearl Islands (Thyatis)	C	Vegetables -3, Fish -3, Gems -3, Pottery -2, Spices -3, Tea & Coffee -3 Precious Wood +3, Wine +3, Weapons & Tools +3, Cloth +3
Seahaven	Meriander (Nayce)	D	Grain & Vegetables -3, Fish -3, Salt -3 Cloth +3, Pottery +3, Fine Porcelain +3
Seahome	Minrothad (Thyatis)	D	Common Wood -3, Precious Wood -3 Silk +3, Dyes +3, Hides/Furs +2
Selenica	Darokin	B	Cloth -2 , Precious Wood -2, Rare Books -1 Dyes +4, Fish +4, Glassware +3
Selymbria	Thyatis (Thyatis)	D	Oil -2, Wine -2 Common Wood +2, Common Metals +2
Shireton	Five Shires	D	Beer -3, Grain -2, Tobacco -3 , Wine -2 Coffee +3, Fish +3, Tea +2
Serison	Thonia	B	Beer & Ale -3, Oil -3, Ivory -4, Rare Furs -4 Silk +5, Porcelain +5, Glassware +4
Skyfyr	Blackrock (Nayce)	D	Beer -2, Common Metals -3, Semiprecious Stones -3, Precious Metals -3, Gems -3 Animals +2, Grain +3, Wine +2, Meat +2, Weapons +3, Mounts +2, Armor +3
Soderfjord	Soderfjord	C	Common Woods -4, Grain -2 Armor +3, Wine +3, Weapons +2
South Harbor	Turmoil (Nayce)	E	Grain & Vegetables -2, Fish -3, Meat -3 Weapons & Tools +3, Beer & Ale +3, Armor +3

Spearpoint	Surshield (Nayce)	B	Grain -2, Meat -2, Weapons -2, Armor -2, Wine -2 Common Metals +3, Salt +2, Glassware +3, Spices +2, Textiles +3, Cloth +3, Silk +4
Stahl	Rockhome	C	Ivory -3, Monsters -3, Precious Metals -4 Meat +4, Silk +3, Textiles +4
Stronghold	Minrothad (Thyatis)	E	Weapons/Tools -2, Armor -2 Common Metals +3, Grain/Vegetables +2
Surra-Man-Raa	Ylaruam	F	Precious Metals -4, Pottery -2, Rare Books -2, Monsters -3 Weapons +3, Silk +3, Cloth +3
Tameronikas	Ylaruam	D	Animals -3, Dye & Pigments -2, Tea -3, Mounts -1 Glassware +2, Porcelain +2, Salt +2, Weapons +2, Armor +2
Tanakumba	Yavdlom	B	Cocoa -4, Coffee -3, Fish -3, Gems -3, Precious Woods -3, Ivory -2 Grain +3, Meat +3, Silk +3, Precious Metals +4, Cloth +3
Tel Akbir	Thyatis (Thyatis)	C	Coffee -2, Oil -2, Wine & Spirits -2 Cloth +2, Dyes +2, Hides +2
Tenobar	Darokin	D	Cloth -4, Fish -5, Pottery -5 Hides +2, Precious Metals +2, Salt +3
Terentias	Thyatis (Thyatis)	C	Oil -2, Fish -2 Common Wood +2, Weapons & Tools +2
Thanasis	Minaea	C	Semiprecious Stones -4, Gems -3, Common Metals - 3, Precious Metals -3 Wine +3, Textiles +3, Ivory +3, Silk +2
Thantabbar	Five Shires	E	Animals -2, Grain & Vegetables -2, Tobacco -2 Tea +3, Coffee +2, Spices +2
Threshold & High Forge	Karameikos	D	Common Wood -3, Common Metals -2 Pottery +2, Coffee +3
Thyatis City	Thyatis (Thyatis)	A	Armor -3, Silk -2, Spider Silk -2 , Weapons/Tools - 3, Glassware -2, Pottery -3 , Porcelain -2, Cloth -3, Textiles -3, Wine -2 Gems +2, Grain +3, Oil +2, Precious Metals +2, Rare Furs +2, Spices +3, Hides +2, Meat +2, Animals +2, Tea +2, Rare Books +2, Semiprecious Stones (Marble) +2
Torion	Thyatis (Thyatis)	D	Fish -2, Tea -2, Spices -2 Precious Woods +3, Ivory +3

Tothmeer	Five Shires	D	Common Wood -3, Beer & Ale -2 Fish +3, Textiles +1
Tresa	Minaea	D	Pottery -3, Animals -2, Grain & Vegetables -3, Common Wood -3 Common Metals +3, Spices +2, Weapons & Tools +2
Trikelios	Trikelios (Nayce)	D	Grain -2, Fish -2, Beer -2 Common Wood +2, Common Metals +2, Tea +1, Textiles +2
Tyjaret	Tyjaret	D	Fish -3, Animals -2, Salt -2 Common Woods +2, Cloth +3
Uhuru	Yavdlom	D	Precious Woods -3, Spices -3 Cloth +3, Textiles +3, Pottery +3
Vanya's Rest	Heldannic Davania	E	Weapons +3, Armor +3
Verdun	Minrothad (Thyatis)	D	Common Woods -2, Cloth -1, Rare Books -3, Precious Woods -2 Furs +3, Dyes +3, Silk +3, Salt +2
Vinton	Thyatis (Thyatis)	D	Wine & Spirits -3 , Porcelain -2, Fish -2 Pottery +2, Textiles +2, Common Wood +2
Vyonnes	Glantri	E	Rare Furs -3, Textiles -3, Wine -2 Beer +3, Meat +4, Silk +3
Wendar City	Wendar	D	Common Wood -3, Hides & Furs -2, Rare Furs -2, Precious Wood -2 Weapons +2, Textiles +3, Cloth +2, Salt +3, Grain +3
West Portage	Hespiria (Thyatis)	C	Common Wood -2, Dye & Pigments -2, Coffee -2 Cloth +2, Weapons & Tools +2, Oil +2
Wymar	Horken (Nayce)	F	Common Metals -4, Semiprecious Stone -4 Meat +3, Rare Furs +3, Cloth +3
Ylaruam	Ylaruam	C	Oil -2, Porcelain -3, Semiprecious Stones -4, Rare Books -2 Coffee +4, Mounts +3, Tobacco +4, Weapons +2, Armor +2
Zeaburg	Ostland	C	Fish -3, Cloth -2, Textiles -2 Common Woods +2, Meat +3, Weapons +2, Armor +2

In addition to the contemporary economic resources available from Darokin, Nayce and Minrothad, we here at *Josbuan Gallidox*

Publishing have also been afforded similar reports from Bellayne.

City	Nation	Class	Modifiers to Price Adjustment
Ah'roog	Shazak	E	Animal Hides -3, Pottery -2, Live Monsters -3, Rare Wood -2 Grain +2, Meat +2, Common Metals +3
Asgamoth	Herath	C	Silk -4 , Rare Books -4, Live Monsters -3 Meat +3, Grain +3, Weapons +3
Ayskudag	Yozgulak (Hule)	C	Fish -3, Grain -2, Gems -2 Common Metals +2, Silk +2
Azkoran	Azardjian	C	Cloth -3, Wine -2, Common Metals -2, Common Woods -2 Animals +2, Books +2, Monsters +2, Salt +3
Azurun	Yozgulak (Hule)	C	Grain -4, Cloth -2, Gems -2, Glassware -2 Common Metals +2, Salt +2, Dyes +2, Silk +2
Boa Mansão	Texeiras	C	Wood -3, Ships -3 Grain +2, Silk +2, <i>Smokepowder</i> +3
Boyâzka	Yozgulak (Hule)	D	Fish -3, Glassware -2, Gems -2 Meat +1, Common Metals +2, Weapons +2
Ciudad de León	Torreón	D	Weapons -2 , Wood -2, Grain -1, Meat -1 Wine +2, <i>Smokepowder</i> +2
Ciudad Huelca	Guadalante	E	Mounts -3 , Livestock -3, Animal Hides -3 Silk +2, Grain +2, Spirits +3
Ciudad Matacán	Saragón	D	Rare Books -3, Scientific Gadgets -2, Grain -2 Fine Art +2, Precious Metals +2
Ciudad Real	Gargoña	D	Fine Art -3 , Rare Books -2, <i>Smokepowder</i> -1 Grain +3, Silk +2, Meat +2
Ciudad Tejillas	Almarrón	D	Precious Metals -4 , Tobacco -3, Coffee -2 Firearms +3, Weapons +3, Silk +3
Cirkara	Eivanjan (Hule)	D	Grain -3, Animals -3, Meat -2, Spirits -2 Common Metals +1, Porcelain +2, Glassware +2, Precious Metals +3
Deauvais	Renardie	D	Wine -2 , Animal Hides -3 Grain +2, Coffee & Tea +2, Weapons +2, Mounts +2
Debredladany	Monzag (Hule)	D	Animals -3, Mounts -2, Furs -2, Common Woods -2, Grain -2 Glassware +1, Spices +2, Silk +3

Dubrax	Robrenn	D	Grain -3, Common Woods -2, Fish -2, Spices -2, Furs -2 Rare Books +2, Precious Metals +2, Pottery +3
Dunwick	Dunwick	B	Weapons -3, Fish -2, Beer -2, Glassware -2, Armor -2 Wine +2, Meat +2, Spices +2, Grain +3
Duzhar	Sardjikjian	C	Glassware -3, Porcelain -2, Mounts -2 Tea +2, Precious Metals +2, Weapons +3, Armor +3
Erdnidze	Chengouch	D	Hides -3, Textiles -2, Animals -2, Monsters -2 Spices +2, Mounts +2, Salt +3
Erzmin	Karsile (Hule)	D	Animals -3, Meat -3, Pottery -2, Common Metals -2 Weapons +2, Armor +2, Oil+3
Eyf	Robrenn	C	Wine -2, Meat -2, Grain -3, Herbs -2, Semiprecious Stones -2 Common Metals +3, Precious Metals +3
Gundegard	Eusdria	C	Beer -3, Furs -2, Spices -2, Common Woods -2 Books +2, Glass +3, Semiprecious Stones +2
Gurr'ash	Ator	F	Meat -2 Semiprecious Stones +2, Weapons +2
Hayebil	Kyurdukstan	D	Textiles -3, Monsters 2, Spices -2 Oil +2, Tea +3
Houriani	Grouzhina	C	Semiprecious Stones -3, Fruits -2, Coffee -2 Weapons +2, Armor +2, Silk +2, Grain +3
Ienzvan	Dvinzina	C	Fruits -3, Books -2, Gems -2 Armor +2, Weapons +2, Meat +2, Mounts +3
Iskilü	Kuliye (Hule)	E	Common Woods -3, Precious Woods -2, Mounts -2, Grain-2 Weapons +2, Common Metals +1, Oil +2, Armor +3
Jandak	Huyule (Hule)	C	Grain -3, Weapons -3, Armor-2, Books-2 Wine +2, Precious Woods +2, Ivory +2, Monsters +2, Silk +3
Jehrom	Jandir (Hule)	D	Glassware -3, Cloth 2, Textiles -2, Mounts -2 Common Woods +2, Salt +2, Silk +3,
Khuur	Boludir (Hule)	C	Grain -3, Glassware -3, Cloth -2, Rare Books -2 Wine +2, Precious Woods +2, Ivory +2, Monsters +2, Silk +3
Kiteng	Sardjikjian	C	Porcelain -3, Textiles -3, Animals -2, Meat -2, Mounts -2 Rare Books +2, Common Woods +2, Pigments +2, Precious Woods +3

Kulnovo	Olgar (Hule)	D	Grain -3, Spirits -2, Mounts -2, Animals -2 Common Woods +2, Weapons +2, Silk +2, Armor +3
Leominster	Bellayne	B	Tea -3, Weapons -1 , Wool -3, Spirits -2 Wine +3, Precious Metals +2, Common Metals +2, <i>Smokepowder</i> +2
Louvines	Renardie	B	Wine -4 , Grain -2, Fine Art -3 Coffee & Tea +2, Herbs +2, <i>Smokepowder</i> +2, Silk +2
Magden	Birgidir (Hule)	C	Grain -3, Meat -2, Animals -2, Gems -2, Spices -2 Tea +2, Oil +3
Miriestiu	Bulzan (Hule)	D	Meat -3, Animals -3, Weapons -2, Grain -2, Armor-2 Spices +2, Rare Books+3, Dye+2, Porcelain+3
Mons-en-Plecy	Renardie	E	Wine -2 , Grain 2 Coffee & Tea +2, Weapons +2, <i>Smokepowder</i> +2, Silk +2
Nidzhman	Kyurdukstan	F	Common Woods -3, Furs -2, Textiles -2, Common Metals -2 Grain +2, Wine +2, Oil +2, Glassware +3
Norchester	Bellayne	E	Coal -4, Common Metals -3 Grain +2, Meat +3, Wine +2
Nova Svoga	Nova Svoga	E	Grain -3, Spirits -2, Oil -2, Hides -2 Tools and Weapons +3
Oldsbury-Upon-Blythe	Bellayne	D	Beer -3, Grain -3, Common Woods -2, Hides -2, Animals -2 Wine +2, Tobacco +2, Precious Metals +3
Othmar	Eusdria	D	Common Metals -3, Wood -2, Beer -3, Weapons -2 Oil +2, Grain +2, Precious Metals +2
Port Preto	Vilaverde	C	Oil -3, Ships -3, Meat 3 Common Wood +3, Salt +2, Grain +2, <i>Smokepowder</i> +3, Silk +2
Prijderel	Antasyn (Hule)	C	Animals -3, Common Woods -2, Meat -2, Textiles -2 Mounts +2, Wine +2, Spices +3
Puerto Morillos	Narvaez	C	Grain -3, Meat -3, Textiles -2, Weapons -2 Wood +3, <i>Smokepowder</i> +2
Raska	Zvornik	C	Grain -2, Spirits 2 Weapons +2, Common Metals +2
Risilvar	Wallara	D	Weapons -2, Semiprecious Stones -2 Meat +2, Grain +3

Seyvan	Karsun (Hule)	C	Grain -3, Spirits -2, Meat -2 Silk +2, Precious Woods +2, Precious Metals +3
Shahav	Herath	D	Silk -2 , Rare Books -2, Live Monsters -2, Meat -2 Weapons +2, Grain +2, Common Metals +3
Shkodar	Hojah	D	Common Metals -2, Fish -2, Oil -2 Cloth +1, Grain +2, Spirits +2
Slagovich	Slagovich	C	Weapons -2, Armor -2, Spirits -1 Common Metals +2, Grain +2
Smokestone City	Cimarron	C	Firearms -3 , <i>Smokepowder</i> -4, Ale -3, Coal -2 Silk +2, Animal Hides +2, Mounts +2, Pottery +2
Smolini	Grouzhina	C	Animals -3, Meat -2, Wine -2, Mounts -2 Textiles +2, Glassware +2, Armor +3, Weapons +3
Sorodh	Herath	E	Silk -1 , Grain -3, Common Wood -3 Meat +3, Common Metals +3
Tashgoun	Douzbakjian	C	Fish -3, Dyes -2, Textiles -2, Salt -2 Meat +2, Common Metals +2, Precious Metals +2, Common Woods +3
Theeds-Upon-Blythe	Bellayne	C	Tea -3, Meat -2, Fish -2, Scientific Gadgets -2 Coal +2, Wine +2, Wood +3
Um-Shedu	Eshu	F	Semiprecious Stones -2, Animal Hides -1 Meat +1, Grain +2, Weapons +4
Withimer	Eusdria	C	Fish -3, Beer -2, Furs -2, Common Woods -2 Common Metals +3, Glass +2
Yenigaz	Yozgulak (Hule)	C	Fish -3, Grain -2, Gems -2 Common Metals +3, Silk +2
Zagora	Zagora	D	Weapons -2, Armor -2 Common Metals +2, Beer +2, Grain +3
Zartakand	Douzbakjian	C	Grain -3, Fish -2, Animals -2, Mounts -2 Common Woods +2, Common Metals +3, Semiprecious Stones +3

Getting information on the Hollow World is often difficult, though with the increased travel (until the unfortunate Lost Squadron episode) we have managed to acquire enough information that the *Mystaran Almanac* is now proud to be able to provide you with some economic and trade data on this exotic region.

Those who have observed trade interactions in the Hollow World have noticed a striking pattern, however. Most of

the people in this realm seem to have a high degree of preference for the commodities and products of their own nations and a unusually strong degree of resistance to objects from other lands. This does not mean, however, that trade does not occur —it seems to mean that the merchants have to be sharper if they try to trade across cultures. This resistance seems even to apply to such commodities as grains (which are thought to “not taste right”) and the like.

[Note to DM: this cultural resistance is as a result of the Spell of Preservation expressing itself in trade matters. From a rules stand point, what this means is that a merchant selling goods outside the culture of origin of those goods suffers a -2 modifier to the sale price. The DM can reduce this to a -1 modifier on some goods if it seems appropriate. For example, animals might suffer only a -1 sales penalty. Raw metals and gemstones might suffer no sales penalty (they are the same everywhere). But worked items, like pottery, textiles, weapons and armor and the like will always have a -2 penalty on sales outside the culture that produced them. This means a merchant can still make a profit selling such goods but must be a more astute salesman and work harder to succeed.]

Unfortunately, we did not have enough information this year to judge quality modifiers but hope to be able to provide this information next year.

City	Nation	Class	Modifiers to Price Adjustment
Amtha	Shahjapur	A	Spices -4, Precious Wood -4, Ivory -3, Silk -4 Precious Metals +3, Rare Books +4, Porcelain +3, Grain & Vegetables +5, Wine & Spirits +3
Arana	Merry Pirates	D	Fish -3, Gems -3, Hides -3 Common Wood +4, Cloth +4, Textiles +4
Atacoatli	Azcan	C	Common Wood -3, Hides & Furs -2, Precious Wood -3, Monsters -3 Weapons & Tools +2, Animals +2, Cloth +3
Baraga	Merry Pirates	B	Gems -2, Precious Metals -2, Monsters -3, Semiprecious Stones -3 Spices +2, Silk +5, Common Wood +3, Cloth +3, Textiles +4, Wine & Spirits +4
Chitlacan	Azcan	A	Cloth -4, Weapons & Tools -3, Pottery -3, Spices -3 Precious Wood +3, Rare Furs +4, Precious Metals +3, Grain & Vegetables +3
Colima	Azcan (but culturally different)	E	Semi-precious stones -3, Spices -2, Salt -3 Wood +3, Pottery +3
Corescos	Traldar	D	Animals -2, Pottery -3, Wine -2 Weapons & Tools +2, Armor +3, Hides +2

Corisa	Milenia	A	Rare Books -4, Porcelain -4, Pottery -3, Oil -4, Weapons & Tools -2, Armor -2 Grain & Vegetables +4, Animals +4, Precious Metals +3, Gems +2
Dashur	Nithia	B	Pottery -3, Hides -3, Grain & Vegetables -3. Animals -3 Rare Books +4, Beer +3, Dye & Pigments +4
Demtor	Milenia	B	Grain & Vegetables -4, Precious Metals -4, Common Metals -3 Wine & Spirits +2, Dye & Pigments +3, Cloth +3
Dharsatra	Shahjapur	A	Spices -4, Dye & Pigments -4, Silk -3, Ivory -3 Grain & Vegetables +5, Salt +3, Rare Books +3, Preserved Meat +4
Dilion	Traldar	D	Fish -2, Oil -3, Animals -2 Hides +3, Wine +3
Dophius	Milenia	C	Pottery -3, Fish -3, Armor -3, Weapons & Tools -3 Common Metals +3, Meat +3, Textiles +4
Dossalonos	Traldar	D	Pottery -3, Common Metals -3, Fish -2 Common Wood +3, Cloth +3, Wine +3
Emperor's Walk	Milenia	C	Mounts -3, Fine Porcelain -3, Pottery -2 Ivory +3, Wine & Spirits +3, Spices +3
Floresque	Merry Pirates	D	Precious Metals -2, Gems -2, Semiprecious Stones -2 Common Wood +3, Precious Wood +3, Cloth +3, Textiles +3, Wine & Spirits +3
Hapta	Nithia	C	Beer -3, Cloth -2, Grain & Vegetables -2, Animals -2 Weapons & Tools +3, Common Metals +2, Common Wood +3
Huitlaktima	Azcan	C	Common Wood -3, Fish -3, Gems -3, Spices -3, Precious Wood -2 Weapons & Tools +2, Hides & Furs +2, Wine & Spirits +3
Issarthyl	Schattenalfheim	C	Gems -3, Semiprecious Stones -2, Precious Metals -2, Weapons & Tools -2, Armor -2 Silk +4, Monsters +3, Rare Furs +4
Kolmstat	Kogolor	C	Beer & Ale -4, Spirits -4, Common Wood -4, Fine Furs -4 Cloth +4, Textiles +4, Porcelain +4, Spices +4
Laroun	Milenia	B	Rare Books -3, Semiprecious Stones -3, Pottery -3, Wine -3 Common Wood +3, Animals +3, Weapons & Tools +3

Laxan	Milenia	D	Fish -3, Oil -3, Wine -2 Cloth +2, Common Wood +2, Textiles +2
Louknor	Nithia	C	Precious Metals -4, Semiprecious Stones -3 Weapons & Tools +5, Armor +4
Malinthos	Traldar	D	Common Metals -3, Fish -2, Animals -2 Common Wood +3, Wine +3
Manac	Oltec	C	Precious Metals -3, Pottery -4, Semiprecious Stones -3, Spices -2, Hides -3 Dyes & Pigments +4, Porcelain +4, Common Wood +3, Beer & Ale +3, Wine & Spirits +3
Menkara	Nithia	A	Common Wood -2, Fish -2, Semiprecious Stones -2, Dyes & Pigments -3, Hides & Furs -3 Animals +3, Cloth +3, Common Metals +2, Textiles +3
Moreus	Milenia	E	Fish -3, Salt -2, Wine -2 Common Wood +2, Cloth +3
Nithys	Nithia	D	Common Metals -3, Glassware -4, Precious Metals -3 Beer +3, Meat +3, Common Wood +4
Pelai	Milenia	C	Oil -3, Pottery -3 Common Metals +3, Weapons & Tools +2, Armor +2
Pharos	Milenia	E	Animals -3, Wine -3, Hides -2 Cloth +3, Pottery +2, Weapons & Tools +2
Phos	Milenia	D	Fish -3, Common Wood -3 Armor +2, Cloth +3
Ranak	Nithia	C	Grain & Vegetables -2, Fish -2, Beer -2 Pottery +3, Weapons & Tools +3
Tarthis	Nithia	A	Weapons & Tools -3, Armor -3, Cloth -3, Textiles -3, Rare Books -4 Common Metals +3, Precious Metals +4, Grain & Vegetables +4, Common Wood +5
Tenpocatl	Azcan	C	Precious Metals -4, Spices -3, Pottery -3 Cloth +2, Grain & Vegetables +4, Animals +3
Titlapoca	Azcan	D	Cocoa -4, Spices -3, Rare Furs -2 Cloth +3, Dye & Pigments +3, Precious Metals +2
Tothys	Nithia	D	Common Metals -4, Precious Metals -2 Meat +3, Beer +3

Tromeas	Milenia	C	Grain & Vegetables -3, Meat -3 Common Metals +3, Wine +2
Tyrios	Traldar	D	Precious Metals -2, Animals -3, Fish -3 Wine +3, Cloth +3, Common Wood +3
Tyrnus	Milenia	A	Common Wood -2, Precious Wood -2, Wine -2, Porcelain -3 Weapons & Tools +3, Armor +3, Common Metal +2
Xarda	Milenia	E	Fish -3, Oil -3 Wine +2, Common Wood +3
Yuzihuapac	Azcan	D	Spices -3, Cocoa -3, Hides & Furs -3, Monsters -2 Weapons & Tools +2, Cloth +2, Rare Furs +2, Preserved Meat +3

Mystaran Miscellanea

Classifieds and Personal Pages

Wanted: Any aged tomes, scrolls, or maps dealing with the region that is present day Karameikos. Preference towards items of at least 100 years of age. Authentic offers only. Contact Sire Mharko Gorochev of Threshold, Magus of the Karameikan Mages' Guild.

Wanted: Small round shield bearing the image of a four-horned dragon on a lozenge pattern field of gray and blue. Willing to pay top price for actual item or serious information on whereabouts. Discretion is assured. Contact Dagos Forentue of Corunglain, Darokin.

Wanted: Woman of amiable personality, comely appearance, well-cultured manners and bearing a strong aptitude in the martial skills. Nautical skills an added plus. For an appointment as escort on travels abroad for an extended period. Benefits include salary, expenses, room and board and the chance to travel the world. Loyalty expected and insured. Must be willing to subject herself to a *geas* spell. Contact Merchant-Prince Meynard of Harbortown, Minrothad Guilds.

Wanted: Information on the following Alphatian military units for proposed documentary on their history in the Great War. 3rd Stonewall Mountain Regiment; 2nd, 4th and 5th Imperial Air Squadrons; 1st Theranderol Pikers; 6th Eadrin Light Horse; 4th Randel Heavy Foot; 1st Frisland Light Foot; 4th Frisland Yeomanry. Testimony from other unit personnel are also welcome. Contact Sir Maltius Pedov of Mirros, Karameikos.

Wanted: Alphatian and Thyatian fighting men wanted by Thyatian gladiatorial promoter for planned re-creations of the Battle of Kantrium. The event is to be staged in Ierendi as part of an attraction based on the Great War. Combat will be simulated and non-lethal. Salary and all expenses paid by promoter. Plus, future opportunities at participating in future

scenarios. For employment, tourist participation, or viewing details, please contact your local Ierendi consulate official.

Wanted: Receiving applicants to serve as the hired retainers for a recently landed noble. Temporary or permanent services accepted. Long-term service may provide the rewards of promotion within the fledgling domain. Perfect opportunity for an adventurer or ex-soldier to settle down. Contact your nearest Naycese consulate office for further details.

Wanted: Information on the artisan that designed the Malchaom Estate in Thyatis City for possible commission to design an estate in Darokin. Also accepting sample drafts of designs and bids by other architects. Contact Delya Manuya of House Linton for further details.

Wanted: Retired or demobilized Alphatian soldiers for service to a recently landed noble. Must adhere to the Alphatian mores. Service rewarded by home and hearth as well as possible promotion within the domain. Contact your nearest Nayce consulate for further details.

For Sale: Complete set of ancient Blackmoorian battle armor. Non-operational but still worthy of study and suitable for display. Priced accordingly with its apparent exotic rarity. Serious inquiries only. Contact Magus Zagost at the Karameikan School of Magecraft for further details.

For Sale: Personal estate in Glantri City. Situated close to the Glantrian School of Magic. Perfect for an attending mage, yet luxurious enough for the discerning noble. Contact the Office of Admissions for further information and to arrange for a showing.

For Sale: Assorted tracts of land in the vicinity of Halag, Karameikos. Reasonably priced. Contact the Karameikan Ministry of State for more information.

Missing: Seeking the whereabouts of the Thyatian gladiator Zerena Vax, gone unseen in public and the arena since the Great War. Avid fan and patron of her feats and wish to know her current status. Opportunity for her being retained for service as bodyguard.

Contact Lord Delmonte Tiberon of Kerendas directly or through your nearest Thyatian consulate.

Missing: Ben Zal'yamman of Selenica, Darokin. Last seen acting as escort for a trade convoy bound for Ylari lands. Trade convoy never arrived. Information on the convoy or the whereabouts of any of its complement should be forwarded to Al-Azrad trading house in Selenica or the DDC.

Missing: I am looking for the whereabouts of a woman named Xerta. She used to tend bar at The Merry Merrow, a posh tavern in Bluenose, Arogansa. She was well known for conversation and advice given while pouring the drinks. In the past I had become well acquainted with her and she provided me with unerring advice. I have recently found myself in need of that advice. Please contact me through the Karameikan School of Magecraft. Any information on her whereabouts will be amply rewarded.

Announcement: Gladiator promoter and owner, Pompus Degradus, announces his freeing of the slave Dragar "the Daring". For service for years of combat on the sands and assistance in nurturing the skills of new gladiators in Pompus's stable, Dragar will be hired on as senior instructor at the promoter's facilities. Also included is the freeing of Dragar's wife and three children.

Announcement: Magus Freykwar announces the completion and launching of the *skyship Azure Myst*. Though a private vessel, Freykwar intends to use the craft as a platform to travel Naycese lands in search of Alphatians with the potential for magic use to serve him.

Announcement: The defunct acting troupe Myazza Company announces their reformation and intent to tour the various Naycese kingdoms. Though few original members are still on board, the original founder is coordinating the venture and promises that previous standards should be adhered to thanks to the addition of some highly promising thespians. Those interested should remain vigilant for posting on the troupe performing in local arenas.

Announcement: Merchant Drassen Fontaine and Lady Aega Fontaine along with Merchant Dimra Al-Mazon announce the union of marriage between their two families. Martyn Fontaine will take Atzalla Al-Mazon as his bride in a private ceremony attended only by immediate family and close friends. The two will reside in an Al-Mazon-owned estate in Selenica, Darokin.

Announcement: The Naycese Kingdom of Lagrius announces that it will restart the annual Blueside Yacht Regatta. Though traditionally a local event, the races will accept entrants from outside of Lagrius. Details on dates, prizes and entrance fees are pending.

Announcement: Nayce announces the retirement of the famed hard-ball player Terstur. The wily veteran gained fame at the helm of his native Frislander teams, but with its loss was forced into playing in several other teams as a freelancer. Last season saw his performance contributions lessened, often sidelined by injury. Future plans are unknown. Official rumor has spread that several team organizations have approached him on assuming coaching or scouting roles. However Terstur has publicly cited his desire to take a few years off from the sport before deciding on a future. Hard-ball enthusiasts offer a hearty thanks to Terstur and wish him well in his future.

Announcement: The Darokin Diplomatic Corp. (DDC) announces the appointment of Absolam Teegan as assistant head of their Naycese branch. Absolam is the youngest child of Anton and Aleese Teegan of Athenos, Darokin. Though only thirty-two years of age, Absolam has a ten-year history within the DDC, dealing mainly with investigative work. This and his familiarity with the magical arts have earned him an appointment in the Naycese office. We here at the DDC wish Absolam, his wife and child our best wishes in the Naycese lands.

Announcement: Magus Qerturo of Aeria announces the commissioning of the *skyship Muse Augur* to travel through Naycese lands offering displays of the visual and written works of the reclusive Alphatian artist,

Missaterra. The displays will offer public and private showings, as well as readings of her poetic prose. It is rumored that the Myazza Company will even perform their theatrical interpretation of Missaterra's epic *Tales of Old, Legends of New* series of poems at several coinciding stopovers. Patrons should be vigilant of local posting announcing the tour dates and sites.

Announcement: As part of an agreement derived from the outcome of a duel, Magus Deros Telgador publicly apologizes for any dishonor afforded to Magus Ewen McTaggart. Thus any dishonorable comments pertaining to Ewen's wife's appearance, his affinity for sheep and his eldest daughter's virtue are all completely false and devoid of factual foundation.

Other Famous Publications

*a review of other publishing houses' famous issues,
by Belzamith Fingertackles*

The *Paparazzi Glantri* is a Glantrian magazine that deals with the rumors, the scandals and the intrigues throughout the Principalities of Glantri. Since its first publication in the spring of AC 1016, the magazine and its proponents achieved much popularity—and notoriety. The *Paparazzi Glantri* boasts of its boldness in dealing with truths, half-truths and the occasional untruths, particularly about the nobility and the glitterati of the City of Canals. Despite the *Paparazzi's* slanted focus on glamour, style and sensationalism (rather than accuracy of facts), the *Mystaran Almanac* has found the magazine a valuable source of information and has corroborated with the *Paparazzi Glantri* on issues about the principalities.

The Mystaran Year

Mystaran Calendar

Most Mystaran calendars consist of twelve months of 28 days each. These months are divided into 4 weeks of 7 days. Each day of the week has a name, but the weeks themselves do not.

Day	Date			
Lunadain	1 NM	8 FQ	15 FM	22 LQ
Gromdain	2	9	16	23
Tserdain	3	10	17	24
Moldain	4	11	18	25
Nytdain	5	12	19	26
Loshdain	6	13	20	27
Soladain	7	14	21	28

NM = New Moon, FQ = First Quarter, FM = Full Moon, LQ = Last Quarter.

Most nations have adopted the Thyatian calendar, which is dated from the crowning of their first emperor, Zendrolion Tatriokanitas. It is currently the year After Crowning 1016 (AC 1016).

The name of the months and days depends on the nation. A few examples for the months follow

Season	Thyatis	Five Shires	Ethengar	Rockhome	Alphatia
midwinter	Nuwmont*	<i>Clabbas*</i>	<i>Amai</i>	<i>Wbarlin</i>	<i>Nyxmir</i>
late winter	Vatermont	<i>Vuuldiir</i>	<i>Hiskmai</i>	<i>Morlin</i>	<i>Amphimir</i>
early spring	Thaumont	<i>Maebin</i>	<i>Yalmai</i>	<i>Hralin*</i>	<i>Alphamir*</i>
middle spring	Flaurmont	<i>Odelin</i>	<i>Haimai</i>	<i>Hnyrlin</i>	<i>Sulamir</i>
late spring	Yarthmont	<i>Gondulrim</i>	<i>Kevamai</i>	<i>Styrlin</i>	<i>Sudmir</i>
early summer	Klarmont	<i>Mithintle</i>	<i>Seimai</i>	<i>Babrlin</i>	<i>Vertmir</i>
midsummer	Felmont	<i>Goldaun</i>	<i>Lingmai</i>	<i>Bubrlin</i>	<i>Tslamir</i>
late summer	Fyrmont	<i>Fyrtal</i>	<i>Tringmai</i>	<i>Klintin</i>	<i>Andrumir</i>
early fall	Ambyrmont	<i>Aumbyr</i>	<i>Demai</i>	<i>Barrlin</i>	<i>Cyprimir</i>
middle fall	Sviftmont	<i>Ssantiir</i>	<i>Chagai*</i>	<i>Biflin</i>	<i>Hastmir</i>
late fall	Eirmont	<i>Tembiir</i>	<i>Rinpoch</i>	<i>Jhyrlin</i>	<i>Eimir</i>
early winter	Kaldmont	<i>Dauntil</i>	<i>Komai</i>	<i>Kuldlin</i>	<i>Burymir</i>

*: marks the first day of the year.

Mystaran Horoscope

Following the introduction of Madame Feliona of Nouvelle Averoine for our yearly horoscopes in the almanac, the response from our readers was overwhelming: Madame Feliona's writings and predictions were insightful, enlightening and astoundingly accurate. Due to the clamor from our valued readers, we have consulted her again for more of her predictions on what the stars hold for Mystara in this year.

“Let us first discuss how to determine your star sign, or as I prefer to call it, your totem sign. There are twelve constellation around our planet, forming an almost perfect circle around our sun. They are, in order, Manticore, Hydra, Centaur, Basilisk, Chimera, Gorgon, Griffon, Dragon, Salamander, Pegasus, Warrior and Giant. Legend has it that each of these constellations represents a race of creatures created by one of twelve Immortals. When the first and noblest of each race died, its soul was raised to the heavens by the Immortals, to watch over all mortal creatures for eternity.

“Legends vary over who these twelve Immortals were and which of them were the patrons of each race. It is widely believed the Dragon Constellation was placed in the heavens by the Great One, Patron of Dragons, although some tales put Ka the Preserver as the creator of the dragons. Ixion the Sun-Prince is generally considered the patron of the Centaur, but other myths place his as the father of the Salamander Constellation. The Warrior Constellation, which represents the human race, was said to be placed in the skies by Vanya, Diulanna, Petra, or again, Ixion. For our purposes, it is not necessary to discuss these esoteric mysteries, as not even the greatest arcane scholars can fully comprehend the Immortal ways.

“Now, there are many astrologers out there with different styles of how to determine your totem sign, but I believe (and this is backed by extensive studies and personal research) that my way is most

accurate. At the time of your birth, you may trace a straight line from the sun to Mystara to the constellation directly behind. This constellation is your guardian totem, which will watch over you and your destiny. Each totem corresponds to a month in our calendar, so you can simple determine your star totem by knowing in which month you were born.”

Date of Birth

Month	Star Sign	Traits
Nuwmont	Manticore	Cunning, ardent, brave.
Vatermont	Hydra	Shrewd, self-centered, resourceful.
Thaumont	Centaur	Vigorous, strong, generous.
Flaurmont	Basilisk	Robust, passionate, domineering.
Yarthmont	Chimera	Confident, charismatic, possessive.
Klarmont	Gorgon	Reserved, private, studious.
Felmont	Griffon	Warm, practical, steadfast.
Fyrmont	Dragon	Ambitious, cold, independent.
Ambyrmont	Salamander	Calm, practical, miserly.
Sviftmont	Pegasus	Enterprising, flighty, imaginative.
Eirmont	Warrior	Astute, efficient, courageous.
Kaldmont	Giant	Selfish, strong, stubborn.

“You will notice that certain traits are assigned to each star sign. Most people born under a sign will inherit these traits, traits that match the soul found within the constellation. However, these traits will also be influenced by your ascendancy and influence, allowing a large variety of personalities. Your ascendancy and influence play no role in determining your destiny, however; that is controlled solely by your star sign.”

Week	Ascendancy	Traits
1 st	Sun	Proud, authoritarian, predictable. Leans toward Lawful alignment.
2 nd	Land	Earthy, steady, rational. Leans toward Neutral alignment.
3 rd	Sea	Creative, mercurial, unpredictable. Leans toward Chaotic alignment.
4 th	Sky	Philosophical, versatile, tempestuous. No particular alignment tendency.

Time of Day	Influence	Trait
Sun is up	Winds of Law	Fortifies lawful temperaments, sways neutral dispositions toward good, curbs chaotic personalities.
Moon is up	Winds of Chaos	Undermines lawful tendencies, sways neutral dispositions toward chaos, intensifies chaotic behavior.
Both are up	Winds of Wisdom	Tempers all dispositions with prudence, caution and common sense.
Neither are up	None	Bodes either great luck or great hardship for the child.

“So how do the signs determine your destiny? This is a secret known only to the Immortals. And yet, the Immortals have given us clues to this and a select few mortals are gifted with this wisdom, to interpret and guide your destiny. I am one of those few and I will share a bit of this to you.

“Each constellation is in the area of the sky at a given time. This area of influence of the constellation is the house. Of all the stars in each constellation, there is one that shines a bright fiery red. This is considered the ‘eye’ of the constellation, or, the star. The other stars forming the houses tend to be more fixed and regular in their travel across the sky, but the stars fly through the heavens at a different pace altogether. Throughout the history of Mystara, sudden or abrupt changes in the paths of these stars always signal a cataclysmic or world-changing event.

“A person’s destiny is affected by the star of her totem sign, its location and path through the other houses, as well as the stars visiting and traveling through the house of her own totem sign. The interplay of these cosmic energies are extremely complex and it takes only the wisest and most experienced of mystics (such as myself) to be able to interpret their relevance accurately.

“As I have explained earlier, each star travels though the houses in different paths and at different speeds. Each constellation also has favorable or unfavorable relationships with the others constellations. Many astrologers use different terms to explain this dynamic of energies. I prefer to use the terms ‘friendly’ and ‘unfriendly’ for stars and ‘hospitable’ and ‘inhospitable’ for the houses. Some astrologers believe these alignments and compatibilities are fixed and set, but others, such as myself, believe they are subject to change over a period of time. Only the Immortals themselves determine this for sure.”

Star Sign	Friendly	Unfriendly	Speed of Travel
Manticore	Griffon, Warrior	Gorgon, Pegasus	5 houses per year
Hydra	Chimera, Gorgon	Centaur, Dragon	11 houses per year
Centaur	Griffon, Pegasus	Giant, Hydra	9 houses per year
Basilisk	Chimera, Giant	Gorgon, Pegasus	3 houses per year
Chimera	Hydra, Basilisk	Dragon, Salamander	2 houses per year
Gorgon	Salamander, Hydra	Manticore, Basilisk	3 houses per year
Griffon	Manticore, Centaur	Warrior, Giant	7 houses per year
Dragon	Salamander, Warrior	Hydra, Chimera	6 houses per year
Salamander	Gorgon, Dragon	Warrior, Chimera	1 house per year

Pegasus	Giant, Centaur	Manticore, Basilisk	5 houses per year
Warrior	Manticore, Dragon	Griffon, Salamander	7 houses per year
Giant	Basilisk, Pegasus	Centaur, Griffon	8 houses per year

Horoscope for AC 1017

“In general, this will be a very eventful year for many people. At the start of the year, four houses will be void, meaning no star will be visiting that house: the Houses of the Pegasus, Warrior, Giant and Manticore. This signifies that a person born under that sign will be left to his own devices, for better or for worse. Some will see this lack of visiting stars as restful, quieting and liberating from distracting energies; others will view it as confusing or lacking in direction. With four void houses, four houses will be twice-visited, meaning two stars will be visiting the house at the same time: the Houses of Centaur, Basilisk, Chimera and Gorgon. This can be quite off-putting, with the energies of two or three stars pulling and pushing you in different directions. Three of these twice-visited houses will have their own star residing in their own house: the Houses of Centaur, Basilisk and Gorgon. This is highly favorable as your energies would be at home and you would be most comfortable in expressing them. Still, this is not as favorable as having only your own star in its proper house. Only the Dragon will be in that highly auspicious situation this year.”

Manticore: The void in the House of the Manticore means no new energies will be introduced into your life. While this favors the uninterrupted continuation of routine work and ongoing projects, this does not bode well for starting new ventures. The House of the Chimera, where the Manticore Star is situated, lends a confidence to consolidate your own resources, material or otherwise, although you may not reap your rewards until later. By the autumn equinox, the results of your efforts will become apparent. Love and already established relationships will deepen, but new ones will result to little or nothing of consequence in the long run.

Hydra: The imaginative Pegasus Star flies into the House of the Hydra this year, bringing in lots of fresh, brilliant, even bizarre thoughts. Luckily, the Hydra Star is in the friendly House of the Gorgon, which backs up your new ideas with a serious reserve and a well-studied calculation, so that these inspirations will not remain mere flights of fancy. Artistic, intellectual and even wizardly pursuits are highly favored and will culminate on the full moon of Eirmont. Long-held spiritual and philosophical beliefs may be challenged if you are not open to new ideas. Travel will be exciting and enlightening.

Centaur: With the Centaur Star returning to its own house, this is your year to shine! Whereas last year, you had to remain balanced and focused, especially with new ventures, now is the time to be the vigorous and dynamic Centaur that you can be. Everything you touch will turn to gold! (Remember that Ixion the Sun-Prince rules the Centaur.) And do not fear going overboard with your sun-kissed generosity! Thanks to the friendly visit from the practical and steady Griffon Star in the House of the Centaur, you will find moderation easily and naturally.

Basilisk: If last year, you had to remain detached and impersonal in your affairs, now is the time to let loose that passion and fervor the Basilisk is known for, as the Basilisk Star is in its own house this year. Love is sure to blossom! But the friendly Giant Star at the cusp of the House of the Basilisk will remind you not to be manipulative and domineering in your zealotry. Your own overpowering emotions may destroy you in the end. Avoid drinking and other excesses during the summer solstice.

Chimera: Two opposing forces mark a very difficult year for you. The unfriendly Salamander Star in your house may

undermine your positive traits, while your own Chimera Star in the inhospitable House of the Salamander will only bring out the worst in you. Your confidence becomes brashness, your charisma into obsequious flattery, your rightful possession into possessiveness and jealousy. Fortunately, the other visitor to the House of the Chimera, the neutral Manticore Star, will serve to diffuse this cosmic crossfire. You will need the cunning and ardor of the Manticore to get through this year unscathed. By winter, you will feel the tension lifting.

Gorgon: The Gorgon Star makes its way home to its own house, giving you that respite from hectic activity and that private refuge you Gorgons cherish so much. In-depth introspection and personal studies, especially if started before the summer solstice, will produce many results and can be done with few interruptions. And yet, you will not be a total recluse, with a transit from the friendly Hydra Star into the House of the Gorgon. You will welcome new friends, new associates and maybe a new love into your life. And the good thing about it is, you will not have to go out and find it. These will all come to you.

Griffon: The unfriendly Warrior Star will enter the House of the Griffon, disrupting that balance and stability you struggled so dearly for last year. Emotions will be raw and tempers may flare. Unexpected break-ups might occur even in the most steadfast and long-term quarters. But the Griffon Star will be in the friendly House of the Centaur, giving you the vitality and strength to endure even the toughest of confrontations. The Warrior Star will challenge the established and the rigid, but be positive that the removal of old structures in your life can bring about the introduction of newer, better ones.

Dragon: The Dragon Star has come full circle, from the other end of the cycle to its rightful place in the House of the Dragon. Though you may still struggle to integrate your energies scattered from the previous year though most of the winter, you will certainly become the cool and independent Dragon by the end of Thaumont. You may

now focus on your personal goals and the betterment of your self. The friends and companions you have avoided in the past will come to you, in droves even, but only if you are sure of yourself and your ambitions. They will be an invaluable asset to the fulfillment of your goals.

Salamander: Conflict is the theme of your year, with your Salamander Star unwelcome in the House of the Chimera and that same unfriendly Chimera Star residing in your own house. Tread carefully and patiently, as most endeavors may only present with insurmountable difficulties and endless dangers. But also remember that from the most challenging undertakings come the greatest reward. It would be best to ask yourself: What are the aspects of that incompatible Chimera that makes them worthwhile? What are the negative traits of my own sign that the Chimera despises so? In understanding this, troubles and disputes, especially in Yarthmont (the month of the Chimera), can be avoided.

Pegasus: With the void in the House of the Pegasus two years in a row, you may feel like you are living in a dream. Everything will have a hazy uncertainty, especially in Vatermont. Decisions remain unsettled. Partners will be wishy-washy. Even your health may suffer somewhat, making you feel neither here nor there. The new moon of Klarmont will provide some clarity, although your experiences may still have the aura of fantasy or implausibility. You will however find yourself lucky in games of chance. The Pegasus Star in the House of the Hydra bestows a much needed discernment for your visions. With some resourcefulness and hard work, you might be able to turn your dreams into reality.

Warrior: No star visits the House of the Warrior, allowing your own natural energies to flow into whatever aspect of life you choose. Although there may be opportunities, these new prospects will be short term—perfect for recreation and a bit of entertainment, but not for long-lasting endeavors. The Warrior Star can be found in the unfriendly House of the Griffon, demanding you to focus on your home and

family and tasks that require meticulous attention. If you avoid dealing with this, the risk of losing domestic and material security is great. It is not advisable to travel. A nagging illness might become full blown if not attended to early.

Giant: The House of the Giant is void, signifying much of your painstaking efforts will produce little or nothing in terms of rewards. But with the Giant Star welcomed in the friendly House of the Basilisk, reflecting some of that famous Basilisk vigor and leadership, you cannot help but pursue some bold adventure! It would be best for you to go on a vacation or take up some recreational activities. You will find this invigorating and ultimately more gratifying, perhaps in the most unexpected ways. The passion of the Basilisk will also be very valuable in the pursuit of love, especially around the month of Flaurmont.

Universities of Mystara

Universities of the Old World

Location	Name	Most Illustrious Teachings
Biazzan (Thyatis)	University of Biazzan	Algebra, Hollow World Theories
Corunglain (Darokin)	University of Corun	Siege Warfare, Land-based Exploration
Darokin (Darokin)	DDC Compound	Diplomacy, Global Trading, Geopolitics
Dengar (Rockhome)	Skarrad High Seminary	Architecture, Engineering
Erendyl (Glantri)	Erewan Dateless University	Botany, Horticulture, Zoology
Evemur (Rockhome)	Syrklist Conservatory	Mining, Metallurgy, Geology
Glantri (Glantri)	Great School of Magic	Magic in all its forms
Harbortown (Minrothad)	School of Harbortown	Navigation, Commercial Shipbuilding
Ierendi (Ierendi)	Naval Academy	Navigation, Naval Warfare
Kerendas (Thyatis)	West Reach	Cavalry Tactics, Mounted Warfare
Krakatos (Karameikos)	Karameikan School of Magecraft	Magic in all its forms
Leenz (Glantri)	<i>Drachen Zentral</i>	Monster Lore and Hunting
Minrothad (Minrothad)	Minrothad Institute of Trading	Economics, Trading & Marketing
Norrvik (Vestland)	Uppsala College	Magical Runes, Poetry, Folklore
Port Lucinius (Thyatis)	Imperial Navy Academy (a.k.a. <i>Collegium Navalis</i>)	Navigation, Naval Warfare, Shipbuilding
Retebius (Thyatis)	Retebius Air Academy	Air Warfare, Flying Creatures Training
Rymskigrad (Glantri) ¹	Igorov Institute	Ancient History, Necromancy
Sayr Ulan (Sind)	Ul Nervi Palace	Philosophy, Theology
Selenica (Darokin)	University of Al-Azrad	Economics, Commerce, Administration
Selenica (Darokin)	Darokin University of Medicine and Scientific Researches	Medicine, Anatomy & Surgery
Serraine (Serraine) ²	Top Ballista Flying School	Aircraft Piloting, Air Warfare

Shireton (Five Shires)	Shireton Tea House	Literature, Poetry, Agriculture
Tameronikas (Ylaruam)	Ylaruam Medical & Curative Academy	Medicine, Healing Methods, Herbalism
Thyatis (Thyatis)	Imperial Academy	Land Warfare, Diplomacy
Thyatis (Thyatis)	College of Lucinius (a.k.a. <i>Collegium Arcanum</i>)	Magical Warfare & Engineering
Thyatis (Thyatis)	Academy of Music	Music, Storytelling, Construction of musical instruments
Vyones (Glantri)	<i>Beaux Arts de Vyones</i>	Art & Entertaining
Ylaruam (Ylaruam) ³	Dream of the Desert Garden University	Water Management, Theology

(1) With the Ethengar invasion of AC 1015, the Igorov Institute was heavily damaged and classes dismissed. Though the damage has been addressed now, the students and faculty have been slow in returning.

(2) The Flying City of Serraine and its Top Ballista Academy are not currently drawing students. This is due to the hostile takeover of the city in AC 1015.

(3) With its past civil unrest and rise to power of a more pro-isolationist

government, the Dream of the Desert Garden University has closed its doors to the majority of non-Ylari students and faculty members.

Universities of the Alphatian Sea and the Sea of Dawn

Location	Name	Most Illustrious Teachings
Alchemos (Meriander)	University of Alchemos	Alchemy
Alpha (Alpha)	Royal University of Norwold	Agriculture, Land Warfare, Basic Magic
Feather Fall (Aeria)	University of Air Magics	Magic of the Air, <i>Skyship</i> Engineering & Enchanting
Newkirk (Westrouрке)	Newkirk High	Sea Exploration, Linguistics
Seashield (Aquas)	Zyndryl University	Aquatic Races, Underwater Magic, Sea Exploration
Skyreach (Floating Ar)	Aerial University of Ar	Air Magic, <i>Skyship</i> Engineering & Enchanting

Naycese Military Protocols

The Role of Submersibles

[The following is an internal memo from within the Nayce War Department provided to the Mystaran Almanac through the good offices of an alert reader who, unfortunately, has not been seen since. Ed.]

The proper defense of Nayce's interests has become more complicated than the defense needs of the Alphatian Empire. Before the sinking, the empire's defenses were set with the understanding that the protection of the Alphatian continent was the central concern. The overseas territories and kingdoms acted as a series of outer defenses to the main continent.

With its population numbering in the millions, vast natural resources and concentrated magical core the premise of most foreign nations invading the Alphatian continent was considered comical. None the less, the empire used its overseas colonies as a buffer to protect the continental kingdoms. From the many ports on the continent, the empire held control of the sea-lanes connecting the homeland to the overseas colonies.

After the sinking of the Alphatian continent, the defense situation has dramatically changed and become much more complicated. The overseas territories are now the focus of defense. Without the core continent's support, enemies may be less discouraged in attempting to storm the beaches of the islands.

The sea is still our first line of defense, however Nayce now has to patrol the open seas where the Alphatian continent once stood. Likewise Nayce cannot boast fleets as numerous as the empire could. With limited resources and a significantly lower population, Nayce cannot begin an arms race to float an immense naval presence. To be able to cover the entirety of the Nayce's waterways, such a fleet would have to be of an unprecedented size.

A compromise could be achieved. *Submersibles* may be an option that we cannot

avoid. Due to their very nature, *submersibles* operate under the waves out of the visual sight of surface vessels. A pirate or enemy ship may see nothing but empty ocean about them, yet the sea could conceal any number of *submersibles* waiting to attack. Likewise a hostile craft can avoid contact with a surface vessel that it spots on the horizon. The knowledge that *submersibles* may be operating in area would be quite unnerving to any hostile craft.

I do think that Nayce will have to use *submersibles* in conjunction with its surface vessels and with its *skyships*. Alone, *submersibles* cannot be expected to fill all of the requirements of a surface naval vessel. Commanders should be aware that *submersibles* are vulnerable to alert and properly equipped enemy ships. Many commanders lost their *submersibles* during the Great War due to over-confidence regarding the invulnerability of their vessels. Nayce will retain a need for surface vessels that can carry large numbers of troops for transport or for ship to ship battles. *Skyships* can also carry troops with a deal of rapidity, flying above harsh weather and hostile opposition.

Submersibles offer many advantages. *The Torpin* is an extreme example of *submersible* potential. However *The Torpin* is a grievously expensive vessel and in the end it is only one single vessel. Nayce needs smaller, more inexpensive *submersibles* that can be deployed in realistic numbers throughout its territorial waters. Numbers must be sufficient enough to be a real threat instead of a potential threat. Otherwise, hostile vessels may be willing to take the risk of breaching Naycese waters. However, even these vessels are exceptionally expensive. Nayce could buy entire fleets for what it takes to build one *Reaver* class *submersible*. As we have already noted, our resources are limited. Therefore, the number of vessels that can be practically fielded might not match my dreams.

The Naycese Submersible Torpin: Crew Information Dossier

[We here at *Gallidox Publishing* came across this report through rather unorthodox and

totally unsolicited means. Due to its Thyatian origins and the past and present animosities between Alphatia and Thyatis, we cannot verify the full extent of its contents. Since neither Thyatian nor Naycese authorities will comment upon the materials, the reader is encouraged to view it as official rumor. Ed.]

Commander Dhallaq Trest: Our intelligence reports that Dhallaq was born either in Arogansa or Haven, but his mother migrated to Aquas shortly after it was completed. He quickly took a commission within the then developing Aquas *submersible* fleet. He rose quickly through the ranks, commanding almost every type of *submersible*. During the Great War, he commanded a squadron of six *submersible* galleys, which were tasked primarily with ferrying troops from Alphatian lands to the fighting on the Isle of Dawn and later the Thyatian mainland. Following the war, Dhallaq turned down a staff position and retired from the service to take over family interests in Aquas. Rumor persists that his retirement was primarily based upon disillusionment with the rise of Zandor as Emperor of the New Alphatian Empire.

Dhallaq Trest is an able-bodied *submersible* commander. Many consider him to be among the best that Aquas can offer. For a mage he is a rather stocky individual displaying some pride in maintaining that physique. His demeanor is subdued and seems to affect to those around him. Dhallaq is unmarried but has three children. All are of mature age and all are currently serving in the *submersible* fleets. His oldest son, Hysto Trest, is a *submersible* captain. The positions of his other two children are currently unknown. Also unknown are the identities of the mothers of these children.

Executive Officer Myarkhen Bayller: Born and raised in Greenspur, Myarkhen Bayller served for twelve years in the Alphatian Imperial *Skyship* Fleet. There, he rose to command a man-of-war, *The Raessynt Daerven*, which was destroyed in the Battle of Retebius. Considered a capable commander, he ended his service with the *skyship* fleet after the Great War. It is rumored that the

real reason is due to his developing an acute fear of heights when his *skyship* crashed as a result of damage sustained during the Battle of Retebius. With the sinking of the Alphatian continent, Myarkhen was stranded. He took up residence in Surshield where he was introduced to Aquas's *submersibles*. Soon after he took a commission in the Aquas *Submersible* Fleet.

Myarkhen is a capable leader of men and is well liked by those that serve under him. When on duty he is serious but sometimes overbearing. Off duty he is more carefree and often socializes with his subordinates. He is quite proud in his ability to know all of his comrades' names and a few details about their private lives. This repartee has made him fairly popular among his subordinates. However, it has also made dictating hazardous duties difficult.

Though a mage of medium power, he exudes little interest in expanding his spell inventory above the normal repertoire as offered in the imperial universities. The transition from *skyships* to *submersibles* has been difficult. Still, rumor persists that Nayce has big plans for Myarkhen. We have reason to believe that he is being groomed by Dhallaq Trest to be the future commander of *The Torpin*.

Chief Navigator Thallyn: Born and bred in Ambur, Thallyn is another *skyship* officer who transferred over to *submersibles*. It is rumored that Thallyn is a lover of Dhallaq's and her choosing the *submersible* fleet and subsequent commission was based upon his position. That said, Thallyn is an accomplished navigator and has adapted her *skyship* navigation skills to *submersible* navigation with little trouble.

Little more is known about Thallyn. It is known that she is not a spellcaster. It is believed that she is either a warrior or rogue. Whatever the case, she has a quick mind and displays a good degree of native craftiness. This has led our agents to believe that she is from a wealthy family. She is a lovely person, both in personality and appearance. Her demeanor clashes with what one would think of in a serving naval officer; she is too

pleasant. Aside from her rumored involvement with Dhallaq, she has no love interests or any children.

Ship's Cleric Sister Yalonda: Though her place of birth is unknown, Yalonda has spent the majority of her life in Ekto on the Isle of Dawn. A cleric of the Immortal Alphatia, she is rather young for the position of ship's surgeon. She is considered pretty and has an ingratiating personality, wrapping many crewmen around her finger. Much of her early past is unknown. Rumor cites that she comes from a family of less than amiable reputation. Our agents are investigating her origins for possible use.

It is known that Yalonda previously served as a ship's cleric aboard several conventional naval vessels. It is unknown what influenced her to shift to the *submersibles*. Likewise it is unknown why she was chosen to act as the healer for *The Torpin*; several other more powerful clerics immediately come to mind. Speculation is that she is actually the ship's political officer, put aboard by Naycese authorities to keep an eye on the crew and ensure loyalty.

Ship's Sage Dsaerdon: Dsaerdon is a mage and scholar of some renown within Alphatian lands. He served on the teaching faculty of the Alphatian Imperial Magical University in Sundsvall before the Great War. Information on him before this appointment is unfortunately minimal. How he survived the destruction of Sundsvall is unknown, but he emerged in Aquas after the war. It is believed that he hails from Frisland, though this is based on circumstantial evidence and rumor.

Dsaerdon volunteered for this duty; some say he called upon a lot of his social and political connections to secure a place on the vessel. It is said that he has a keen interest in the learning process, a tendency well established during his tenure at the university. It is also said that he tolerates little foolishness or interruptions to his research and is considered abrasive and smug by most of the crew, especially as his personality clashes with their military demeanor.

Ironically, Dsaerdon has little experience in naval or military service. As far as our sources can ascertain, he has never served in any military role. In fact, it is rumored that he is an extreme pacifist and has been highly critical of the military and the Alphatian Empire's past expansions. He was highly involved in the anti-war movement that arose during the later stages of the Great War.

Ship's Sage Haerdon: Haerdon is a complete mystery. Our agents have only been able to trace his existence back to AC 1014, when he published some maps and essays on the submerged Kingdom of Aquas. From all accounts, he has a keen interest in sea life and sea races. Likewise he has certain artistic abilities which show themselves as illustrated depiction of sea creatures and maps. We believe that his expertise in sea life and mapping is why Nayce has decided to include two ship's sages aboard *The Torpin*.

Gathering information on the mage has been made difficult, as he tends to avoid the company of others. We have been told numerous rumors about him. The rumor that holds the most credible information cites that he is one of those reclusive mages and has spent the past few decades in some stronghold where he fanatically pursued his researches. Given his interests in the sea, we believe that this stronghold could be somewhere near Aquas, or one of the satellite domes.

Security Officer Kayllen: Kayllen is an elf, but shows no signs of any affiliation to the elves of Shiye-Lawr. We know that she originally hails from the Alphatian mainland, probably being born and raised in Randel. Kayllen has proven to be a difficult person to investigate. She has an apparent hatred of Thyatians and Glantrians, believed deriving itself from personal losses during the Great War.

Kayllen previously served in the imperial forces and was stranded when the Alphatian continent sank. Her exact rank and position is unknown. Given her present commission, it is suspected that she was an officer in the

imperial *skyship* fleet or was attached to an imperial garrison unit.

As mentioned, Kayllen has proven difficult to investigate.

Ship's Engineer Dlanor: It is well known that Dlanor is one of the creators of *The Torpin*. A student of the mage Bordicar, his expertise in *submersible* design and construction is rivaled by a mere handful of individuals. His role as ship's engineer is a natural choice, as he knows the vessel thoroughly. Dlanor is virulently antipathetic to non-Alphatians, with a special hatred for Thyatians, having been discovered to be involved in arms shipments to the Twaelar. It should be noted that he has contributed his services to the construction of *The Torpin* with little financial compensation from Nayce. In fact, he is said to have sold his Aquas estate to assist in the vessel's creation.

Aside from his work on *The Torpin*, Dlanor exhibits little in the ways of a personal life. This is quite odd, as he was once known as a flagrant socialite in Aquas. His *submersible* designs were mostly centered on privately-owned pleasure vessels. He gets a bit defensive when it comes to questioning of any of his designs or ideas, especially *The Torpin*.

Chief Enchanter Xathar: Xathar is an accomplished spellcaster who has made a career of casting his spells for financial compensation. His strength is his ability to amass a large and varied spell inventory. As such, he can cast a good deal more spells at one time before having to retire to memorize them again. Despite his magical ability, Xathar is no fighting mage and has trouble using his spells in a cohesive offensive role. He really needs someone present to tell him what is required.

Xathar came into his service with *The Torpin* out of financial need. With the sinking of the Alphatian continent, Xathar lost his family estate and much of his economic resources. Though there is much demand for his services, the pay scale pales in comparison to the extravagant awards issued by the imperial court. Xathar has signed on to *The Torpin* for a period of time. In

exchange, he will be given a lump sum and lands. Rumors persist that these lands will be on the Alphatian continent in the Hollow World.

Diplomat Ogomon: The youngest child of a moderately powerful house in Arkan, Ogomon was groomed from birth to be the family spokesman in business, social and political matters. Thanks to his father, he received schooling to qualify for these requirements. With the sinking of the Alphatian continent and the subsequent rise of Nayce, Ogomon's father saw opportunity for expanded influence of his family. He called upon some old favors to obtain Ogomon's appointment to a diplomatic posting.

Ogomon is a competent diplomat. However, he lacks the full enthusiasm for such a position. Out from under the authority of his father, he wants to live a little bit. Because of this, he managed to go through a series of postings before being assigned to *The Torpin*. Ogomon seems a bit enthusiastic about this posting as it seems to be adventurous and living on the edge.

We really do not know what Ogomon's duties will involve. As far as we know, there are not any real societies living in the area where *The Torpin* will be sailing. He might be charged with monitoring communications between *The Torpin* and the governing body of Nayce and insure that the vessel is operating within the government strictures.

Squadron Leader Horan Dakken: Horan Dakken is a bit of a mystery. Of mixed human and elven heritage, he is rumored to hail from Arogansa. He is supposedly the product of an affair, his mother a human concubine slave. Therefore his father must have been an elf. Having the ability to manipulate magic, Horan avoided slavery. Coming of age, he began a life as an adventurer. Horan traveled throughout Alphatian lands.

How he went from adventuring to *submersibles* is a long and unessential story within the context of this report. However, the firestorm at Aasla played heavily into it. During this period, Horan became and

expert in the field of small high performance *submersibles*. When *The Torpin* and her contingent of fighter/scouts and transports came to light, Horan's name was brought up. He was approached on the matter and was promptly given a commission.

Horan is the ranking officer and squadron leader of *The Torpin's submersible* fighter contingent. He has handpicked and trained most of his pilots. As an officer he is rather unorthodox and undisciplined. This attitude has endeared him to his pilots; many have adopted his swagger and live for the moment attitude. However, it often puts him at odds with the more conventional officers and military types. Horan takes a bit of satisfaction in this and encourages this roguish persona.

Assault Commander Fyrdden: Commander Fyrdden was born in Norwold. His father was an Alphatian soldier, his mother a local native. As a boy, he grew up hearing his father's tales of his homeland. He also became interested in the teachings of the Immortal Bemarris and soon after entered the clergy. When the Great War began, Fyrdden volunteered to go fight for the imperial forces. In his service, he rose quickly through the ranks. By war's end he was in command of a regiment of Alphatian imperial marines.

When the war ended with the Alphatian continent sinking, Fyrdden remained in Alphatian lands. Since then he has served as commander or deputy commander of several fighting units. He is a fierce fighting priest and a capable leader. He is also ambitious and wants to attain a measure of power within Nayce. He lobbied for his current position, as it would give him the rank of commander.

Chief of Boltmen Gadori: Hailing from Arogansa, Gadori enlisted in the imperial *skyship* fleet after coming into conflict with a powerful mage. The military offered anonymity and protection from retribution. Surprisingly, Gadori grew to enjoy the service and managed to be promoted chief of boltmen aboard an Alphatian man-of-war. Gadori remains in service far beyond

the usual career of an imperial officer. The service is his life and home.

Gadori is getting old and he knows it. His age has worked against him, limiting the opportunities to remain in service. He requested the position aboard *The Torpin* as it is his only option apart from retirement. With the need for experienced officers, his request was approved. Onboard *The Torpin*, Gadori is more of an administrator than a typical chief of boltmen. His duties mainly rest in drawing up duty rosters and making sure the wands are all ready. The more rigorous demands are delegated to subordinates.

Teldex: *The Torpin* has a contingent of special troops equipped with an array of enchanted items to allow them to operate out in the watery environment. Their numbers are unknown, but are estimated to be less than a score. Their leader is a man named Teldex. He is a bit of a mystery, none of our agents have even seen him. It is known that he is an adventurer and has established a bit of a reputation in Alphatian lands. Other than that, we have no further information on him.

Chief Jyanka: *The Torpin* is a naval vessel and like all naval vessels requires a crew of sailors. Overseeing the duties of these sailors is Jyanka. His place of birth is unknown, however he has spent his adult years overseeing the sailors of surface vessels, *skyships* and *submersibles*. He even spent some time aboard *The Airship of Love*. Though a non-spellcaster, Jyanka has the responsibility of overseeing the daily routines of the vessel's crew. This includes damage control, housekeeping, maintenance and cooking.

Aquan Submersible: Azeeka Class Galley

Overview

Aquas is a rather young kingdom. From its initial founding, the military placed its emphasis upon defending its own borders and centered on garrisoning the domed communities. The premise of sending troops abroad, either in an offensive role or as

contributions to an imperial effort, was placed on a secondary tier.

King Zyndryl did initiate a program to afford his kingdom's forces a capability to send troops abroad in adequate numbers. He placed the project in the hands of the mage Azeeka, who had already established a small fleet of *submersible* merchant freighters. The matter of translating the capability from transporting materials to transporting troops should have been a simple transference. Azeeka took upon the task with a limited sense of enthusiasm.

Azeeka chose to draw heavily upon existing designs for Alphatian rowed war galleys. A galley-based design offered several advantages to creating a new *submersible* or even converting a freighter design. A galley also allowed a less expensive means to provide motivation power. Therefore, the *Azeeka* class *submersible* looks like a war galley. It is a common misunderstanding that the vessels are simply converted war galleys; yet the *Azeeka* Class vessels are created by magic, just like any *skyship* or other *submersible*.

The *Azeeka* class *submersibles* entered service soon after, boasting a fleet numbering several vessels. Though it was only considered to be in service for a limited time, it has remained the mainstay of Aquas's ability to send troops abroad. This longevity is due to the lack of deployments: without a need, few saw the reasoning to commit funds and labor to creating a replacement design. Such resources could be better used to expand the kingdom's domes and living quarters.

The *Azeeka* does not boast a lot of magical enchantments. Motivation is provided by its rowers or by its sails. Diving and surfacing is accomplished by a simple *levitate* spell. The ship's environment is provided by rudimentary magic enchantments. Breathable air is abundant, however temperature is not magically regulated; as such, the interior is usually chilly and damp.

The use of non-magical motivation sees the use of a collapsible and storable mast and rigging system. The mast folds down

and rests along the vessel's main deck, keeping it out of the way for submerged travel and preventing any access drag. The mast can be erected fairly quickly using a series of pulleys and tackle. Sails are stowed inside the hull out of the elements. In all respects the vessel operates fairly well on the surface, comparable to any normal war galley.

The rowers are used primarily when the vessel is submerged, though they can also be called upon to assist movement while on the surface. Given its form, the vessel handles very badly underwater—it is slow and tends to turn sluggishly.

The *Azeeka* class has few amenities and creature comforts. Its interior is designed to simply transport troops and land them on shore. This discomfort is shared by all aboard. Officers and crew alike are crammed together within the hull, finding sleeping space amid the stowed materials. There are no specialized crew positions. Each marine must be able to serve as sailor and rower.

When the Great War erupted, Aquas was called upon to offer troops to the war effort. The venerable *Azeeka* class became the primary means for the kingdom to ferry its troops to the marshaling areas on the Isle of Dawn. Aquas found its *submersibles* being used to ferry not its own troops but those of other kingdoms as well. The Great War took a heavy toll on the *Azeeka* fleet, as half of the fleet had been lost. These craft have been relegated back into the service of the Aquas forces.

The shortcomings and limitations of the *Azeeka* class have been finally recognized. Plans are in the works for replacing the venerable design with a more formidable craft, one that can operate in an offensive role under the waves. Such a program is beyond the limited means of Aquas though. Likewise, Nayce is lacking the economic base that the empire had. The process of upgrading the *submersible* fleet will thus certainly take some time and the fleet is destined to fall under the authority of Nayce, not Aquas.

Role/Tactics

The *Azeeka* class has a very simple role to fill: troop transport and landings. It primarily operates upon the surface where its war galley attributes are more powerful and formidable. Submerging is done primarily to dock at the Aquan domes or to avoid detection. If it is at all possible, the vessels tend to travel on the surface where their performance is better and all of their defensive capabilities can be utilized.

Unlike newer types of *submersibles*, the *Azeeka* class cannot adequately act as a patrol vessel. The primary reason for this is that its submerged speed and maneuverability are lackluster. It was never designed to operate exclusively underwater.

With its discomforts, the *Azeeka* is usually deployed in short voyages. Long voyages are staged out to allow ample opportunity for ship and crew to stop at various ports, fortunately for the crew's morale. Likewise, the vessel holds only a limited amount of cargo, much of which is intended to serve the marines after they have disembarked on land. Maintaining adequate stores for supplies is paramount.

The vessel is designed to transport and off-load the marines, a role that the war galley form serves fairly well. Landings are usually done with several other *submersibles*—it is preferred that the Aquas vessels operate along with other fleets so they can be protected by these surface vessels and assisted in establishing a beachhead.

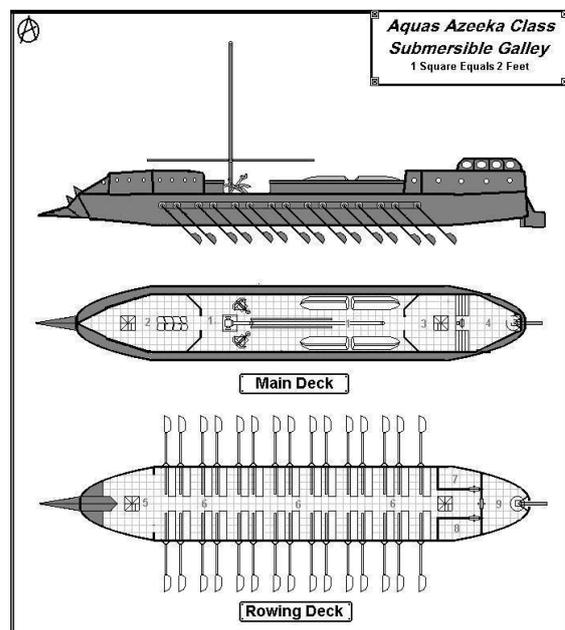
If forced into a surface battle, the *Azeeka* performs within the limitations of a standard small war galley. The ability to submerge is the vessel's trump card. If pressed, it can dive to avoid a battle or maneuver to better positions. This ability is often a surprise to enemy vessels. Some crafty captains have used the ability to fake their sinking, only to surface later to attack or flee the area.

The vessel's ability to fight underwater is limited to its ramming attack. It lacks proper airlocks to allow troops to leave the vessel while submerged, thus limiting covert raids. The fighting ports that adorn the forecastle are too small for spellcasting, though the

ones on the poop deck can be used for casting.

Armament

The *Azeeka* class *submersible* is armed with two light catapults. These artillery pieces can only be fired while the vessel is surfaced; submerged, the main deck is open to the sea and flooded. The vessel has a ram and can utilize it while on the surface and while it is submerged. The primary fighting capability comes from its crew of marines, troops and battle mages that can use the forecastle and poop deck as protective cover for the attacks.



Main Deck

1. Surface Deck: Like any sailing vessel the upper deck is a busy and required place. However, the ability to submerge has made it a requirement to have the mast and rigging collapsible. The entire mast assembly has been designed to be able to be lowered to rest along the center of the deck. Also on deck are the vessel's two light catapults; mounted on the swivel pedestals, they can command the side portions of the vessel. However, they can only be fired when the vessels operating upon the surface.

2. Forecastle: This area has two distinct purposes. The first is as a fighting compartment. Using watertight archer ports, the vessel's marines and mages can engage

an enemy while being covered from attack. The second role for this chamber is as a storage space. Here are stored the vessel's sails and rigging; likewise, supplies and war materials are often placed here. It is not uncommon for marines to hang hammocks here and sleep. The room has a set of spiral stairs that lead down to the rowing deck.

3. Poop Deck: This portion of the ship is mainly used for storage and for sleeping. Here one will find a set of spiral stairs that lead down to the rowing deck.

4. Bridge: At the rear of the poop deck is the vessel's bridge. Elevated, the helmsman and any present crew are given a viewpoint through the crystal vision bubble cut into the roof.

Rowing Deck

5. Forward: Coming down the stairs from the forecastle, one enters the frontal section of the rowing deck. This area is mainly used for storage and for sleeping.

6. Rowing Stations: Here is where the rowers sit and pull at the vessel's oars. Fifteen benches are placed on either side of the vessel, each seating two rowers, giving the vessel a total of 60 crewmen propelling the vessel forward. The oars are mounted into the sides using a watertight socket. Extra oars are kept underneath the benches. This area is often used for sleeping.

7. Weapons' Storage: Set astride the stairs is the vessel's weapons' storage. Here one can find cases of arrows and crossbow bolts, spears, swords and spare sets of armor. One can also find tools and materials to maintain these weapons. If room is available, the room is usually used for additional storage.

8. Captain's Quarters: Here resides the vessel's captain. Though spartan, it does offer some privacy for the senior officer. Here he sleeps and eats and keeps his nautical tools and charts.

9. Officers' Quarters: Here reside the vessel's officers and NCOs. Little more than an empty room, they sleep on hammocks strung from the ceiling.

Stats

Armor Class: 6
Hull Points: 100
Motivation:
Wind and/or Rowers (surface)
Rowers (submerged)
Speed:
15 (surface sails and rowers)
5 (surface sails only)
12 (surface rowers only)
8 (submerged)
3 (submerged with mast and rigging erected)
MF: 1/3
Crew: 100 marines (act as sailors and rowers)
Range: 1-3 weeks (food supply and crew fatigue)
Weapons: Two light catapults (usable only on surface)
Ram (usable on surface and submerged)
Crew Defenses: Ability to submerge.
Cost: 110,000 gold pieces

Naycese Submersible: Myontii Class Freighter

Overview

Aquas is a kingdom confined within a series of domes beneath the very seas. Though the inhabitants have become adept at surviving in this uninhabitable environment living, the limited living space that the domes provide offer great difficulties for the basics of human requirements. Food production is part of this problem; a problem that even magic is hard-pressed to resolve.

Aquas has always had a very real need to be able to augment its food supplies and bring in other materials that it needs to exist and to exist comfortably. Such shipments could have been achieved through

conventional means, however King Zyndryl sought a transport system that reflected the submerged nature of his kingdom. Likewise he did not want to risk his kingdom's well-being being undermined by unscrupulous traders or political complexities.

Zyndryl initiated a program to establish a fleet of *submersible* freighters that would be used to supply the domed kingdom within his desired parameters. Already busy in his own designs, the project was placed in the capable, yet untried, hands of the magist Bordicar. Bordicar worked on the project for some time before presenting to Zyndryl the designs for *Myontii* class *submersible* freighter. He supposedly named the vessel after his current mistress.

King Zyndryl approved the design and put it into production. It soon became evident that the costs of these vessels were beyond the meager means of a new and developing kingdom. Though he disliked losing some of the control of these vessels, Zyndryl pushed for loans and financing from friends and Aquan merchants. He tried to focus on those living in Aquas as he felt that their loyalties would be better assured than going to outside sources.

Most of these investors saw a great deal of economic promise in owning the supply lines that fed the kingdom. Zyndryl was cautious enough to provide ample provisions in their loan agreements to insure that the kingdom would not be held hostage to unscrupulous owners. The investors resisted some of these measures. In a compromise, the king founded the Seashield Consortium, which organized the investors into a group of tradesmen.

Once the *Myontii* class *submersibles* came into action, they proved themselves as capable freighters. Though slow and unwieldy, the vessels proved to be resilient and reliable. Within a few years their construction costs were met, leading to increased profits with every shipment. The design has persevered to the present, with more examples being constructed to further meet the kingdom's supply needs.

The vessel is powered by magical enchantments, which provide its motivation, diving capability and interior environmental needs. The vessel is broken into two areas: the cargo hold and the living and working area. Environmental enchantments are focused amid the living and working areas. The cargo area is virtually devoid of enchantments, except for those required to make the vessel operate.

The deficiency in the cargo area is not a big deal. While underway, the crew rarely ventures there, only to inspect the hatches and hulls. For this limited encroachment, proper clothing suffices to overcome the physical discomfort. Breathable air is usually provided by a quick spell or by surfacing or docking and venting in that air. If need be, the crew can open the door from their area and allow a slow infusion of breathable air. However, cargo area climate temperature is unaffected and usually bleeds into the crew areas offering slight discomforts.

Unlike other fleet *submersibles*, service with a *Myontii* is considered quite amiable. Each vessel requires only a small crew. Since the vessels are slow and voyages are often long, the owners have spent some time and gold coinage in improving the interior and the overall comfort level of the interior. Also playing into the equation is the general sense of security in keeping the crew comfortable. Pay is also very lucrative. Most crewmen are lifelong professionals who stay together for the duration of their employment.

This beneficiary approach also has a more covert side as well. Since the cruises are long, the cargo valuable and the crews are so small, the owners want to avoid the possibility of their vessels "disappearing." The financial investments for such wages and amenities are far outweighed by the profit potential. Besides, many owners like having their own little group of loyal submariners—it fits their aristocratic egos.

A typical crew sees a captain, a navigator and an enchanter. Other crewmen vary based on the input of their captains, tendencies of their owners and the nature of their planned voyages. The demands on the

crew are light and a vessel has little need for more than five crewmen. Most vessels leave a spare bunk or two for paying customers that wish to use the vessel as a means of transportation.

Perhaps it is symbolic of their closeness, extended voyages and confined environment that crews of a *Myontii* freighter are rather close-knit bunch. Class barriers are often ignored, only coming to light when outsiders are onboard. Still, behavior onboard is amiable and even courteous. Disagreements are settled quickly to avoid lingering harsh feelings. An unwritten rule is that any unsettled disagreements be addressed outside of the vessel once the voyage is complete; usually by then, the matter is resolved.

The boredom of the voyages often promotes intimate relationships. Some of these relationships are purely physical and last for a few trips. Others are based on true affection and carry over into long standing pairings. Though Alphatians rarely marry, it is not uncommon for crews to have at least one or two established relationships. These pairings are often given priority in deciding their quarters. It is often said that the crews are quite promiscuous while out to sea—it is a common joke that the owners could save some money by only installing half the number of beds. This is true and the owners encourage such activities by halving their crews equally based on gender. This keeps them happy and occupied on those long voyages.

Unlike most *submersibles*, the *Myontii* vessels are ingratiated with more than ample living space for their crew. The exact crew quartering varies from vessel to vessel and even on various journeys. Quarters are usually decided before the vessel departs. It is customary for the crew to rotate their quarters to offer a sense of change.

Role/Tactics

The *Myontii* freighters are cargo carriers and the lifeblood of the domed communities of Aquas. Their role is simple and single-minded: the means to allow a steady flow of supplies from the surface kingdoms—

imperial grain, lumber, etc. Military uses have been contemplated, however the lack of enchantments in the cargo area make this difficult. The costs of transports based on the design have proven too expensive, especially when the *Azveeka* class is already in use.

The Seashield Consortium controls the *Myontii* freighters. Their owners have given them names like *The Sea Cow* and *The Sea Ox*. Most owners have a designated flagship, which they usually name after themselves or their merchant company. These flagships are usually ornate and extravagant; most are used to send special cargoes to prominent buyers or markets. It is common practice for owners to periodically rename their vessels, usually during a symbolic changing of the guard whenever a new company leader is chosen or a new captain assumes command.

The Seashield Consortium was originally devised to offer a centralized body of freighter owners. King Zyndryl felt that by organizing them, he could better control them to abide by Aquas's needs. The consortium has changed over the years, as original owners have sold their vessels, new vessels have been built and new consortium members have been initiated. The consortium's most powerful member is the Monarchy of Aquas. As the kingdom grew, Zyndryl began his own fleet of freighters, which currently rivals any of the other member fleets. Along with the statutes within the original consortium charter, the monarchy holds solid control over the consortium itself. This arrangement of power has served all members well.

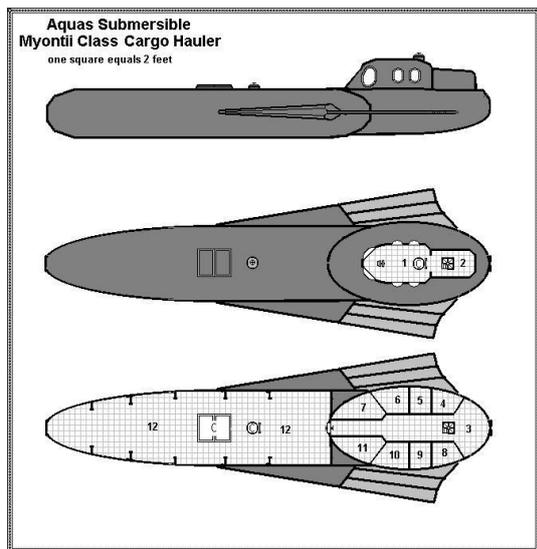
In spite of Zyndryl's initial concerns, there has been no attempt by any consortium member to usurp this monarchical control or to use its own power to hold the kingdom hostage. The truth is that the profits are ample enough to keep these thoughts away. Any would-be conspirators would find their embargoes thwarted by other merchants. Plus, the statutes of the consortium charter allow the monarch to nationalize the consortium vessels if an emergency situation arises. The demands of the monarchy are light. By the charter, they only are required

to offer a portion of their cargo holds to the kingdom's food and material shipments. The balance can be used to the discretion of the owner.

The crews of the *Myontii submersibles* are among the most stable professionals. Though most start as servants, many rise to greater class levels quite quickly. Their profession is respected and stable; their earnings contribute heavily towards the local economy. Those that handle their earnings with some wisdom manage to retire and begin their own businesses. In fact more than one consortium member is a group of former crewmen.

Armament

Being freighters, the *Myontii* class *submersibles* have no official armaments. Operating mostly submerged, they have little fear of attack by enemy vessels. Likewise, their sheer size deters attacks from underwater predators. If forced to fight, most crews have some sort of weaponry, mostly mundane melee and missile weapons. Spellcasting crewmen do have their spells for offensive and defensive roles. However, these spellcasters are usually low-level or act as enchanters for the vessel; few could be deemed combatants.



Top Deck

1. Helm: A *Myontii submersible's* helm centers around a control console, which operates all of the vessel's control functions. The helmsman is afforded excellent view from the two large vision ports in front of

him, as well as the four smaller vision ports running along the sides of the walls. A ladder that leads up to a sealed hatch in the ceiling caps off the room. This is the primary means that the crew enters and exits the vessel when berthed at Aquas or when surfaced in other harbors.

There is a great deal of variation in various vessels. Some owners have installed railings and even chairs here. Most captains post navigational aides here for quick reference; maps and sea charts are often pinned to the wall, some hung in ornate frames. Flagships usually boast ornate fixtures, wall coverings and carpets.

2. Bridge Alcove: This room sits directly behind the helm. Inside, one finds a set of spiral stairs that lead down to the deck below. The room is obviously oversized for the mere need of the stairs, with the extra space is used in all manners of alternative ways. Some captains place bunks here to provide additional sleeping quarters. Some more devout captains use the excess space to erect a shrine to pay homage to a favored Immortal. Company flagships tend to use this space as an observation room, cutting vision ports in the walls and installing comfortable seating.

3. Main Room: Coming down the stairs from the bridge alcove, one enters the vessel's main room. This chamber is the largest room in the vessel's crew quarters. This is where the crew spends their free time. Décor is comfortable and usually sees the installation of cushioned chairs and couches. Most vessels see an abundance of reading materials.

Flagship vessels usually use this room as its stateroom with vision ports cut into the back wall to allow observation out into the open waters. These vessels are much more ornate in their decor and their stateroom is symbolic of this.

4. Captain's Quarters: This room is usually reserved for the vessel's captain. Décor is suited to the captain's taste and varies greatly.

5. Officer's Quarters: This room is usually reserved for one or more of the

vessel's officers (first mate, navigator and enchanter). If crew allotment allows, each officer claims a room of his or her own. If paying passengers are onboard, they are billeted in this room. Décor varies on who is using the room and what he or she desires to take along. For passengers, décor is basic and based upon what they are paying for passage. It is not uncommon for passengers to share rooms.

6. Ship's Galley: This room is used for the preparation of the crew's meals and as a storage area for food supplies. In mainstream vessels, food preparation is basic and adequate to prepare the food correctly. Magic is used to allow the use of fire while submerged. The cook is a professional whose sole duty is preparing meals, usually assisted by an apprentice him; both sleep with the crew. It should be noted that meals are of good quality and offer a great deal of variation. This is for morale purposes for a crew often undertaking long and boring voyages. Extra food stores can be placed in other rooms or placed in the vessel's cargo area.

7. Crew Quarters: This room is where the lesser members of the crew sleep. Since crew sizes are small, all can easily be billeted here. Some captains divide their crews in half, based on shifts, using room #11 for the other shift. While one shift is working, the off-duty shift can sleep without the interruption of their working counterparts. In this divided state, the rooms see bunk beds to maximize the available space and allow for a table for dining.

8. Officer's Quarters: This room is usually reserved for one or more of the vessel's officers (first mate, navigator and enchanter). Unlike other officer's quarters, this room's size makes it a requirement that no one singularly gets this room—married or intimate officers get this room. Paying passengers are rarely offered this room; if they are, they must share it with several other paying passengers. On company flagships, this room is considered to be the VIP suite. In that role its décor is exquisite and surpasses the comforts of the captain's own room.

9. Officer's Quarters: This room is usually reserved for one or more of the vessel's officers (first mate, navigator and enchanter). If crew allotment allows, each officer claims a room of his or her own. If paying passengers are onboard, they are billeted in this room. Décor varies on who is using the room and what he or she desires to take along. For passengers, décor is basic and based upon what they are paying for passage. It is not uncommon for passengers to share rooms.

10. Toiletry: Since the vessel's crew is human, they bear the mortal "call of nature." Being submerged for the duration of their journey, crew hygiene is also important. This room has been set aside to provide a toilet and a means to bathe. Magic and gnomish engineering provide the means for flushing out human wastes and to provide clean and comfortable bath water.

There are usually two bathtubs and two toilets. In some vessels, these facilities are segregated based on class. This varies on the decision of the captain and depends heavily on any passengers being on board. Flagships observe this difference almost unanimously.

11. Crew Quarters: This room is where the lesser members of the crew sleep. Since crew sizes are small, all can easily be billeted here. Some captains divide their crews in half, based on shifts, using room #7 for the other shift. While one shift is working, the off-duty shift can sleep without the interruption of their working counterparts. In this divided state, the rooms see bunk beds to maximize the available space and allow for a table for dining. If this shift method is not being used, with all of the lesser crew being billeted elsewhere, this room is often used specifically for the crew's dining.

12. Cargo Hold: This is the area where the vessel earns its keep. Within this vast chamber, vast amounts of cargo can be placed. Cargo is always carefully stowed in barrels and crates; to further minimize the possibility of cargoes shifting, the encased items are solidly bound to the walls using straps and ropes. While submerged, the crew

can access the cargo hold by means of a sealed doorway leading from the living area. Except to examine the cargo or to check on the integrity of the hull and hatches, the crew rarely comes into this area of the vessel.

The cargo is transferred in and out of the vessel by means of a large hatch in the ceiling. Near this hatch is a ladder which leads up to a small sealed hatch for easier personnel traffic. When in surface ports, the vessel ties up to a dock and the cargo can be transferred using conventional means. When operating underwater in Aquas, the vessel docks with a specially created airlock, which encompasses the large and small hatches; the hatches are opened and cargo hoisted out.

Stats

Armor Class:	8
Hull Points:	150
Motivation:	Magic
Speed:	8
MF:	1/3
Crew:	5 (minimal)
Range:	1-3 weeks (food supply and crew fatigue)
Weapons:	None (except those carried onboard)
Defenses:	None
Cost:	320,000 gold pieces

Naycese Submersible: Reaver Class

Overview

The *Reaver* class *submersible* is to be the core of the developing Naycese *submersible* fleet. Based on a design formulated by the renowned *submersible* designer, Bordicar, the *Reaver* class is a testament to Naycese *submersible* development. Being a pre-war design, the current *Reaver* class *submersibles*

see a series of improvements to optimize their performance and to adapt them to their intended role.

A typical *Reaver* is fitted to allow sleeping quarters for fifteen (15) crewmen. However, most vessels sail without filling all of its bunks. If need be, up to thirty (30) individuals may be accommodated by rotating crew sleeping quarters for missions of short duration (supply problems are created if this is done for any length of time). Mostly the additional crew would be marines and boltmen being transported to surface positions, or intended for some specialized raid.

The officers and command staff include the captain, first mate, ship's engineer, navigator, pilot, copilot and weapon's officer. Due to personnel problems some vessels will see a sense of redundancy as crewmen are used to fill multiple roles. Therefore, you may see a navigator also acting as ship's engineer or the first mate also doing the duty of navigator.

The *submersible* operates in an alien and hostile environment. Magic plays a heavy hand in the vessel's ability to operate. First and foremost, magic allows the vessel to move about the sea. Also thanks to magic, the vessel's interior is lit to allow sight and a comfortable environment and breathable air are provided. Communications are likewise provided through magic; it is planned that the entire *submersible* fleet will be able to converse with each other, the military high command and the flagships of Naycese's surface fleets.

Role/Tactics

The *Reaver* class acts primarily as a patrol vessel, using its stealth to patrol Naycese waters. Their nature will allow them to monitor ship movements from the shadows of the deep. It is planned that the *submersibles* will be key to discovering the secret strongholds of the pirates that so plague Naycese shipping. However, they cannot and will not be used as a simple scout for the Naycese navies. If the situation dictates it, they are more than capable of engaging an enemy vessel.

The *Reaver* class *submersibles* are warships. Unlike conventional surface vessels and even *skyships*, they lack the crew numbers to engage the enemy in standard boarding battles. Instead, they attack from under the waves with the sole intent of sinking the enemy vessels, primarily using magical artillery. A secondary tactic is to ram the enemy vessel.

Due to its small crew size and limited cargo space, these *submersibles* are limited to simply sinking an enemy vessel; they cannot take prisoners, or offer a reasonably-sized boarding party and they cannot offer crewmen to sail a captured vessel. Essentially, its prize-taking is limited to some minor salvage after the vessel has sunk. This loss of materials and revenue is being addressed and several plans are being considered.

The *submersibles* operate under the waves where they are very difficult to detect without magic, such as the gear Thyatian anti-*submersible* vessels are equipped with. Many over-confident *submersible* captains lost their vessels during the Great War and as such *submersibles* should take care when operating against well equipped and trained navies.

A *Reaver* class *submersible* can operate on the surface. In safe waters it often sails on the surface to break up the monotony and to allow the crew to see real sunlight and breathe fresh air. Surface travel always requires diligent lookouts on deck, watching for signs of ships on the horizon. *Submersible* crews tend to arrive at their bases sailing on the surface.

Armament

As a warship, the *Reaver* class is armed with a variety of weaponry. Much of it has been custom-tailored to fill the *submersible's* underwater environment and submerged fighting style. Although these weapons are new, they are not ground-breaking in their design; resources and immediate needs dictate the use of available weaponry. Upgrades and refinements are being contemplated and researched.

The vessel's main weaponry is composed of

a pair of artillery pieces. These are visually marked by the two protruding spikes at the vessel's front. These artillery pieces fire magical bolts and have a variable rate of fire based on bolt type. Targeting also varies based on bolt type. For either type the vessel must be pointed in the general direction of the intended target and since they are based upon the *magic missile* spell, the bolts do not affect inanimate objects such as hull planking; rather, they are intended for use against underwater creatures. The weapon is targeted by the weapon's officer or by the captain; multiple targets can be selected, up to four each round. Its rate of fire is five (5) bolts per round. Given the targeting, multiple bolts can be sent to single targets, with each bolt doing 1d6 points of damage. Each bolt has a range of 200 feet, though this is often undermined by visibility problems.

The *submersible* also has a ramming capability, with each of the frontal spikes acting as a ram. The ram attack does less immediate damage than a conventional ram attack, causing 3d6 hull points of damage.

Additional offensive firepower can be gained from the crew. Mages and clerics can use the glass portals of the bridge or the observation deck to cast their spells. If the situation calls for the vessel to operate on the surface, spellcasters and marines can use a hatchway to gain access to the exterior. They can then fire missile weapons or cast spells that may not be usable underwater.

Each *Reaver* class *submersible* leaves port with enchanted items or potions that allow its crew to send a small number of individuals outside of the hull. While these enchanted items allow for a limited offensive force, they are mostly used for other purposes, including repairs to the vessel while it is submerged, exploration of wrecks or ruins, underwater item retrieval and personal amusement.

Main Deck

1. Main Chamber: This room is by far the largest and most used inside the ship. With its hatch to the outside of the vessel and its access to the bridge, galley and secondary

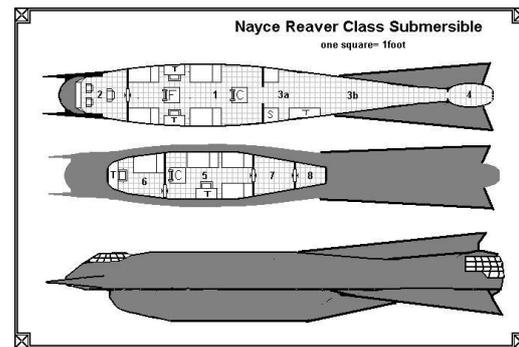
deck, there is a good degree of traffic through this chamber.

There are four (4) sets of bunk beds, allowing sleeping quarters for eight (8) crewmen. There are also two table and chair sets for reading, writing and eating, which, in addition to the beds, are bolted to the deck. It is here that the vessel's sailors and marines live and sleep.

2. Bridge: Behind a watertight door is the bridge, which is always occupied out of necessity. There are three chairs here. The two smaller chairs sitting in tandem are the pilot seats. From here, the on-duty helmsman maneuvers the vessel and oversees the weaponry. In combat situations both chairs are occupied, with one crewman piloting the vessel, while the other oversees the operation of the weaponry. The larger chair is the captain's seat.

3a. Galley: The crew has to eat and as such there must be a galley. Here, the crew prepares food for consumption. Being underwater most of the time, cooking the food is difficult using normal stoves; an enchanted stove has been installed to allow cooking without the threat of hazardous smoke fumes. The galley also boasts a storage tank to collect seawater and act as a water treatment device. Thanks to a simple enchantment, this seawater is purified for human consumption. Also present here is a long table and benches, capable of seating up to eight (8) people, which are bolted to the floor.

3b. Food Storage: Behind the galley is the principal storage area for food, wine and other required materials. Foodstuffs kept here are packed in salt or preserved to prolong their shelf life during the journey. The stored items are kept in crates and barrels, which are stacked along the walls of the room. Straps keep the stored items from scattering all over the deck during sudden motions. There is usually enough foodstuffs kept in stock to sustain the crew for a month.



4. Observation/Fighting Chamber: To the rear of the vessel is a small oval room surrounded on all sides by thick panes of glass. This room was originally designed to serve as an observation deck and to act as a place where a ship's mage could go to cast his spells on an enemy on the outside. In use, the room is often a place where the crewmembers can get away from the others and be alone. The captain schedules such activities and loss of the privilege is often used as a disciplinary action.

Secondary Deck

5. Officers' Quarters: This room serves as the sleeping quarters of the vessel's more exalted crewmembers. There are three sets of bunk beds, which allow sleeping quarters for six (6) individuals. The beds are slightly larger and more comfortable than those seen on the main deck. Here sleep the vessel's first mate, chief enchanter, navigator, pilot, copilot and weapon's officer. A table and chair set is present for reading, writing, or work. As with the main chamber, all furniture is bolted to the deck, to minimize the chance of injury should the vessel be shaken or disturbed.

6. Captain's Quarters: By ship's standards, this room is luxurious. Here, the captain can be alone or entertain himself as he wishes in privacy and in comfort. There is a rather large and comfortable bed, as well as a desk and chair set here, all of which is secured to the deck.

7. Bath Chamber: This room is necessary for sanitation and overall hygiene. There is a tub in its center, bolted to the floor, that can be used for bathing purposes. Filling the tub requires pumping in seawater from the outside and enchantments placed on the tub remove the salt and keep the water clean and

at a warm temperature. On the walls of the room are stored towels. The tub is also used to wash clothing. Though regulations dictate a bath at least twice a week, most crewmen try to bathe daily for its therapeutic value and the opportunity to be alone. Of course this solitude is often disturbed by the intrusion of those needing to use the toilet.

8. Toilet: Toilet facilities are a definite requirement for any human-crewed vessel. By using fantasy engineering, waste products are pumped out of the toilet's holding tank and out into the sea.

Stats	
Armor Class:	5
Hull Points:	130
Motive Power:	Magic
Speed:	12 (cruising speed)
	20 (battle speed)
	24 (emergency 3x day)
MF:	1
Crew:	15 (up to 30 for a limited period)
Range:	3-5 weeks (food supply and crew fatigue)
Weapons:	Two artillery ports
	<i>Magic missile</i> 2x five bolts per round (see above for damage and range)
	Ram (see above for damage)
	Spellcasters and crew
Defenses:	Stealth
Cost:	600,000 gold pieces

***Privately-Owned* Submersible: The Dallyant**

Overview

Aquas has historically been associated with the sea and the under ocean environment. To function amid this hostile environment, the people of Aquas have adopted the *submersible* as a mode of transportation,

commerce and military weapons platforms. As with the *skyship*, it did not take long for the Aquan mages to create *submersibles* for their own personal use.

One of Aquas's founding mages and most renowned *submersible* designers was magus Bordicar. A friend of King Zyndryl, his designs are widespread and well known by the people of Aquas. Bordicar did not just create *submersibles* for the kingdom's use; he designed several for the financially lucrative private market. And what better way to advertise his skill than to travel about in his own *submersible*?

Up until his death during the Great War, Bordicar went through a series of *submersibles*, exchanging one for another as his designs improved. One such design is *The Dallyant*. For a time, Bordicar used the vessel to travel the waters surrounding Aquas as a sort of traveling laboratory to test new design theories. *The Dallyant* also varies from the other vessels as it reflects Bordicar's momentary interest in studying sea life.

With his death and without an heir, Bordicar left most of his estate to his three former apprentices, the mages Xerathis, Tredrignon and Dlanor. The three mages have since sold off many of Bordicar's properties, mainly to finance *The Torpin* and to refurbish Bordicar's *submersible* facilities. *The Dallyant* was one of the casualties of this estate sale. The vessel was sold to Delmarst, a wealthy refugee mage from Arogansa, for a quite lucrative sum.

Delmarst has taken the vessel as his own personal pleasure craft. After some rather extensive modifications performed by Xerathis, Tredrignon and Dlanor, the vessel has had a major interior overhaul to transform it from Bordicar's traveling laboratory to a pleasure vessel. Recently finished, the vessel has made several short ventures. It is believed that as soon as the newness wears off Delmarst will enter the vessel into the commercial market for tourists and private charters.

The Dallyant was an impressive *submersible*. In spite of the passage of time and the

modifications initiated by its present owner, the impressive attributes are still present; one only as to look past the frills and fluff to see the genius of the original design. The vessel is completely motivated, lit and environmentally-controlled by magical enchantment. Its interior is filled with a plethora of minor enchantments to make the underwater journey pleasing to both the eye and body.

The Dallyant has a crew of six. This includes the captain, first mate, navigator and chief enchanter. In addition, there are provisions for ten other crewmen, including two cooks and an assortment of servants. The balances of those onboard are guests of the vessel's owner.

Role/Tactics

The Dallyant is a privately-owned *submersible*. Though it originally served as both advertisement and traveling laboratory, it is now a pleasure vessel for a mage. A vessel that had once tested *submersible* theories and displayed the skill of Bordicar now acts as a showboat vessel for the current owner. Delmarst uses it to entertain himself and friends. As rumored, the vessel will probably fall into the role as a commercial sightseeing vessel. Either way, Bordicar would be very disappointed at its current situation and its current owner.

Armament

The Dallyant has never really had a great deal of armaments. Bordicar had always depended upon the vessel's speed and size to either deter attack or avoid it. One enchantment that is included is the ability to go *invisible*. There is also a *blink* enchantment. Both of these enchantments were designed to aid Bordicar in his observations of aquatic life. If combat proved unavoidable, he would turn to his ample spell inventory and to the spells of his accompanying mages. The mage also kept on retainer a squad of fighter types and armed them with enchanted weapons and armors to maximize their effectiveness in fighting underwater.

Delmarst seems completely unconcerned about providing any defensive armaments.

He feels that the *invisibility* enchantment, being submerged, the vessel's size and speed and a competent captain will keep them safe. Though a mage, he has few ideals at being able to bolster the vessel's defenses like Bordicar—his magical skills are more inclined to impressing the ladies than fighting off attackers.

Deck Plans

1. **Bridge**
2. **Captain's Quarters**
3. **First Mate's Quarter**
4. **Navigator/Enchanter's Quarters**
5. **Pilot's Quarters**
6. **Guest Quarters**
7. **Guest Quarters**
8. **Guest Quarters**
9. **Guest Quarters**
10. **Servant Quarters**
11. **Servant Quarters**
12. **Owner's/ VIP Quarters**
13. **Mundane Crew Quarters**
14. **Main Hall/Dining Room**
15. **Kitchen**
16. **Stateroom**
17. **Pantry**
18. **Toilet**
19. **Rear Observatory**
20. **Ceiling Hatch**
21. **Airlock**
22. **Bath**

Stats	
Armor Class:	5
Hull Points:	150
Motivation:	Magic
Speed:	16
MF:	1/2
Crew:	Minimum of 3
Range:	2-4 weeks (food supply and crew fatigue)
Weapons:	None except crew

Defenses:	Ability to submerge
	<i>Invisibility</i> (x3 per day)
	<i>Blink</i> (x3 per day)
Cost:	810,000 gold pieces

Thyatian Anti-Submersibles Measures

Aquatic penetration (*Enchantment/Charm*)

Level: 2

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M

Duration: 6 turns + 1 turn/level

Casting Time: 1 round

Area of Effect: 1 missile weapon

Saving Throw: None

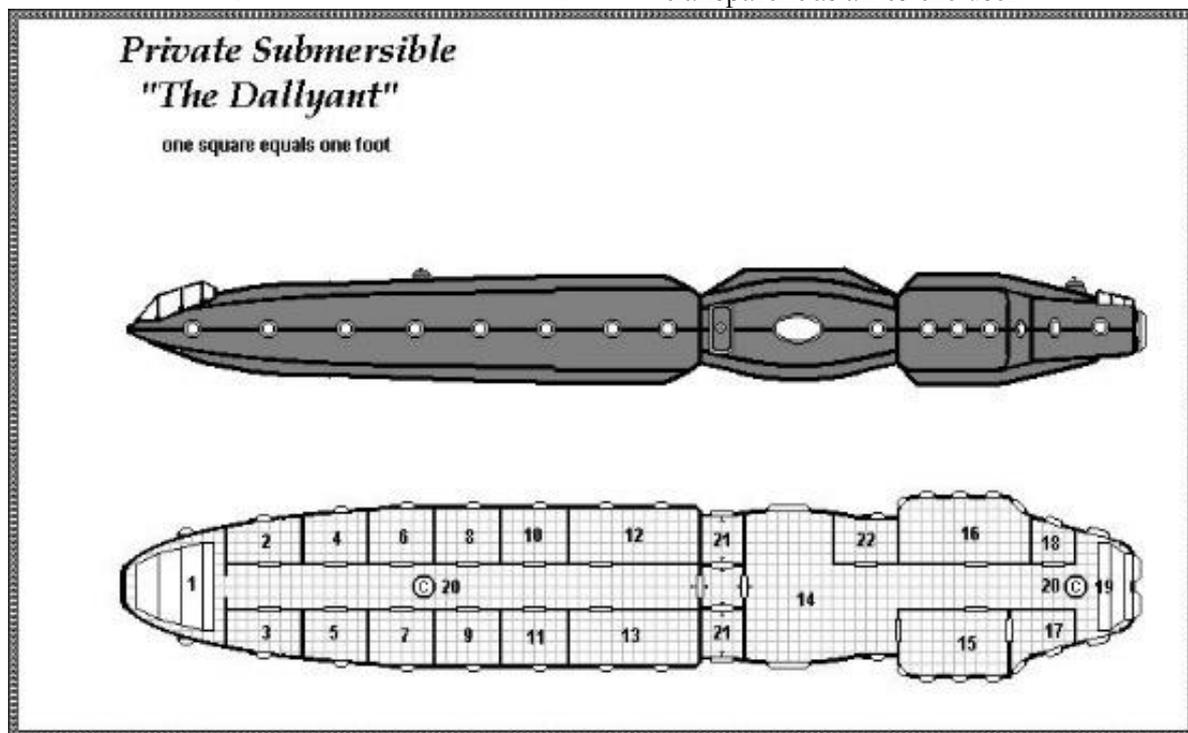
This spell was developed by the Thyatian Ministry of War and used during the Great War and more recently in their battles against the Twaelar. When cast on a missile weapon the *aquatic penetration* spell allows that weapon to fire missiles through water (or any other liquid) as if it were firing

through air for the duration of the spell. Such missiles can pass through air for some part of the distance and then water as well; they do not have to fly the entire distance underwater. The spell does not provide protection to the missile from damage caused by liquids like acid, nor does it allow the missile to do anything else underwater that it would normally be unable to do (for example, it does not allow a flaming arrow to burn underwater unless the flame is produced by something that usually burns in water). It simply allows the missile to perform in terms of range and damage when passing through water as if it were fired through air.

The material component of the spell is fairly specific. This spell requires a few drops or a small vial of water that has passed through an aqueduct into a cistern, mixed with a small amount of red wine.

Eyeglass of aquatic vision.

This telescope-like device, when used, improves the user's ability to see objects at a distance (x10 magnification) and is also enchanted so that liquid appears as clear and transparent as air to the user.



Events: Nuwmont

First Week

Nuwmont 1, AC 1017: Evil Dead, Too.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: As midnight approaches, Yalag and his wererat companion hurry through the tunnels under the City of Thyatis, bearing the crown. The wererat returns to his people to inform them of the success of the mission, while Yalag re-enters The City, to locate Eusebius and give him the *Imperial Crown*.

At the same moment, the undead assault grows fiercer. Then the *Gown of Valerias* flares with an unnatural holy light. Suddenly, the blows of the undead and other rebels do not seem as effective. Many begin to wonder whether magic has returned an hour early [*magic does not return until almost 1 AM here. Ed.*—but neither spells nor magic items seem to function, yet. The attack begins to falter, but Heinrich then commits his reserve, sending his force of dark knights forward to attack the main gates. They meet stiff resistance, but seem to shrug off every blow themselves and are soon scrambling up the battlements. It is there that Eusebius and his bodyguards and advisors make their appearance. The emperor's personal guard rushes forth to repel the dark knights as Yalag hands the *Imperial Crown* to a priestess as Eusebius kneels. Behind him stand, in a half circle, Demetrian, Anaxibius, Stefania, Tredorian, Coltius and Lucianna. Behind them stand prelates representing each of the major faiths in Thyatis. The priestess places the crown on Eusebius's head and there is another sudden flash, seen to almost all the defenders and attackers alike. As vision clears, Eusebius is standing again, crowned in regal splendor. Eusebius's bodyguards rush forward to stem the advance of the dark knights.

Magic returns shortly thereafter and the spellcasters of both sides call forth their most devastating spells to smite their

opponents. But the spells of the rebels seem to have limited effect—only their most powerful magics strike true. A swarm of huge, bat-like creatures fly towards the battlements, to strike at the defenders. They are decimated by Thyatian priests and mages, however, fluttering to the ground smoking and quickly turning to ash. Seeing the attack beginning to fail, Heinrich calls for his forces to retreat. They withdraw back to camp in good order. The victory celebration in the city of Thyatis that follows is among the most boisterous and passionate in recent memory. It seems like the despondent pall, which had settled over Thyatis since the Great War, is beginning to lift. Following this victory, Eusebius visits the hospices where the wounded are being tended. Remarkably, he discovers that his touch tends to *heal* them while he's wearing the *Imperial Crown*. Many soldiers' lives who otherwise would have been lost are saved. As a result, the emperor reaches new heights of popularity among them. (*See Nu. 2, Nu. 3.*)

What This Means: The *Gown of Valerias* and the *Imperial Crown* are both artifacts. The gown is effective only in aiding the defense of The City, but is revealed as being fairly potent in that regard. The *Imperial Crown* has significant psychological and magical effects when worn by the Emperor of Thyatis. The priestess is none other than Aline Sigbertsdatter, the mother of Thincol Torion. Aline ascended to the ranks of the Immortals some time ago in the Sphere of Time, as the Immortal Liena. This war is part of the Trial She had to face in founding a dynasty. Though Manfred is also the son of Thincol, his ascension to the throne as a pawn of Entropy would bode ill for the future of Aline's dynasty. The wererat who helped Yalag and survived, was an agent and companion of Hers. Note that this does not diminish the contributions of the two wererats who died helping retrieve the crown—nor does it mean Her agent was not a wererat himself (he was). Few of those present—Eusebius, his family and a couple of his close advisors—have any knowledge of who Aline is. Even they do not know of

her Quest for Immortality, nor the significance of her presence. They only know it is important.

What The PCs Can Do: PCs might either have gone with Yalag on his mission or gone in his stead. If so, they might face further opposition on their way back to The City with the crown. If the opposition gets the better of them, they will receive unexpected help from a powerful cleric, in the nick of time as it were. If the PCs are attempting to prevent the crown from falling into the hands of Eusebius, they will find Yalag and his wererat companion much tougher than they expected—also, additional wererats might rally to their aid once they are in the tunnel. Again there is always that meddling cleric to watch out for as well. Aline is very tough and has some followers and friends who are almost as capable as she is. If necessary, Aline should be played as being at least as high in level as the most experienced cleric (PC or NPC) in the game world, but with a minimum level of 20 (36 OD&D). This would be a mission for high-level characters.

Nuwmont 1, AC 1017: A New Agenda.

Location: Temple of Greatrealm, The Sanctified Lands, Hulean Empire. WB

Description: Immediately after the Day of Dread, the Master of Hule calls his top-ranking priests and *bakans* (top government officials, akin to ministers) to his temple. He announces that from now on, Hule will switch to a less militaristic approach to dealing with other nations. Instead, troops will be gradually withdrawn and used to defend Hule and to hold its possessions at home, while other countries shall be subjugated through diplomacy and intrigue. Some of those present are surprised by the Master's seemingly sudden change, but they trust his judgment and apparent favor of Bozdogan. (See *Nu. 12*, *Nu. 26*.)

What This Means: Hosadus, the Master of Hule, is on a quest for Immortality. He has been at it for the last few centuries and he is nearing the crucial, final phase. He has already successfully demonstrated his ability

to sow chaos through military might—conquering Sind driving his forces to Darokin City itself. Though he was subsequently defeated by forces of Darokin and their allies in Karameikos and the Five Shires, he still arranged to salvage what he wanted. As his forces “withdrew” from Darokin, they left behind agents whose mission would be to make sure that Darokin feels the aftereffects of the chaos caused by Hule for a long time. The Master's next quest stage is to prove his ability to sow chaos and discord through subterfuge, intrigue and deceit—the very things for which he is seeking Immortality.

To do this, the Master will gradually reduce the involvement of his military in the surrounding nations and move towards using secret agents to do his will. What the Master aims for is to eventually negotiate cease-fires or peace treaties with various nations, quite possibly giving up many Hulean conquests in the process and withdrawing its military to Hule proper. Meanwhile, the Master hopes to infiltrate his agents into the highest levels of their societies, there to be able to cause as much chaos and confusion as he desires. In order to hide Hulean involvement, the agents are generally recruited directly from the target country, using means such as promises of wealth and power, blackmail and even religious conversion.

Nuwmont 1, AC 1016: Alheimers Stop in Heldann.

Location: Grünwald Forest, Territory of Heldann, Heldannic Empire. OW

Description: After two months spent traveling from Wendar towards the Heldannic Territories to escape the Wendarian prison camps created by Bensarian in Fyrmont of AC 1016, the Alheimers finally settle in the woods near Kammin and Altendorf. They implore the Heldannic government to accept their request to stay in their territory as political refugees. The *Landmeister* of Altendorf assures the elves they have the permission to spend the winter inside Grünwald and that

the matter will be presented to the high priest to evaluate. The official answer to the elves' plea will come on the first day of spring. (*See Th. 1, Fl. 13.*)

What This Means: This is one of the two groups of exiles that left Wendar in a hurry to escape the prison camps and deportation to Denagoth. [*See Fyrmont and Sviftmont of AC 1016. Ed.*] The majority of these Alfheimers are Grunalfs (300 out of 500 elves), who didn't follow Durifern in the elven crusade to Denagoth back in AC 1015 mainly because they were too old, too young or simply not interested in the quest. They decided to go to Norwold because they hoped to gain the Heldanners' help and protection and for now they have at least a safe home where to spend the winter.

Nuwmont 2, AC 1016: Bensarian Awakens Again.

Location: Village of Kevar, Kingdom of Wendar. OW

Description: Bensarian awakens from his coma, just as he did last year. After reassuring his attendants and a couple of trusted friends of his regained health, he proceeds to return to Wendar City, to attend the daily political meetings and check the current situation of the Alfheimers. (*See Th. 22, Ya. 27.*)

What This Means: As it happened last year, after the Day of Dread Bensarian's soul attempted to regain control of his body and fought bitterly with the Onyx Ring mage for its control. In the end, the evil wizard's will finally prevailed and he was able to enter once again the old man's body. This time however, he was prepared and had ordered his sleeping room be guarded by some loyal servants (also spies of the Church of Idris), to prevent Bensarian's escape in case the old sage had regained possession of his own body. The plan went smoothly and now his next move will be to plunge Wendar into chaos, trying to avoid being exposed.

Nuwmont 2, AC 1017: Death of a Duke.

Location: City of Tel Akbir, Duchy of Tel Akbir, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: The 82 years old Tarik ben Nadir, Duke (*Sheik*) of Tel Akbir, dies this morning of old age. (*See Nu. 3, Nu. 5.*)

What This Means: In fact, Tarik was very old and would not have survived much longer. But recently, his son Farid has secretly poisoned him gradually to accelerate this process, hoping to make him die during the Crown Rebellion so he could take advantage of the disorder in the empire and unite Tel Akbir with Ylaruam. The old duke took longer to die than Farid hoped, however, but he has at last succumbed.

Farid has been in contact with the Kin Sultan of Ylaruam since the start of the War of the Crown. The sultan has promised Farid strong military support if he rebels against Thyatis and declares the duchy rightly part of Ylaruam. In his declining years, Duke Tarik had turned over the supervision of Tel Akbir's guard forces to Farid. Farid has packed them with mercenaries from Ylaruam and the few Tel Akbirans who support his goal. Most of the troops loyal to Thyatis were sent to occupy Kantrium when it rebelled, or to Thyatis City to re-enforce Eusebius. Farid did that to get them out of the way. The troops left in Tel Akbir are almost entirely loyal to him and Ylaruam.

In change, the Kin faction has promised him that he will marry the daughter of the Sultan, Hassam al-Kalim, thus becoming one of the possible heirs to the Alasiyan throne.

Several members of House al-Azrad's operations in the area have secretly funded and encouraged Farid. This includes Akir al-Sudif, the supervisor of House al-Azrad's merchants in the area. They have provided the funding out of their own private wealth, not that of the house. Eshram al-Azrad is unaware of these efforts; those involved figure he would be pleased, though, considering the current state of relations between Darokin and Thyatis, as well as the house's traditional sympathies with Ylaruam.

In truth, the Master of Hule manipulated things to reach this outcome, as Akir al-Sudif is one of his agents and he persuaded other al-Azrad merchants in Tel Akbir to participate in the conspiracy in order to fan the flames of antagonism between Thyatis and Darokin.

What the PCs Can Do: There is little they can do to halt the death of the duke, especially because there is no reason to think that it was not a natural one. More probably, they can be involved by being one of the Ylari agents that have contacted Farid, or one of the poisoners used by the son of the duke.

Nuwmont 2, AC 1017: Nightmares and Dreamscapes.

Location: Across the Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: In various locations in Glantri, the secretive Brotherhood of the *Radiance* makes contact with one another. Their conclave goes on undisturbed, but much later, as they all lay down to sleep, they experience fitful dreams. Upon awakening, none can quite recall what so bothered them during their slumber and pass it off as nothing. (*See Fl. 11, Ei. 5.*)

What This Means: None of the members of the brotherhood speak of this event to their brethren and so none is aware that their unrest is shared by others. However, the incidents will continue sporadically over the next several months.

Nuwmont 2, AC 1017: Eusebius's Declaration.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW.

Description: Following the battle, Eusebius calls a special session of the imperial senate, where he gives a speech. Wearing the by now famous *Imperial Crown*, he calls for reconciliation and forgiveness and promises to be just to the defeated. He announces that there should be amnesty for the common troopers among the rebels—so long as they cease to resist and surrender.

Those who continue their revolt will face the penalties for treason and will be enslaved and consigned to the mines or other harsh conditions when captured. As for the ringleaders and aristocrats, Eusebius offers to spare their lives and give them a chance to redeem themselves if they also surrender and beg forgiveness for their treason. He does, however, announce that the imperial throne hereby confiscates their lands and their slaves are hereby freed by imperial edict.

After brief deliberation, the imperial senate passes a resolution supporting Eusebius's proclamation. Following this, wererats in human form and rogues (including members of the Shadow Hand!) infiltrate the rebel camp, where morale is sagging, spreading news of the proclamation. Their spirits fall more later this same day, when several Thyatian airships hover into view from the south and land in the City of Thyatis. Many soldiers sneak away that night, deserting the rebel cause. But in the camp of the usurper, dark priests and necromantic mages work feverishly to create hordes of undead. (*See Nu. 1; Nu. 3, Nu. 4.*)

What This Means: This measure undercuts any incentive for people to continue to support the rebel cause. After failing to take the capital, the rebellion now seems doomed and continuing to support it in the face of possible ruin and enslavement, when amnesty has been offered, seems foolish to many.

This declaration also ends up freeing most of the slaves in Hattias, since support for the rebellion among the aristocracy was particularly strong there. Over the next several months Eusebius will grant out the lands in Hattias and elsewhere that were confiscated, giving them to his soldiers and to the freedmen. For the most part these lands will be assigned as much as granted. They are given in exchange for military service and when the recipient dies or retires they must designate a son, relative, or other successor to serve, or the lands will be re-assigned. Thus, Eusebius creates a category of military lands throughout the empire, which will cover the confiscated areas and

many of the lands granted out for new settlement. The families of the nobles and aristocrats who surrender will receive new lands—of a size equal or almost equal to the lands they lost. But their new lands will be unimproved wilderness lands, either in the interior areas of Thyatis (the previous Imperial Territories which were given to various dominions last year) or in the overseas colonies. They will then have to work hard to develop them and restore their family fortunes and will be watched closely and will also be required to provide service in exchange for the lands they receive. Those who don't give up the fight will likely lose everything, though their families might be able to salvage something if they serve the emperor diligently in the next several years. Eusebius has little desire to make many new enemies. But he will crush those who insist upon opposing him.

What the PCs Can Do: There is little the PCs can do to directly affect this event. However, the ramifications of the declaration are likely to create many adventure opportunities... as well as posing a choice for PCs who may have joined the rebellion. If they give up now, they will lose little. PCs who continue to resist will have a hard road ahead of them should their side lose. PCs who turn themselves to imperial forces will receive forgiveness... in exchange for completing this one task that needs to be done.

Also, things don't end here. Even loyalist PCs will receive opportunities as a result of this event: they might be given land, but faced with challenges from the previous owner. They might be approached by some of those who have lost long-held family possessions and asked to intercede with the authorities on their behalf (yes, this does mean that eventually some property might be returned to those it was confiscated from). They might be hired or asked to help carve out new estates for the displaced aristocracy and the like.

Nuwmont 3, AC 1017: Dead Bodies Everywhere.

Location: Torenal Site, Sunken Arogansa, Nayce. AS

Description: With magic returned, spellcasting and mundane personnel that had been away for the Day of Dread return to Torenal Site to renew their efforts. The first group leaves Aquas, utilizing *teleportation* spells to make their arrival at the site. They are confronted with the signs and evidence of the ghoul attack. More eerily though, they are met by silence. The arrivals begin cautiously making their way towards the main barracks to seek out the facility's administrator, Commander Talmata.

After a rather tedious trek through the darkened and at times flooded corridors and chambers that compose the construction facilities, they arrive at the main barracks. There they are met and challenged by a group of facility garrison troops from barricaded positions. After a few tense moments of dialogue, the returning party is allowed entrance.

The party is escorted to see Commander Talmata. Though bedridden from wounds suffered in the ghoul attack, the grizzled cleric greets them warmly, citing that their numbers and spells would greatly bolster their defenses. Puzzled, the returning personnel ask what had transpired. Talmata tells them of the ghoul attack and the carnage wreaked during the Day of Dread.

At the urgings of the senior cleric, the returning Alphasians integrate their own numbers into the ranks of the defenders. Though there has been no sightings of renewed ghoul attacks since the Day of Dread they do not want to compromise their weakened state. Therefore, cleanup and further damage control will be limited to the main barracks area for the time being. While they are doing this, he sends word to Aquas of the ghoul attack and requests the return of all personnel away from the site. (*See Nu. 4, Nu. 6.*)

What This Means: Last year, on the Day of Dread, Torenal Site was besieged by a horde of ghouls. Since many of the site's

spellcasters and mundane name-level personnel had chosen to leave the site as a precaution against the affects of the Day of Dread, the site's defenses were sorely undermanned. The ghouls took advantage of this and wreaked havoc on the site, gaining entrance to several chambers, flooding them in the process.

Though magic returned on Nuwmont 1, the personnel on sabbatical did not immediately return. Many chose to take a few extra days to rest, entertain, or see to matters resulting from the Day of Dread. This returning group is the first to make their way back to Torenal Site. The ghoul attack is all news to them as most magic was denied to the defenders. The few mages unable to avoid the Day of Dread either perished in the attack or were too inexperienced to cast the spells to magically inform their superiors in Aquas or in Nayce.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs who were at Torenal Site can witness the return of the mages, perhaps even have their feats glorified. Those that are returning with them will be shocked and horrified at what they see. The DM should really play up the carnage, dim light and damp nature of the scene.

Nuwmont 3, AC 1017: The Duke's Funeral.

Location: Duchy of Tel Akbir, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Tarik Ben Nadir is buried amid much ceremony. The people of Tel Akbir form long lines to file past his funeral bier. It is clear from their mourning that the duke was much beloved by his people. His son, Farid, stands above it all, with a somber expression on his face. (*See Nu. 2; Nu. 5, Nu. 15.*)

What This Means: The funeral is not unusual. This does give people (including, perhaps, the PCs) the first look at the man who is likely to be Tel Akbir's next ruler, Farid ben Nadir. Two men, robed in desert style, which is not unusual for Tel Akbir, flank Farid. Except that no one remembers seeing these advisors in the court of Tarik.

Standing near him also is Akir al-Sudif, the head of al-Azrad House's operations in Tel Akbir, though this is not seen as unusual.

Though this is not known at the time, the two men are agents of the Sultan of Ylaruam—a cleric and a fighter sent to help, but also to manipulate the somewhat impetuous and foolhardy Farid.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are loyal to the Kin faction, they could be among the guards who have been employed by Farid in the last period. In the alternative, if they are of high level and proven loyalty to the sultan, they could even be one of the two men sent by Ylaruam to influence Farid's moves. If they are on the Thyatians' side, they would have not much to do in this situation... but if they are paying close attention to the situation, they may find it strange and do some investigating on their own.

Nuwmont 3, AC 1017: Lightning Struck.

Location: Outside the City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Just after dawn, dromonds of the imperial navy begin rowing their way up the Mesonian River. Imperial forces, gathered atop Emperors Hill, receive blessings for victory from the chief prelates of Thyatis. Then, led by Eusebius, they sally forth from The City, heading towards the rebel encampment. The soldiers march forth singing, a song written by Lucianna and Coltius following the tune of an ancient ballad sung during the Struggle for Freedom, over a thousand years ago. Overhead several Thyatian *skyships* soar accompanied by members of the Retebius Air Cavalry. With them is the Imperial Magist, Demetrium, mounted on the golden dragon Hytiliaph and Vivianna Romanones, mounted on the golden dragon Chrystonian.

In the rebel camp, the call to arms sounds and Count Oesterhaus orders the forces under his command to form a battle line. Members of the Storm Soldiers assemble on the right wing. Oesterhaus, Manfred and the black knights form a body in the center of

the line, the huge twin-lightning bolt-black banner flapping overhead. To the front of this force stand serried ranks of undead, shrouded in shadow. Among these troops are the Thanatons and necromancers who follow Oesterhaus. The remaining rebellious aristocracy forms up on the left wing, the horses of their captains snorting and rearing while the soldiers themselves steel themselves for the coming clash.

While they are preparing, the imperial host marches forth, units wheeling out of the column, alternating left and right, forming the imperial battle line. Fierce northmen with huge axes stand forth in the center, backed by the emperor himself and his companion cavalry. To each side members

of the guard regiments form wedges of armored cavalry. To the left of these are the Karameikans and other volunteers and mercenaries, including many of the Alphatians who took service with the *imperium* following the Great War, commanded on this occasion by Tredorian, their imperial prince. Among these also is a contingent of the Order of the Grey Lady, including many Hattians who returned to The City with Palykratidius and the *skyships*, under the leadership of the Hattian noble, Wilhelm Habsburg. These stand opposite the Storm Soldiers, facing them across the battlefield with grim resolve. To the right of the guards are the Hinterlanders and the detachment from Minrothad. To the flanks



of each, the auxiliaries of Ochalea and the Pearl Islands form up. Behind these, forming the reserve, there are formations of Eusebius's reformed army, both infantry and cavalry. In an arc beyond them are light cavalry of Thyatis and skirmishers from the Isle of Dawn—the whole body of the nation, drawn up as an army.

The *skyships* hover over the imperial force and begin to pelt the rebel army with artillery at long range. It is then that Oesterhaus takes out a black-fletched arrow and a bow of black iron, drawing it back and aiming it at the nearest of the *skyships*. The distance is still impossibly far, but the arrow's flight is true. It strikes the prow of the *skyship Adrasteia* with the force of a thunderclap. An explosion rips through the hull, causing the entire ship to lurch and it lists to starboard and begins to descend. The crew manages to pull it back from the line and soldiers scamper out of the way before it settles to the ground with a groan. Oesterhaus pulls out another arrow and fires it at the next ship in line, with similar results. The Thyatian *skyships* pull back—but as they do so the imperial army begins to march forward.

Oesterhaus fires two more arrows, one each at the golden dragons still flying overhead. But their riders are ready and both arrows burst into flame before hitting their targets, causing no effect. At this point a group of specks appear on the horizon, to the north of the enemy force, flying rapidly towards its left flank. The imperial light cavalry begins to pelt the rebel line with arrows as this formation nears. This force is revealed to be a flight of dragons and griffons from Retebius, led by Callastian and Mitasula Retebius, mounted on a pair of ruby dragons (their personal pegasi are back in Retebius). These forces swoop over the left wing of the enemy army, raining devastation upon them and causing it to panic. Soon the survivors of the aristocratic rebel forces are fleeing in all directions. But when the Retebian force attempts to reproduce the same result against Oesterhaus and his knights and undead, they fare far less well. The breath weapons of the

dragons seem to splash away when they get within a few feet of the enemy troops. A few are struck by spells and aerial archery, but the Thanatons and necromancers exact a price as well, when one of the dragons is felled by a *finger of death* and crashes to the ground. The rider, severely wounded in the fall, is swiftly dispatched. But at that moment, the leading edge of the imperial line charges into the rebel force, compelling them to turn their attentions away from the aerial cavalry, which wheels to the south, flying behind the imperial line. Clerics of Thyatis destroy multitudes of undead by calling on the power of their Immortals and more are felled by spells and by the axes of the northmen, chopping into the line. To the south, the troops of the Order of the Grey Lady and Hattians rush the Storm Soldiers, clashing in a fierce melee.

Oesterhaus decides the only way to decide the issue in his favor is to charge the center of the imperial line, to kill Eusebius and his men. He spurs his dark knights forward, Manfred at his side and they pierce the line of Northmen. The two forces of heavy cavalry charge each other, meeting with a clatter of metal so loud it sounds like the tolling of a multitude of bells. Heinrich spurs his mount forward, but above he has momentarily lost track of Demetrium, who casts a spell down upon him and Manfred. The spell has no apparent effect upon Oesterhaus, but Manfred suddenly sits up in his saddle, sharp-eyed. He swings his sword forth—not at the imperials, but at Oesterhaus, striking him just before the count's lance reaches Eusebius, knocking off his aim. Oesterhaus pulls up short, his charger rearing and in a rage, with one fluid motion, draws a two-handed sword and slashes Manfred. Manfred raises his sword to parry, but it glances aside. Heinrich's sword cleaves through Manfred's arm, then through the torso of his horse and Manfred is pitched forward from the saddle. The priestess who crowned Eusebius simultaneously spurs her mount forward, a great glowing hammer in her right hand. She swings the hammer—the *Hammer of Destiny*—in a vicious arc. It strikes

Oesterhaus on the side of his head with a great flash, blinding the entire battlefield. When vision clears a moment later, Oesterhaus and the priestess are gone. The undead have collapsed to the ground, no longer animated. Surviving members of the rebel army attempt to flee—except for two forces. The dark knights fight on, but without leadership they are soon cut to pieces. As for the Storm Soldiers, they are surrounded on a hillock. Their opponents, the Hattians who have come to curse their name, give them no quarter and they fall to a man. During the battle the imperial fleet had guarded the northern flank to prevent enemy troops from escaping across the river. The ships now proceed up river towards Hillfork, to return it to imperial authority. (See *Nu. 1*, *Nu. 2*; *Nu. 4*, *Nu. 7*.)

What This Means: This is the final decisive battle of the Crown War. Though Thanatos's minions are defeated, many escape and will cause trouble elsewhere. As for Thanatos Himself—this should not be considered a stroke of any kind against him, or even truly a setback. He achieved many of His goals in this—much death and destruction, which paves the way for renewal. This was Entropy serving its purpose in the cosmic order. The Heinrich Oesterhaus identity served Thanatos long and well, but was reaching the end of its utility in any case. It is time for another identity—somewhere, sometime soon, He will replace another. And the cycle will begin anew. As for Aline, her role in this time and place was also completed. She disappeared as mysteriously as she arrived, no doubt to face new challenges on her quest, one of the quests that led to her ascendance as Liena. The weapons both Oesterhaus and Aline used disappeared with them: bow, arrows, hammer, lance and all.

As for the *Hammer of Destiny*, which Aline used against Oesterhaus, it is an artifact created by Ixion to be used to banish Entropy. The hammer disappears at the same time Aline does, but it does not go with her—in effect, it is retrieved by Ixion, who hides it in a new location, somewhere else (not in Thyatis), where one day it might

be recovered and used against another foe. Such is the way of artifacts. This does have an impact in Thyatis, however. Many of the people near Oesterhaus when the priestess hit him with the hammer swear they saw a shape superimposed over Heinrich's features. A mummy, swathed in dark bandages and covered in heavy black robes, holding a large black scythe instead of a two-handed sword. And in place of Aline they saw a man with golden hair and flaming eyes garbed in robes of gilded silk. This was also a price Aline paid for using the hammer, an artifact of Energy—though Aline is questing for Immortality in the Sphere of Time, Solarios (Ixion) will be credited for defeating the forces of Entropy.

This also brings to full circle a longer-ranged plot by Valerias and Ixion. As a result of their interference (mostly Valerias's, actually) during the Wrath War and Vanya's own bungling, the Thyatians began to call into question some of their earlier assumptions. This opened the way for other Immortals to increase their influence. Beset by famine, mummy rot, Thothian undead and now the Crown Rebellion, many Thyatians become open to faiths that would halt or reverse decline. As a result, many more Thyatians will invoke Solarios after the Crown War. Other Immortals will continue to receive reverence, but the faith of Solarios will become a central one in the empire, gaining influence over time.

The dragons that came with Callastian and Mitasula Retebius were recruited last year. Some came from the Isle of Dawn (near Laticea), while others left Norwold during last year's Dragon Wars. This is part of Thyatis's effort to rebuild their aerial forces following the Great War.

For Thyatis, the War of the Crown Rebellion is essentially defeated—the danger that Eusebius will be overthrown is over. But that does not mean there remain no challenges ahead—there are pockets to be cleaned up, traitors to be dealt with, many now-vacant positions of nobility needing replacement and a nation to be revitalized. And not all of those disloyal to Thyatis joined this rebellion.

Manfred will survive, as will many of the wounded Thyatians, in no small part due once again to the manifestation of the powers of the *Imperial Crown of Thyatis*. The *Gown of Valerias*, used in the previous battle, will go into the care of the Vestals of Valerias, enshrined below their main Temple in Thyatis City. It may emerge again if the City of Thyatis is ever attacked again. The *Imperial Crown* will become part of the regalia of the Thyatian Empire—for now, at least.

As for the damaged Thyatian skyships, they will be recovered, taken to the City of Thyatis and repaired over the next several months.

What the PCs Can Do: This is one of the largest and most significant battles since the end of the Great War. PCs of sufficient power can be instrumental in slaying Thanatons and necromancers. Tangling directly with Oesterhaus is not recommended, however. If the party chooses to do so, they will face an avenger of super-human abilities (literally) armed with mighty, Entropic weapons (those who like to have their levels drained will enjoy such a fight immensely). The DM should make Oesterhaus single-handedly equal to an entire party of master-level adventurers. Fighting him should be a battle they'll never forget.

Nuwmont 3, AC 1017: A Plea for Help.

Location: City of Andaire, Kingdom of Alphas'ar, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: Selcomad, a warrior currently leading a delegation from Stonewall, arrives in Andaire from Draco and makes a plea to the imperial court of Empress Eriadna and her advisors to aid Stonewall, which has a food shortage and now faces famine. His plea is generally ignored by those to whom it is made; some ignore it because he's a commoner and so find him and Stonewall in general, unworthy of their attention, some because they are too busy considering other matters in other Alphatian nations, which seem more important to them. Selcomad is told that the

matter will be taken under advisement and is then sent back to Stonewall. (*See Nu. 14, Nu. 23.*)

What This Means: After the destruction of Alphatia and its subsequent recreation in the Hollow World, the empire has been facing a general food-shortage because they no longer have access to the resources they formerly received from Bellissaria. Some nations have been able to grow more food to get around this problem, while others have simply used their magics to solve their problem. Some nations, like Haven or Vertiloch, just don't have the problem simply because they lost such a large proportion of their populations during the Great War with Glantri and Thyatis in the outer world. Stonewall has been unable to solve the problem because, while it's a geographically small nation, it still has the densest population of Alphatia. Due to their preference for non-spellcasters, this now means that they cannot use magic to solve the problem, while they also have too little farmland to feed their population. For years the leaders of Stonewall have been trying to make the imperial court aware of this situation, but the empire has failed to take their situation seriously for whatever reason. In the last few years, Stonewall has been using grain reserves but also money to buy surplus grain from other Alphatian kingdoms. But all surplus food stored in granaries has now been used up, trade opportunities have been exhausted and famine seems imminent and inevitable, so Stonewall is getting rather desperate this winter. They have sent Selcomad to Andaire to negotiate because he is quite a hero in Stonewall and has an impressive record in the service of the empire and he also learned some diplomatic skills during his youthful life as an adventurer years ago.

What the PCs Can Do: Selcomad needs all the help he can get, especially from people skilled in diplomacy and negotiation, but also from spellcasters who might be more inclined to get the ear of the court (Stonewall has a lot fewer spellcasters than other nations and those are probably busy using their magic to aid their people, or else

they just don't care about the nation's problems and might already have moved elsewhere). He could also use guards to help him make the trip to Andaire and then back to Draco. If the PCs are with Selcomad, the DM should certainly add a few colorful encounters along the way. For example, Selcomad's previous adventures are likely to have made him a few enemies, perhaps among some powerful wizards, who will use this opportunity to get revenge while he's not in Stonewall.

Nuwmont 3, AC 1017: The Investigation Reconvenes.

Location: City of Corisa, Milenian Empire. HW

Description: Senator Krameos summons his fellow investigators to meet at the baths. As Senator Tibernos, High Priest Dagos, High Priestess Helentia, Tassia Red-Hair, General Tythus, Xanthipon and High Magus Amnethon arrive, they begin going over the fruits of their labors. All put forward their own findings, concluding that an outside party is definitely influencing Advisor Dionios. More disturbing though are the realization that Dionios is but a small part of a bigger conspiracy. The investigators end their meeting with a common understanding of the situation. They agree to meet again to decide on a course of action. They all agree that when they move, it will have to be done altogether to insure success. (*See Tb. 16, Fl. 4.*)

What This Means: After a good bit of investigating, Krameos and his compatriots have uncovered enough information to get some idea about a possible conspiracy within the Order of Matera and its covert influences upon Milenia. However, their findings are limited to rumors, speculations and circumstantial evidence. Since the order extends up into some very high places, they want more solid evidence before proceeding.

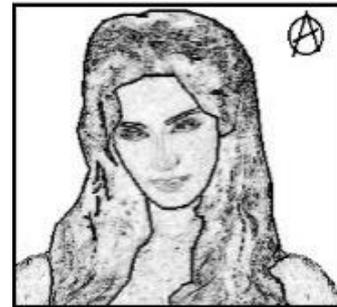
What the PCs Can Do: As the investigation focuses on gaining hard evidence, the risks will become ever more intense. PCs may be called upon to handle much of this. Conversely, PCs may be

friends of targeted individuals or acting as bodyguards. The PCs may find themselves dragged into the investigation and even recruited to help the investigators.

Nuwmont 4, AC 1017: More Infamy in Hapta.

Location: City of Hapta, Empire of Nithia. HW

Description: Scant weeks after the last grisly murder in this tense city, the constabulary is surprised to receive urgent



summons to go to the main Temple of Horon—it appears the unnamed assailant has struck again! Wasting no time, several guardsmen rush to the site, only to find the mutilated bodies of three Nithian clerics of Horon and the signs of a struggle. Braziers have been knocked over and decorative wall hangings torn and spattered with blood. Realizing that there is little they can do, the guards seal off the room, but already temple servants are running through the streets, shouting hysterically what has just happened. (*See Nu. 10, Va. 1.*)

What This Means: Efforts to identify and capture the killer have been unsuccessful thus far and this latest attack, against three well-known clerics of Horon, will no doubt stoke the fires of civil unrest even more.

What the PCs Can Do: The most the PCs can do at this stage is keep trying to find out who (or what) is responsible for the killings, or at least try to calm the city-folk.

Nuwmont 4, AC 1017: Coming Out of Their Shells.

Location: Torenal Site, Sunken Arogansa, Nayce. AS

Description: With no renewed ghoul attacks, Commander Talmata decides that the ghoul threat has passed. He decides to send parties out into the rest of the complex

to assess the damage, seek out survivors and deal with any residual ghouls. With the numbers of returning personnel trickling in, the already present spellcasters support this move. (See *Nu. 3*; *Nu. 6*, *Nu. 7*.)

What the PCs Can Do: PCs at Torenal Site may find themselves tasked with the mission of securing the complex. PC clerics will be working alongside Talmata, tending to the wounded and seeing to the remains of the deceased. Though the ghoul forces are nowhere in the area, there should be a few isolated ghouls left in the complex to pop up to hamper these efforts. Remaining ghouls should not be the only threat: the complex has suffered a good deal of flooding and there are several airlocks that are wide open to the sea and the fresh blood may have drawn a good deal of natural predators into the area seeking an easy meal.

Nuwmont 4, AC 1017: Entrenchment in Helskir.

Location: City of Helskir, Dominion of Helskir, Heldannic Empire, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: Having secured the port city of Helskir and its immediate surroundings, the occupying force of Heldannic Knights, under the leadership of *Ordensgeneral* Anna von Hendriks, proceeds to repair damaged fortifications and inspect minutely the walled city. Cityfolk are pressed into service to carry out the bulk of the repairs, though low-ranking knights spend a lot of time going about these grueling tasks, as well. Once these tasks are completed to her satisfaction, Anna will send some of the vessels docked in port back to the Heldannic Territories for reinforcements. (See *Va. 3*, *Va. 20*.)

What This Means: Having succeeded (after so many failed attempts) in conquering the city of Helskir, to which the Heldannic Order has laid claim for a long time, the knights are doing their best to ensure that their tenuous toehold on the Isle of Dawn is not crushed before they can make use of it.

Nuwmont 4, AC 1017: Triumphal Procession.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: The imperial army marches back into the City of Thyatis following their victory over the rebels yesterday. Various heroes and commanders who played a key role in the victory march at the head of their men, to the cheers of the citizens. The people of Thyatis hang richly-brocaded carpets over balconies and gay streamers fly from poles. Fragrant flower petals are showered from the rooftops onto the victorious troops and generals.

Following after the troops themselves march the defeated captives. Manfred himself is made to walk barefoot before the chariot that Emperor Eusebius rides in. This chariot is pulled by eight large white stallions and is made out of ivory and mother of pearl, cased with gold. The emperor stands clad in gilded armor, with a laurel wreath on his head, with a servant holding the *Imperial Crown* over him and whispering in his ear that all glory is fleeting...

The procession makes its way to the floor of the Coliseum passing through the Triumphal Arch of Zendrol and the Arch of Alasiyanus Victor on the way, where the units of the army form up in seared ranks. The Coliseum seats are full, with the most prominent citizens of the empire and the families of the troops therein. The empire's chief prelate pronounces a benediction upon the troops and Eusebius gives a short speech, promising to complete the process of defeating the rebels and to bring a new bright age for Thyatis. The crowd roars its approval. Eusebius says that this will begin here, in the center of the empire and announces plans to build a great temple to the Immortals on the pinnacle of The City, where all can see its glory and to rebuild the ancient palace in the Zendrolion district. He then beckons Manfred up from the ground and into the back of his chariot and embraces him as a brother. The imperial chariot then leads a procession of the troops in a circuit around the floor of the Coliseum,

again to the loud approval of the assembled spectators.

The people of the city of Thyatis celebrate late into the night. The next day plans are begun to convert the imperial palace into the most spectacular temple in Mystara and to rebuild the old palace in the Zendrolion district. Upriver, Thyatian warships reach Hillfork and receive its submission to the emperor. Meanwhile, not far away, several ships sail quietly from a harbor, heading westward... (See Nu. 2, Nu. 3; Nu .7, Nu. 14.)

What This Means: The people of Thyatis are happy to finally have something to celebrate and they may be overdoing it a bit. There is still much work to do in rebuilding the empire, much less bringing about a new golden age. Never the less, Eusebius sees this as a perfect opportunity to arouse the people of Thyatis to action to recover their greatness and to start some projects that will be a testimony to his dream. This will also put people to work: last year, when the slaves were manumitted, they received their freedom in exchange for doing imperial service for the duration of the crisis or one year, whichever was greater. Many of these will be put to work on the construction projects, others will be tasked with repairing the damage caused during the war (all suitably supervised by engineers and architects, of course). Since such large numbers are not needed all at once, they will be divided into three work crews, each to work four months in succession, following which their service time will be commuted.

Most of the captives who submitted before being defeated will be treated as Eusebius promised. They will likely be sent overseas, to serve in units stationed in the colonies or become colonists themselves. Those that did not surrender and are exceptionally recalcitrant will be treated as traitors and either sold or consigned to the mines. Most others will be forgiven, regardless, after a short span in the work gangs.

As for the Storm Soldiers, that order was decimated during the Crown War—but it

was not destroyed. It has lost much of its base of support in Hattias, however, as the Hattians are significantly less favorable towards them now. It will, however, reconstitute itself as a secret society and begin to rebuild itself, recruiting from throughout Thyatis (and elsewhere). The Storm Soldiers organization will have a significantly lower profile for a long time to come, however and is a much weaker institution. But does not die out and in fact becomes much more subtle, insidious and, eventually, dangerous.

What the PCs Can Do: Crowds of people fill the streets—rogue PCs will find no shortage of ways to try and take advantage of this situation. Other, more gallant, PCs might come to the rescue of those who are beset by such scoundrels. Those looking for a way to make money could be hired as bodyguards or entertainers by wealthy patrons.

Characters who distinguished themselves during the war itself will get prominent positions in the procession, befitting their status and contributions. Eusebius might acknowledge certain individual efforts when in the Coliseum and that would be a good time for him to hand out rewards for heroism, in front of the empire's most distinguished lords and ladies. Dominions will not be granted on this occasion, however, though they may be later—but medals, orders of knighthood, or lordships may be received.

Nuwmont 4, AC 1017: Lost Valley Secure.

Location: Foamfire Valley near Threshold, Kingdom of Karameikos. OW

Description: An expedition of sages and adventurers sent to investigate the Lost Valley in Sviftmont of last year returns. They are greeted by the King's Road Battalion, who have been preventing any other outsiders from gaining access to the valley. The envoys are immediately escorted to Mirros, to meet with King Stefan. (See Nu. 8, Va. 3.)

What This Means: The Lost Valley of Hutaaka was discovered last year and quickly became the object of many adventurers' quests. This in turn caused troubles with gnolls in the hills north of Threshold. A Darokinian merchant operating in the Lost Valley requested the king's aid with a political situation there and Stefan agreed to send a team to investigate. They have returned with many interesting tales to tell.

Nuwmont 4, AC 1017: Flock to the True *Pharaoh*.

Location: Valley of Kings, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: Dozens of Thothians, feeling disenfranchised by *Pharaoh* Ramenhotep's collaboration with Nayce, flock to the Valley of the Kings. There they hope to join the secessionist Thothian colony and its leader, self-proclaimed *Pharaoh* Haptuthep II. (*See Kl. 12, Sv. 4.*)

What This Means: *Pharaoh* Haptuthep II (actually the lich Haptuthep I) convinced several Thothian settlements to secede from the nation last year and used ancient magicks to effectively seal the Valley of Kings off from outsiders. It is here, in the valley and the escarpment around it, that he hopes to give birth to a new Thothian Empire, one free of Alphatian influence and able to bask in its rightful superiority. Many Thothians, having only very recently been freed of centuries of Entropic influence, have begun to feel common cause with Haptuthep.

Nuwmont 5, AC 1017: Death in Lichfield.

Location: Village of Lichfield, Bishopric of Kittings, Kingdom of Bellayne. SC

Description: Archibald Shaw, the member of parliament for the small mining town of Lichfield in northern Bellayne, is found dead in his house this morning. Shaw was a particularly old rakasta, so his death was not a great surprise among the locals. (*See Va. 23, Fe. 23.*)

What This Means: There will have to be a by-election in Lichfield soon to replace the

deceased Shaw. Given the current tensions in the country, it seems likely that this particular by-election will be particularly hard fought by the various factions that are emerging.

Nuwmont 5, AC 1017: A New Duke, A New Enemy.

Location: Duchy of Tel Akbir, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Farid Ben Nadir, eldest son of Tarik Ben Nadir, former Duke of Tel Akbir, announces that he is now the new Emir of Tel Akbir. This surprises everyone, for the emperor has not proclaimed this. More surprising is the fact that he declares Tel Akbir part of the Emirates of Ylaruam, no longer part of the empire. Farid gives all non-Ylari citizens of the duchy ten days of time to get out of the emirates' territories, thereafter all Thyatians and non-Alasiyans found will be executed.

Farid also frees the Ylari raiders that were captured attempting to attack Thyatis last year, gives them arms and incorporates them into his forces. (*See Nu. 2, Nu. 3; Nu. 15, Nu. 17.*)

What This Means: Farid has had a long time to prepare this event and believes that now the empire will not be able to sustain a new conflict with a whole nation (the emirates). Most of the army of Tel Akbir is with him, but the people are definitively not—they consider themselves Thyatians, not Ylari.

The wizard Sarapammon, who had been a close friend and advisor to Tarik ben Nadir and Ralak Ahman al-Mustafa, Tel Akbir's chief priest, begin working secretly to organize people to resist Farid and the Ylari occupation.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are Alasiyans with Ylari sympathies they may help Farid's interest, but if they are not, they will probably have enough to do trying to save their life in the upcoming hard period.

Nuwmont 6, AC 1017: The Costs of Unwanted Visitors.

Location: Torenal Site, Sunken Arogansa, Nayce. AS

Description: After tying up the loose ends at the construction site, Commander Talmata compiles a report on the matter and has one of the mages forward it to Seashield. The report is full of mixed findings. In regards to the facility, damage was slight with flooded chambers and damaged airlocks. All of these can be repaired and bilged out without too much trouble. However, the attack was costly in the form of personnel. Of the construction crews, casualties include 55 dead, 12 missing and an additional 25 wounded. Of the military forces, casualties include 43 dead, 20 missing and an additional 30 wounded. Talmata estimates that a third of his casualties came from flooding chambers rather than the attacks of the ghouls proper. In particular he cites the flooding of one of the workers' quarters where 20 workers were drowned. He adds that morale is low among the personnel, many desiring to go home. Talmata requests increased wages for the specialized and common laborers to provide additional motivation for them to stay. (*See Nu. 3, Nu. 4; Nu. 7, Nu. 18.*)

What This Means: The battle with the undead was a terror for the site personnel and it has given many of the workers reasons to want to leave. Casualties were high and most survivors can attest to seeing comrades struck down or carried away by the ghouls. However more can claim that the sea itself took more lives than the undead. Luckily, the ghouls' attention was on food and not on destroying the various buildings of the construction site; therefore, damage was limited to breaches to gain entrance and collateral damage from the flooding.

Nuwmont 6, AC 1017: Winter Chill.

Location: Western Kingdom of Douzbakjian, Midlands. WB

Description: A large raiding party of white orcs from the Endless Winter Clan

descend on the hamlet of Arkady in Western Douzbakjian. They come in the middle of the night during a mild blizzard—the hamlet receives no advance warning. The orcs and their dire wolves make short work of the hamlet—they slaughter every villager they can find, loot the houses, round up the livestock and then torch the entire place before they retreat into the night.

What This Means: The white orcs, a breed of orcs especially adapted to the cold climate of northern Brun, are becoming increasingly audacious in their strikes. This is being facilitated by the fact that every year in the region stretching from northern Zuyevo to the Midlands to the Adri Varma Plateau, the winters are getting slightly longer and slightly colder. Every year also, the viciousness of the winter weather increases. This effect is being created by the near-immortal ice demon of the north known as Kazukarzash who is subtly making the climate of northern Brun colder. His eventual goal is to freeze the entire continent of Brun and bring death to all its residents apart from his own minions.

Nuwmont 6, AC 1017: The Days of Extravagant Military Orders.

Location: City of Ionace, Ionace Island, Nayce. AS

Description: Commander Broderick issues a series of orders that range from the bizarre to the extravagant, sending patrols in desert areas, ordering a tree-climbing contest among his officers, or renaming every unit using a pattern only he can comprehend. Displaying a behavior that doesn't resemble him, he also treats his non-spellcasting officers in a rather rude way. Though some are puzzled, nobody dares question his attitude, yet even his orders. (*See Nu. 9, Nu. 17.*)

What This Means: Broderick is normally a no-nonsense man, sometimes harsh yet fair, who is not biased against mundaners since he is one himself yet knows how to handle aristocrats and behave in their midst without stepping out of his caste (that would be dangerous) nor bowing too low before

them (that would undermine his military authority). It is those qualities that allowed him to be a respected officer and rise through the ranks, doing the real work on behalf of the mages with the honorifics. Ultimately, when Zandor needed someone to lead his armies and would not trust any other wizard to do it, the loyal (and, in Zandor's eyes, negligible and naturally subservient) Broderick came to light without having to be the inferior of some wizard, a veritable revolution in Alphatian military thinking.

But these past few days he has been acting strangely. In fact, he has been acting very much like an aristocrat officer of the pre-sinking days, those that used to have fanciful titles but no idea how to lead an army, whose vain orders you would bend so they were content with themselves but in a way the military wouldn't be disrupted. Since Broderick is a cold man, none can really call him a true friend and so none dare tell him of his odd ways.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs work for Broderick, they should receive their fair share of inept orders. If the PCs trust Broderick's judgment and blindly follow the orders, that should result in a fun, silly session of play (the exact orders are left at the DM's discretion). If they don't follow the orders, they will eventually find themselves in trouble though, so when they eventually figure something is wrong they will have to learn the Alphatian mundaner's art of handling aristocrats' whims without getting into trouble.

Nuwmont 7, AC 1017: The Procession Continues.

Location: Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: After resting in Thyatis City for a day, Eusebius and his soldiers file out of The City once more, heading west along the coast road. A strong garrison is left behind, but Eusebius takes Manfred with him (as a brother, but also to keep an eye on him and to show to everyone that the rebel is captured.) Eusebius's goal is to clean up

the remaining pockets of resistance. While his forces march, throngs of sightseers line the highways, cheering the imperial forces as they pass by.

The procession reaches Julinius by mid afternoon. The small rebel garrison there is reluctant to surrender, but when Manfred encourages them to submit and Eusebius guarantees them the amnesty that was offered, they put down their arms. Several ships thought to be in the harbor of Julinius are discovered missing, however. The former rebels say they were commandeered by several rebel officers and their staffs and sailed west a couple days ago. Eusebius sends messages to his admirals directing a search for them, but they are not found in Thyatian waters.

Eusebius also sends out several other messengers this day. He has received word of what is going on in Tel Akbir. He sends a messenger to his commander occupying Kantrium, Ettore Ottaviano, ordering him to prepare to march against Farid, once reinforcements arrive. Eusebius dispatches some of his swiftest ground troops to march to Kantridae. Once they arrive, Ottaviano is to strike at the new rebellion and hopefully crush it before the Ylari become entrenched in Tel Akbir.

Note that throughout the march, Eusebius will be making appointments to fill vacancies that were created during the Crown War in civil ministry positions and in the judiciary. Many of these appointments, especially new judges and treasury officials, will turn out to be clerics of Tarastia. (*See Nu. 3, Nu. 4; Nu. 14, Nu. 15.*)

What This Means: The heart has gone out of the Crown Rebellion and it is collapsing swiftly. New problems continue to arise, however, one being Farid's secession. Eusebius hopes to deal with this one decisively before it gets too serious.

Appointing clerics of Tarastia to government office is one side-effect the crown is having on Eusebius. These appointments will have the benefit of cutting down on corruption in the imperial government and improving the justice of the

courts, but they also increase the strength and influence of the followers of Tarastia within Thyatis.

What the PCs Can Do: Players with Eusebius's forces can either remain with them if that is most interesting to them, or be dispatched east to help deal with the newest problem facing Thyatis.

Nuwmont 7, AC 1017: A Broken Torenal Gets a Quick Fix.

Location: City of Ionace, Ionace Island, Nayce. AS

Description: In response to the needs of Torenal Site, the Nayce Council convenes to discuss the matter. After the usual rhetoric of argument and unfocused dialog, order is called and the matter addressed. Since Torenal is a military project, the council defers to the judgment of Commander Broderick, who quickly orders the deployment of Seashield troops and *submersibles* to remedy the matter of defense. He orders that replacement workers can be gathered through conscription and suggests slaves be used if need be.

Since the current administrator, Commander Talmata, has "allowed" his command to be attacked, he should be remanded back to the rank of captain and placed in a more acceptable position. For a replacement, Broderick suggests that the council deploys the mage Captain Deltart to the facility and appoint him the facility's commander. Though few of the council can blame Talmata, they defer to Broderick's judgment of this Captain Deltart in replacing the elder Talmata.

The Aquas representative objects to this strategy of deployment of Seashield troops as it will undermine Aquas's ability to defend itself. Undaunted, Broderick orders the Nayce-allotted Aquas troops to dispatch an expeditionary force to the site. He also orders a similar contingent be sent to the *Torpin* Site to prevent a similar attack from unfolding there. To make up for any defensive shortcomings, Broderick suggests that Aquas can call upon all of its aquatic

forces living in and around the kingdom for assistance.

The Aquas representative further objects and calls for a council vote to settle the matter. When the votes are counted, Broderick's proposal is passed through by a large margin—since the measure won't affect them or their economies, most representatives are quite willing to let Aquas bear the costs of the project. Even though Torenal is a Naycese project, they see Aquas's expertise in underwater construction as placing the responsibility for its completion upon Aquas's shoulders. With the power of the Nayce Council behind him, the measures are implemented.

Ironically, the main objections posed come from the Verothian representative, who wants to clarify that the disaster at Torenal Site should not be blamed on Commander Talmata. He also has certain apprehensions about the command capabilities of Deltart as he has served as a staff officer only and never held a combat position. Though the Verothians can claim their own expertise in military matters, Broderick's rank and influence within the council override their concerns.

In response to the Naycese orders to deploy forces to protect the site, Aquas begins to negotiate with Underocean to split the burden of providing troops, in return for trade concessions. (*See Nu. 4, Nu. 6; Nu. 18, Va. 14.*)

Nuwmont 7, AC 1017: Change of Tactics for the King.

Location: City of Leominster, Bishopric of Leominster, Kingdom of Bellayne. SC

Description: Lord Marston the Just, Archbishop of the Church of Pax Bellanica, has spent most of the winter hurriedly educating King James in the arts of etiquette, diplomacy and patience. Marston was deeply distressed by the fighting last year and wants to help smooth the troubled waters. King James is not the most amenable of students, but the message seems to have gotten across. (*See Nu. 28, Va. 11.*)

What This Means: The faith of Pax

Bellanica (Tarastia) is the officially sanctioned faith of the kingdom. Marston suspects that his main religious rivals, the worshippers of Belbion, have something to do with stirring up trouble in the kingdom and so he is attempting to assist his king as best as he is able.

Nuwmont 8, AC 1017: Terari Gives Report.

Location: City of Mirros, Kingdom of Karameikos. OW

Description: Master Terari and the rest of the Lost Valley expedition meet to tell King Stefan of their findings. They report that the natives of the valley—dog headed humanoids known as Hutaakans and a degenerate group of humans calling themselves Traldar—were at war with one another. Their attempts at diplomatic contact were unsuccessful—until they realized that their efforts were being undermined by agents of the Iron Ring. The nefarious group of slavers had infiltrated the valley on their own last year, with hopes to bring the natives under their own control. Terari’s group sought out and captured or killed all agents of the Iron Ring and once more set their sights to diplomacy. They managed to bring the two groups to a shaky peace, brought on mostly by the valley inhabitants’ knowledge of an outside world. There are some conditions to the agreement, though, which Stefan endorses. (*See Nu. 4; Va. 3, Va. 4.*)

What This Means: The Hutaakans and Valley Traldar are curious about the outside world, yet are wary at the same time. They want to be assured that no unwanted visitors will come into their valley, but they are willing to accept limited contact. Stefan will assign a temporary garrison outside the valley until more permanent accommodations can be made. In return, his diplomats will be allowed access to the valley and its inhabitants in order to learn from them and teach them of the outside world. The Darokinian merchant, Finnwiddey Nimbletoes, gets exclusive rights to trade with the valley’s inhabitants for his

diplomatic efforts, which Stefan also agrees to; Stefan can always rightfully tax any trade coming through the valley’s only entrance into his kingdom.

Second Week

Nuwmont 8, AC 1017: The Shadow Grows.

Location: City-State of Mivosia, Meghala Kimata Plains. DV

Description: Numbering almost 2,000 strong, a host of Mivosian soldiers commences its long march southwestwards—to Polakatsikes. From the battlements of the imposing citadel, the triumvirate watches its army surge forth, envisioning the havoc that will be wreaked upon the hated Heldannic interlopers. (*See Nu. 21, Nu. 28.*)

What This Means: After it learned of the conquest of Polakatsikes by the Heldannic Knights, the ruling Triumvirate of Mivosia did not take a long time to figure out that its own dream of conquering the eastern Meghala Kimata Plains might never come to pass if a “mob of religious fanatics” overran the territory and converted everyone to their cause. The fact that, after almost two years, this has not come to pass means nothing to the Mivosian leadership; they believe it is their manifest destiny to rule this region. If the Heldannic Knights will not leave after being pressured to do so [*last year’s “cold war,” see AC 1016 almanac for more details. Ed.*], then the Mivosians are prepared to use force and eradicate the threat once and for all.

Nuwmont 8, AC 1017: Trikard Announces the Winner, Sort of.

Location: City of Haldemar, Kingdom of Alphatian Neatharum., Alphatian Empire HW

Description: Last year, Military Governor Trikard announced his intent to step down as governor of the Kingdom of Alphatian Neatharum. To find a suitable replacement

he initiated a series of trials where candidates would compete for the throne. The winner was to be announced on Nuwmont 1 of this year. However, that date has come and gone without any news.

Military Governor Trikard announces that due to a general lack of interest, his planned tournament to find a worthy ruler has been a failure. The few individuals that entered the competitions were too inexperienced to fulfill all of its rigors. As such, Trikard sees it as his duty to postpone his retirement and remain as military governor until the empress can appoint a worthy individual. The news is surprisingly well-received by the populace as most of them like Trikard and want him to remain as their leader. They see him as being one of them and a more amiable ruler than some arrogant aristocrat from the continent. (*See Am.1, Sv. 14.*)

What This Means: The general lack of interest was mainly the result of the fact that few Alphatian spellcasters who would be acceptable rulers were interested in leaving the floating continent and Trikard didn't consider any non-spellcaster worthy of the position. Many non-aristocrats expressed interest, but Trikard found deficiencies with each of them.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs may be candidates for the job. In that case, Trikard has deemed them unsuitable as well—either because they are (at least in regards to his criteria), or maybe because rivals have spread rumors about them that they must now rectify. If the PCs considered them well-suited for the job, they may question Trikard's true motives and investigate him, possibly thinking they will discover he wants to keep power to himself.

Nuwmont 9, AC 1017: He Who Casts a Spell...

Location: City of Ionace, Ionace Island, Nayce. AS

Description: During a meeting of senior officers Commander Broderick punctuates his discourse with several showy *cantrips* and other mild magics, obviously uttering magical words himself and not activating

magical devices. When he is done he casts a final spell and *teleports* away from the dumbfounded officers. Murmurs start and grow in volume after his departure, but no one speaks his mind too explicitly or too loud. (*See Nu. 6; Nu. 17, Nu. 19.*)

What This Means: Though several officers have deduced from Broderick's attitude that someone has been impersonating him, they have been proved wrong by the non-activation of the safety devices that protect sensible buildings from mundane and magical infiltration, leaving them the more puzzled and concerned.

What the PCs Can Do: Any PC working for Broderick, either as officer or mercenary or any other position, will certainly by now have noticed his change in behavior. Investigation is de rigueur.

Nuwmont 10, AC 1017: Foreshadowing of Things to Come...

Location: City of Hapta, Empire of Nithia. HW

Description: As word spreads of the continuing inability of the city guard to find the perpetrator of the recent string of murders, some local firebrands take the opportunity to further their own ends. At a public gathering, a wizened Nithian man addresses passersby, telling them that there is a reason why only Nithians have been the victims in this tragedy: the Tanagoro inhabitants are responsible! Appealing to the emotions of his listeners, the man tells them about how the Tanagoro are allegedly living off of the fruits of Nithian labor and how they are not truly loyal to the empire—how could they be, for they are not of Nithian blood!

Although many bystanders shrug off the man's diatribe, others prove to be eager listeners and they talk with him earnestly afterwards. (*See Nu. 4; Va. 1, Va. 2.*)

Nuwmont 10, AC 1017: Interlude with the Shadow.

Location: Idris Tower, Forest of Lothenar, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: Christopher Dove, during his forced sojourn in the dungeons of Idris Tower, is surprised when addressed by a foul rat that has crept inside his cell. The rat talks to him asking his identity and albeit reluctantly, Dove greets with open heart the opportunity to exchange a few words with another living being. As it turns out, the rat is not intelligent or magical, but merely the vessel through which the occupant of another cell is trying to communicate with other prisoners of the dungeon. The mysterious stranger explains he is a wizard imprisoned by the high priestess because of his crimes against Idris's regime. Dove, keeping faith in the old saying "an enemy of my enemy is my friend," gladly welcomes the newcomer and tells him his woeful story. The two exchange vows of friendship and promise to help each other escape this terrible prison, then the wizard must interrupt the communication to avoid being discovered. (*See Va. 14, Th. 17.*)

What This Means: After traveling throughout the Avien Plains during the last months of fall of AC 1016 in order to write his geographical survey for the *Mystaran Almanac* (carefully revised by Idris's minions before being sent to Mirros), Christopher Dove has been held prisoner in the dungeons of Idris Tower for the last three months. According to the orders of the high priestess, he must be kept alive as a propaganda tool to use with the civilized nations of the Old World and his travels through Denagoth will resume once again at the break of spring. In the meantime, Dove tries desperately to obtain any useful information on the high priestess's plans and on the situation outside the tower, planning his escape if the opportunity arises. Dove doesn't know the identity of his new interlocutor, but he has noticed he is feared by the guards and closely watched. Trusting in this man's powers and knowledge, he hopes to gather his aid and to escape Idris's clutches soon.

What the PCs Can Do: All the adventures that befall Christopher Dove can easily be adapted for a group of PCs venturing into Denagoth. Or captured PCs

may meet Christopher Dove in the dungeons of Idris Tower and form a bond with the almanac correspondent, so they will be adventuring together.

Nuwmont 11, AC 1017: Hinterlands Reorganized.

Location: City of Raven Scarp, Hinterlands, Thyatian Empire. DV

Description: During one of her regular audiences, General Leilah ben Nadir, Governor of the Thyatian Hinterlands, announces that, in recognition of the continuing colonization of the region, the Hinterlands will be reorganized into a number of colonial holdings. The division will be as follows:

The territory lying east of the River Torion (which runs through Raven Scarp) will be known as Davania Inferior. This region will remain under colonial administration.

The coastal territories lying west of the River Torion, extending northwest to Fiorenza and inland roughly 100 miles, will be known as the *Exarchate* of Davania Superior; Raven Scarp will be its capital city and General ben Nadir will serve as *exarch* for now.

The Barony of Fiorenza, established by Justinian Silvestro in AC 1011, will retain its designation, but be officially recognized as a separate dominion, outside colonial administration.

The port colony of Cape Town will be enlarged somewhat to the south and be a barony.

The bulk of the northwestern Hinterlands (excluding Cape Town and Fiorenza) will be the colonial territory of Torionensis.

The broad swath of territory running along the southern fringes of the Hinterlands will be known as Thratia. This territory, still only loosely controlled by Thyatis, will be under military jurisdiction.

What This Means: Since the invasion of the Hinterlands first began in AC 988, the Thyatian Empire has made considerable inroads into the territory. Colonization has continued apace and the empire's grip in the

coastal regions, at least, has become far more secure than it once was. As a result, some regions of the Hinterlands, such as Fiorenza and the lands around Raven Scarp, have been tamed to some extent. The reorganization of the Hinterlands is a recognition of the fact that one person cannot oversee the territory for the empire and that civilian control for some regions would be more appropriate.

What the PCs Can Do: Although there is nothing the PCs can do to influence the decision, the new administrative boundaries might make it easier for them to acquire dominions, should they be Name-level. Colonial territories such as Torionensis and Davania Inferior are largely unpopulated (by Thyatian citizens, at least) and thus land is available on very favorable terms.

Nuwmont 11, AC 1017: Ire of the Sea.

Location: Sea outside Town of Port Fewalskij, Barony of Fewalskij, Confederacy of Klagorst. WB

Description: A cargo directed to the Kerminhae from Port Fewalskij is sunk during a tempest. The cargo's content was apparently composed of farming animals. The portal authorities of Port Fewalskij send some agents to investigate the matter. Here, the sea is not particularly deep and there are many rocks in the area. Thanks to this and to magical means, they discover an unusual number of dead men in the area, many naked and put inside metal cages. The agents report secretly the news to the harbormaster, Jasin Pankow, who decides to keep the information from becoming public domain. (*See Nu. 21.*)

What This Means: This was a very strange cargo and it raises disturbing thoughts about the activities of the hresha-rhak, the race that live in the Kerminhae. Pankow does not want to spread panic among the population, nor does he want to stop the profitable commerce with the Kerminhae, creating a diplomatic incident. So he will make some investigations, first and decide later.

What the PCs Can Do: This is a great opportunity for investigating in the city, because low profile adventurers, who would not attract much attention, would suit very well the purposes of the harbor master.

Nuwmont 12, AC 1017: Work Finished... for Now.

Location: City of Aaslin, Kingdom of Notrion, Continent of Bellissaria, Nayce. AS

Description: King Corydon reports to the Nayce Council that the first batch of domes for the Torenal Site are completed and awaiting transport to the construction site. Corydon is told to prepare the domes for transportation while the council organizes the proper workforce and fleet to transport them and safeguard them. Corydon obliges the message and issues orders to make things ready. (*See Nu. 20, Va. 1.*)

What This Means: The initial batch of domes for Torenal Site has been completed on schedule. Corydon is quite anxious to deliver this news; though he is grateful for the job opportunities and added coin to his kingdom's economy, he has become quite apprehensive to get the finished domes off his docks and out of his hands, mainly for security reasons—he fears the domes may be damaged by accident or even by sabotage. He feels that as long as the finished domes are still in his kingdom, work on the new domes is placed at a standstill and since he also fears that these idle mages may use the opportunity to plan to usurp his rule...

What the PCs Can Do: PCs in and around Notrion may find themselves hired to help guard the domes, or retained to assist in their transportation. Corydon may even recruit PCs to help bolster his own personal security and even spy on the mages. The truth is, at present no mages really seek to usurp his reign—the kingdom is too poor to attract the attentions of would be mage rulers. The tasks will be rather boring, so the DM may want to create some potential sabotage for them to root out and eliminate. Of course, Corydon's growing paranoia could have them running around in a wild goose chase after supposed usurpers.

Nuwmont 12, AC 1017: Heart of the Enemy.

Location: City of Akesoli, Republic of Darokin. OW

Description: As Greenleaf Vickers, leader of the Umbarth House, is relaxing at his Akesoli villa, a shadowy figure suddenly appears before him. Vickers listens, entranced, as the figure explains that the Master of Hule has noticed the worth of Umbarth House, which is unrecognized in the Darokin Council. The Master offers to have his agents covertly support Umbarth by providing secret trade information, by influencing local authorities to support Umbarth merchants and by taking care of Umbarth's opposition. In return, the Master asks to be informed of the goings-on in the Darokin Council and for Vickers to speak and vote as the Master instructs. After some deliberation and considering the potential for profit, Vickers agrees to the proposal. (See *Nu. 1; Fl. 7, Fl. 23.*)

What This Means: Greenleaf Vickers has become an embittered, selfish man over the last decade, seeking only profit for himself. He has watched the fortunes of Umbarth House dwindle over the years. First his operations in Sind were disrupted by the warfare there, then, Alnheim was invaded by the Shadow Elves and all his trade there was lost. After that, his Glantrian operations were hard-hit by Ethengar's invasion and the local authorities only helped in the restoration of native merchants, not caring about Darokinians. Throughout it all, the Darokin Council did nothing to help Umbarth, despite Vickers's repeated pleas. Today, Umbarth House only holds trade around Akesoli and Akorros, as well as some shreds in Sind and Glantri. Vickers is desperate to regain his house's fortunes and the Master has offered him an opportunity to do so. As a result, the Master now has an agent in the very heart of Darokin.

Nuwmont 12, AC 1017: Explosion!

Location: Emirate of Makistan, Emirates of Ylaruam. OW

Description: Shepherds in the plains near the town of Anram hear a tremendous

explosion several miles away. The *Sheik* of Anram sends agents out to investigate and they eventually discover a ruined structure in the wilds to the west—evidently all that remains of the tower of Istakhr, an eccentric Makistani sorcerer. The residue of powerful magicks taints the area and evidence seems to point to a magical duel. No one is quite sure what to make of this news. (See *Sv. 13.*)

What This Means: Istakhr was ambushed by a powerful rival wizard and their duel unleashed potent energies that destroyed his tower. Istakhr is presumed dead and the identity of his nemesis is unknown.

Nuwmont 12, AC 1017: Return from Azca.

Location: Town of Kota-Jayang, Merry Pirate Seas. HW

Description: Captain Buraganu has returned to his homeport of Kota-Jayang, after a failed raid on the Azcan city of Huitlaktima. The crew's morale is low, but Buraganu and his quartermaster, Redbeard Kray, hope to keep them motivated and then set out in search of a prize. (See *Va. 4, Va. 7.*)

What This Means: The swarming Azcan armies battling in and around Huitlaktima at the end of last circle, prevented Buraganu and his ship, the *Butchery*, from capturing any booty. The crew voted to return to Kota-Jayang and regroup. Buraganu hopes that he can retain control of his crew, but the failure to capture a single coin is not looked upon highly.

Nuwmont 14, AC 1017: Stonewall Explores Its Options.

Location: City of Draco, Kingdom of Stonewall, Floating Continent of Alpathia, Alpathian Empire. HW

Description: The situation is slowly growing more serious in Stonewall—the hunger menace seems ever more imminent and inevitable. In an attempt to solve the problem, Koblan Dracodon, King of Stonewall, has called together a number of advisors to explore the options. Among

these are Selcomad, the diplomatic warrior who was sent to Andaire and Rogart, a historian and personal advisor to the king. Various trading options and magical solutions are discussed, but they are rejected because they are not feasible in Stonewall. The debate grows more desperate until Rogart makes a stunning suggestion: if Stonewall cannot find aid, the nation may have to go to war with other Alphatian nations! Wars among the kingdoms are not unheard of in Alphatia, but it has been a while since the last one. Then again, all agree that Stonewall isn't just going to lie down and die and if they must use force to gain what they need, then so be it. In the end, King Koblan decides to go to Andaire himself to address the empress one last time. (See Nu. 3; Nu. 23, Va. 5.)

What This Means: Stonewall is getting desperate! In the outer world, Stonewall depended greatly upon trade with places like Bellissaria or Norwold to sustain its vast population. But these trading partners are now gone and because Alphatia has become a floating continent, trade with other nations is all but impossible due to Stonewall's lack of *skyships* to transport goods. Similarly, magical solutions are not available because of the low number of spellcasters in Stonewall.

What the PCs Can Do: King Koblan is desperate for solutions; if the PCs have any suggestions to make, then he will certainly listen to them. They had better be serious, though, because Koblan will be very upset with them if he feels that they are wasting his time in this hour of need.

Nuwmont 14, AC 1017: An Honorable Sacrifice.

Location: Duchy of Kerendas, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: After recovering Julinius, the imperial army marched west, receiving the submission of Bayville and Bridleton and eventually reaching the City of Kerendas. The gates are open when the army arrives and the Kerendan guards do nothing to stop Eusebius's forces from entering the city,

standing around and watching instead. The imperial forces march on to the ducal palace at Castle Kerendas, several miles outside of town. The doors of both the castle and palace open when tried. The palace is unusually quiet and Eusebius begins to suspect a trap. He orders his soldiers back and enters with an elite force (adventurer types).

They find the Duke, Maldinius Kerendas, in his bath. His wrists are slit. (See Nu. 4, Nu. 7; Nu. 15, Nu. 21.)

What This Means: By ancient Thyatian tradition a man can avoid disgracing his family by committing suicide himself. This is what Maldinius did. As a result, Eusebius will not strip his family of its lands and wealth. Several prominent rebel aristocrats have chosen this course of action, Maldinius being the most significant of these.

Though Maldinius's family is not impoverished, Eusebius waits before deciding if the rebel duke's heir should succeed him in ruling Kerendas itself. The matter is extremely difficult to handle because Maldinius is uncle of Lucianna Torion, Eusebius's wife [see Joshuan's Almanac page 136. Ed.]. He does make one appointment while in Kerendas, however. He gives Tredorian, Eriadna's son, the position of commandant of the cavalry academy and the rank of lord knight.

Eusebius will tarry in Kerendas for at least a week, entrenching his control over the administration once again and dispatching forces to secure control over the Kerendan countryside.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs could be approached by Maldinius's children, each of whom hopes to become the next duke. They will ask them to support their candidacy and lobby the emperor's advisors (or even Eusebius himself) on their behalf. Sufficiently distinguished and ambitious PCs might try to further ingratiate themselves with Eusebius in the hope of becoming duke themselves.

In fact, the period after the War of the Crown rebellion is a perfect time for Thyatian PCs to become dominion rulers.

Many positions in the imperial hierarchy are vacant and characters can achieve title in a variety of areas. Should your characters receive any of the ranks that are granted out in later events, simply ignore those and substitute the name of the characters in your campaign receiving them instead.

Nuwmont 14, AC 1017: Up, Up and Away!

Location: Town of Leenz, Principality of Aalban, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: The business of Montgolfière & Urbaal, Ltd. unveils its first mutual creation today—the commercial blimp. This tremendous contraption, a large gondola-like device carried by a huge steam-powered balloon, will revolutionize the transportation industry in Glantri, they claim. They allow several prominent nobles to ride on the device and they take a several hour trip around the region of Aalban and then to Glantri City. Though this is the only working blimp they currently have, they are in the process of making several more and they declare that they will be running transportation for commercial tourists within the month. (*See Va. 9.*)

What This Means: The two enterprising men, Jean-Louis Montgolfière and Yarov Urbaal (son of the late Count Emeth Urbaal of Wylon), met in the days following the war with Ethengar. Both men had similar designs for hot air ballooning devices and decided to merge their ideas. After finding several wealthy backers, they are attempting to open their commercial transport venture. Their main headquarters is in Leenz, but they hope to have several similar locations in many other principalities soon. Initial transportation costs will be expensive, but as they make more balloons, they hope to reduce their rates so that even mundaners can afford to use their wondrous device to travel swiftly between the villages and towns of Glantri.

Nuwmont 14, AC 1017: Hunters Quarrel.

Location: Somewhere in Neathar Lands.

HW

Description: A Hatfei hunting party are seeking game close to the borders of their territorial holdings. Sighting a group of deer, they move into position and unleash their slings and spears at the beasts, striking several. The Hatfei hunters begin the task of tracking the mortally wounded beasts to harvest their kills. Several Hatfei follow one of the blood trails but find that a Makekei hunting party has already claimed their trophy. Both parties claim the fallen beasts are theirs, neither group willing to relinquish the game. The situation is further muddled as both hunting parties cite that the area is their own. Before long the two hunting parties clash over the slain deer. Outnumbered, the Hatfei are forced to abandon the deer and head back into safer areas, where they relate the tale to their fellow tribesmen. Not wishing to shed blood over a single deer carcass, the Hatfei elders decide to focus on the other deer that they have taken and voice their grievance to the Makekei tribal ruler. (*See Va. 4, Va. 22.*)

What This Means: The incident begins as a pure chance encounter. The Hatfei had in fact delivered the mortal blow to the deer and the Makekei had merely finished it off. The Hatfei genuinely believe that they had killed the beast and that the Makekei are just trying to claim their kill. The matter worsens as the Hatfei were on their normal lands, the pursuing hunters having crossed over to Makekei lands pursuing the deer. The location of where the deer fell is the basis of the Makekei's claim to an easy harvest of venison.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are part of either hunting party, the DM should make it obvious that the other group is not sincere and see how they react.

Third Week

Nuwmont 15, AC 1017: Seize Them!

Location: Throughout the Emirate of Tel Akbir, Emirates of Ylaruam. OW

Description: Tel Akbir guards all over the duchy start to round up non-Alasiyans and expel or execute them. There is widespread, but passive, resistance to this throughout Tel Akbir, as people hide their friends and neighbors from Farid's men. (*See Nu. 3, Nu. 5; Nu. 17, Nu. 18.*)

What This Means: This is part of Farid's plan to incorporate Tel Akbir into Kin-led Ylaruam and purge it of Thyatian influence.

The wizard Sarapammon and Ralak Ahman al-Mustafa's covert efforts to create and organize opposition to Farid increase and they work to help hide people from Farid's troops.

What the PCs Can Do: Ylari PCs who support the Kin, or who just want to see Tel Akbir as part of the emirates, could come to help Farid. Thyatian PCs might be sent by Eusebius as spies and pathfinders for the inevitable counter-attack and given instructions to organize resistance to Farid's rule.

Nuwmont 15, AC 1017: We Are All Happy Huleans.

Location: All around Hulean Empire. WB

Description: Today, it is proclaimed throughout the Hulean kingdoms that humanoid shall from now on be allowed to live outside their reserves, together with Hulean humans, as long as they obey the Master's laws and do not engage in disorderly behavior. The humanoids meet this proclamation by cheering and praising Hosadus. Many Huleans are baffled, but trust their Master's wisdom. (*See Ka. 23.*)

What This Means: Hosadus has made this proclamation in response to the unrest among humanoids that was experienced last year. He knows that having unrest in the heart of his empire would be bad and so takes steps to improve the humanoids' loyalty. In reality this proclamation won't change things much—the humanoids still prefer to live with their own kind and so most remain in their reserves. Those who leave are watched by the Master's guardsmen; the more orderly humanoids settle in Hulean cities and are cautiously

accepted by the populace, while the wilder ones are quickly sent back to the reservations.

Nuwmont 15, AC 1017: War Weary.

Location: Duchy of Kerendas, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Tredorian seeks audience with Eusebius to discuss the concerns of the empire's Alpathian troops. Following the Great War, several thousand Alpathian soldiers entered Thyatian service. Though some of these later defected, many have served Thyatis faithfully throughout the struggles that followed. Like Tredorian, they have formed bonds (and in numerous cases, families), within the empire. Since they have served Thyatis, they know they would be unlikely to receive a warm welcome in Naycese lands.

But they have also fought in many battles for over a decade and many are growing weary of fighting and would like to settle down. Tredorian petitions the emperor on their behalf. Eusebius agrees to grant them plots of land as if they were retiring Thyatian soldiers and insures that they will all be given respect and the status of Thyatian citizens. He also issues a proclamation regarding the contributions of these Alpathian troops to the empire, admonishing people not to take out their anger against the Alpathian Empire on loyal Thyatians who are of Alpathian heritage. This is in echo of the Wrath of the Immortals Day of seven years ago. Eusebius also asks the soldiers to serve out the rest of the year before retiring. He does not demand that they do so, but in part as a result of not commanding them, almost all of them agree. (*See Nu. 7, Nu. 14; Nu. 21, Th. 5.*)

What This Means: Anti-Alpathian sentiment was strong in the immediate aftermath of the Great War, due to the suffering many had received at the hands of the invaders. Passions and hatreds were inflamed, as many had lost loved ones or friends during the war. These hard feelings have subsided with time. No one in Thyatis is a fan of the Alpathian Empire, but as

Thyatians now, of Alphatian ethnicity, they are accepted as citizens. Some in Kerendas believe that they should have been given the lands these soldiers were, though and there will be some friction on that score.

For the Alphatian soldiers themselves, Eusebius's guarantees are much welcomed. Many are ready to lay down the burden of arms (though a large number of these will still serve in reserve units). Others will continue to serve in the military, but are comforted knowing that they have been adopted into Thyatis and will be able to make a home here.

The land grants given to the Alphatians are in the following areas: portions of the land in hills of Kerendas along the Trevanion River, parts of Machetos (though these are granted out later) and some of the confiscated estates in Hattias. Eusebius is shrewd in how he does this. He makes sure that Alphatians who served in the same company are clustered with their comrades, but he also makes sure that they are interspersed among Thyatians, rather than forming a solid block which may not assimilate itself into Thyatian society or, worse, might rebel at some point. And none of them are settled in entire division communities.

What the PCs Can Do: Though unlikely, it is possible that Alphatian characters took service with the Thyatians after the events of the Wrath of the Immortals campaign and have remained in Thyatian service until now. If so, they too will benefit from this event. Prominent Alphatians, who, like Tredorian, distinguished themselves above the norm, may receive knighthoods, baronies, or lord knighthoods as well.

Nuwmont 16, AC 1017: Garlic and Stakes and Everything Breaks.

Location: Keep of Drax Tallen, Forest of Geffron, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: The umpteenth assault made by Sylarion's undead inside Drax Tallen turns out to be less easy than was expected. In fact, the Shadow Army is now equipped with many garlic flowers, holy symbols of

Idris and circles of protection against evil and the soldiers led by General Grumman are able to withstand the attacks of the vampires and wyrds without many losses. The Elf Skull Unit humanoids, for their part, manage to strike a good deal of oaken stakes through the hearts of the elven vampires, killing nearly one third of the assailants before the undead retreat into the forest. (*See Fe. 13, Fe. 14.*)

What This Means: After General Grumman's arrival in Drax Tallen in Swiftmont of AC 1016, the undead troops of the vampire elf Sylarion have made regular forays into the keep (unhindered by the harsh winter) to exact revenge for their treatment under the Shadow Lord's tyranny and to satisfy their feeding necessities. Grumman realized that he needed to resort to old folktales ways to counter the undead's assaults, so he enlisted the help of many priests of Idris from the nearby Avien Plains and equipped his men with imported garlic flowers against the vampires. Also, he made the wizards stationed at the keep draw magical circles of protection in the key points inside the keep to hold the undead at bay, while the Elf Skull Unit humanoids discovered that the vampire elves could be destroyed by staking them with oaken weapons. Thus the defense against Sylarion's troop came to be and under Grumman's orders the Shadow Army gained its first significant victory. Now Sylarion will be much more careful in his assaults, in order to avoid losing precious followers.

Nuwmont 16, AC 1017: Refugees Reach Ierendi.

Location: City of Ierendi, Kingdom of Ierendi. OW

Description: Several Thyatian ships sail into Ierendi's harbor today. The passengers and crews claim to be refugees from the civil war in Thyatis. They stock up on provisions and most say they are continuing on, hoping to make new lives in the Thyatian baronies (a.k.a. the Savage Baronies) near Hule. Some decide to stay and settle in Ierendi, however. They keep one of the ships for their own use

(or to sell in order to acquire houses in Ierendi) while the rest of the refugees sail on. (See *Nu. 4, Nu. 7; Va. 14, Th. 2.*)

What This Mean: These are actually followers of Thanatos and others who joined the Crown Rebellion but decided to flee rather than submit. They landed here and planted the rumor of proceeding on to the far west, but they actually plan on sailing south through the sea of Dread before swinging back east, to the Isle of Dawn. They hope to throw any imperial pursuit off their trail. Those that stayed behind consist of people who really do want to live in Ierendi, but also some that are settling for a more sinister purpose. Thanatos ordered a few of his followers to stay in Ierendi to establish a secret shrine and base of operations. They will attempt to recruit people to their cause.

What the PCs Can Do: Ierendi-based characters could find themselves immersed in a series of adventures revolving around the activities of the cult of Thanatos.

Nuwmont 17, AC 1017: ... Must Be a Wizard.

Location: City of Ionace, Ionace Island, Nayce. AS

Description: At a Nayce Council meeting, Commander Broderick leaves his usual reserve and addresses representatives and rulers alike in a fashion which does not fall within proper protocol, apparently forgetting he is only gentry among nobility. His friend Favian Vern, though himself not annoyed by this, notices the furious looks of several present and gently urges Broderick to show some restraint. Broderick's reaction is the opposite of what he expected, though, as he instead erupts into rage, stating vociferously that "I, Karszamon, refuse to be silenced without a magical duel."

After the initial shock of the revelation, which causes everybody to fail to notice the challenge to a duel (to which, incidentally, Vern will never respond), Queen Zynnia, recognizing the name as that of a powerful enchanter from Theranderol, asks him to explain how he came here.

"Well," he says, "I was genially enchanting this," he raises *Frightcorps*, "with magical dweomers, when I was sucked into the item. Even though I hadn't properly finished the enchantment, my talent at preparing it was more than enough to make it stable and, because my great mind was fused into it, an item of tremendous power indeed. Unfortunately it was that stubborn individual you call Broderick that was wielding it, but I finally was able to overcome his lesser mind and possess his body. Since my body and estate were destroyed, I think I'll keep both this body and the functions attached with it; in fact I've been doing just that those past few days and I must say certainly better than the, uh, crude original."

The shock is immense at the council. Agreeing to think about the avalanche of revelations before committing to a course of action, the council ends for the day. (See *Nu. 6, Nu. 9; Nu. 19, Nu. 22.*)

What This Means: Karszamon is a powerful wizard that had (and still has, since the position cannot be revoked unless death is proved) a seat at the Great Council. The wizard, an acquaintance of Zandor's, was allowed to remain in his tower and enchant that weapon (assumedly because it would be useful in the war effort, though some wonder if it wasn't destined as a gift to his friend, the new emperor), rather than participate in the attack on Glantri. He was trapped in his own enchantment when the power of the *Radiance* was released on Alphatia and created an unknown number of Alphatian Artifacts by fusing minds with magical items and *Radiance*. Though his entrapment wasn't the result of his own genius, his escape was in part, as he finally overcame Broderick's mind in a contest of willpower during the last Day of Dread. Thanks to Broderick's abundant notes, he quickly filled in the time gap and grasped the current political situation, then decided that since he had lost all his magical books and items, he could as well be the supreme commander of New Alphatia.

Nuwmont 17, AC 1017: Of Wind and Fiends.

Location: Alasiyan Desert, Emirates of Ylaruam. OW

Description: A troop of 200 Ylari cavalry and 400 infantry on the way to Tel Akbir to support Farid's rebellion disappears in the desert. It almost seems as if a sudden and very violent desert storm has dispersed them. (*See Nu. 5, Nu. 15; Nu. 18, Nu. 19.*)

What This Means: In fact, the responsible of the disappearance is a fiend and a squad of Alasiyan undead, who died in the previous year's problem with the fiend. The demon benefited of the strong desert wind to attack the cavalry and most horses fled in panic. Some of the bolder (and well-equipped) Ylari (mostly officers) managed to face him and, equipped with some magical weapons, they defeat the fiend. When the 50 undead and the fiend are finally killed, of the Ylari division only 20 men remain (though some others, who fled into the desert during the attack, eventually trickle back into Abbashan).

What the PCs Can Do: This is a good way to provide a fight with a supernatural force, if the PC's missed the events of AC 1015. But this obviously halts the march toward Tel Akbir. If the PCs are strong enough, they could change the end of the conflict...

Nuwmont 18, AC 1017: A Changing of the Guard and a Not-So-Gentle Nudge.

Location: Torenal Site, Sunken Arogansa, Nayce. AS

Description: A trio of *submersibles* arrives at Torenal Site. Among their cargo of personnel and supplies is a newly promoted Commander Deltart. Deltart appears before Commander Talmata and issues him the papers turning over command to him. He also hands Talmata his orders sending him to Eagret Island to assume command there. Talmata begins assembling his personal possessions and prepares for his departure.

Deltart's first act as facility administrator is to meet with his staff to go over Talmata's

organization and personnel allotments. After a few minutes, he decides to leave them in place with but a few changes. He then sends an aide to collect all of the available members that compose the Destroyer and Super Destroyer units, to read them a message from none other than Broderick. The letter strongly urges the adventurers to "start pulling their weight and deal with this ghoulish nuisance." He passes the parchment out to allow each attendee the opportunity to read it for themselves. (*See Nu. 6, Nu. 7; Va. 14, Va. 25.*)

What This Means: This is the official change of power for Torenal Site. Ambitious, Deltart wastes little time in setting up his authority. He is ambitious and a bit arrogant, even by Alphatian nobility standards. He is aware that he is not powerful enough to manhandle his authority over the other spellcasters and that owes a great deal to family connections; however he also knows that his position gives him a great deal of power over the mundaners and most of the spellcasters under his command. Talmata's organizational skills prove sound and the new commander leaves them essentially as they were—the exceptions are merely the areas that were greatly affected by the attack and need new personnel. There is little that Deltart can do to undermine the efforts of his predecessor.

Deltart is a bit wary in dealing with the adventurers. He knows that these individuals are adventurers and are not nearly as subservient to the authority that the council has given him. Likewise he is aware that he would fare badly if it came to physical conflict with most of them. Aware of the contents of Broderick's letter, he is a bit nervous about its confrontational and accusing contents. Therefore he makes it very clear that those words are from Broderick and not his own, going as far as to let them see the dispatch for themselves.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs involved in the Torenal Site will immediately see Deltart just for what he is: an arrogant novice flaunting the power given him by the council. The DM should play him up as the worst of Alphatian nobility, where even

other nobles do not like him. He likes to pander to nobles of equal or greater experience to gain allies. He panders to those of greater magical, political and even melee power. However those less experienced than Deltart will find themselves berated and ridiculed.

Nuwmont 18, AC 1017: The General Strikes.

Location: Town of Kantridae, Duchy of Kantrium, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Ettore Ottaviano, a loyalist general in charge of garrisoning Kantrium (which revolted last year, but was occupied by forces from Retebius and Tel Akbir) marches immediately toward Tel Akbir. (*See Nu. 15, Nu. 17; Nu. 20, Nu. 21.*)

What This Means: Ettore Ottaviano is the former ambassador in Ierendi and one of the most prominent diplomats and generals of the country. Ottaviano received a message from Eusebius that he must march toward Tel Akbir as soon as the reinforcements arrived. He was thinking to leave for Tel Akbir even if they haven't arrived yet, because he has heard news from Ralak Ahman al-Mustafa of Ylari troops sent by the Kin sultan to help the traitor Farid. Fortunately for him, fresh troops from Port Lucinius have arrived near Fort Zendrol pursuing a group of rebels who refused to surrender. Ettore Ottaviano contacts its commander, Iulius Scaevola and asks to leave the rebel group and march toward Tel Akbir. Scaevola agrees and the two groups unite and direct themselves toward the city. Apart from the political considerations, Eusebius has to choose new rulers for several dominions and he believes that this could be a test to see if Ottaviano is fit for the title of duke that he long desired. It will be a very hard task for him to reconquer the duchy without creating any diplomatic problem with Ylaruam, especially since the Kin are now firmly on the throne. He doesn't know, but the luck has been on his side, destroying the first Ylari reinforcements.

What the PCs Can Do: A lot of military fighting in Thyatis this year.

Nuwmont 18, AC 1017: Mixed Reviews.

Location: City of Starpoint, Kingdom of Ambur, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: Noted eccentric playwright Azomog publishes his latest play. *Of Skies Blue, Rivers Red* draws a variety of reviews from critics, thespians and theater enthusiasts. Some praise it as "a strange but remarkable unpredictable piece of entertainment." Others describe it as being "ahead of its time." More critical readers handle their judgment with far harsher terms such as "garbage" and "the meandering rants of a mentally-deficient orc." Despite all of the prerelease hype, there are no immediate plans for any theater troupe to present the play. (*See Am. 27.*)

What This Means: In truth, the play is an experiment. Azomog crafted his tale while under the effects of zsonga and by going without sleep for extended periods. Its content is full of abstract and nonsensical passages. There is no apparent plot and it really comes off as a series of incoherent ramblings. Azomog is fairly certain that as it is the play will fail. Not wishing to waste the experience, he has already begun using his developmental notes to write a play based on the life of a zsonga addict.

Nuwmont 18, AC 1017: Crackdown!

Location: City-State of Kastelios, Serpent Coast. DV

Description: During the night, several warehouses along the shores of Euripidos Island are raided by squads of city guards. A number of these do not appear to contain anything out of the ordinary, but some are inhabited by a number of shady individuals, who resent the intrusion. Skirmishes break out amongst the docks, but the city guard has numbers on its side and soon overpowers most of them—though almost a quarter of the malefactors escape. Some of

those who surrendered are taken into custody for questioning. (*See Nu. 22, Nu. 26.*)

What This Means: Euripidos Island, which sits at the mouth of the Amoros and Vasilios Rivers, is the location of almost half of Kastelios’s warehouses. It is also home to the less savory aspects of Kastelios—most notably the business interests of the city-state’s more powerful criminals, which include the illicit sale of antiquities and magic items, drugs, prostitution and slavery. It is said that almost anything can be bought on the island and this is in fact true—provided one has enough money.

For years, there was an unspoken agreement between the assembly and the criminal overlords of Euripidos Island. As long as the Kastelian government interfered as little as possible with the commerce of the island, the crime bosses would try to limit their excesses in the rest of the city and contribute “gifts” to the government’s coffers. Although this has been the norm, there have been periods where ambitious members of the assembly, eager to clean up the city and to prove themselves as capable leaders, tried to crush the criminal element. Though the raid was remarkably well-timed, this appears to be the beginning of another such period.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs can be involved in the raids, or in tracking down those criminals who escape.

Nuwmont 19, AC 1017: New Barons in Underocean.

Location: City of New Smaar, Kingdom of Underocean, Sunken Alphatia, Nayce. AS

Description: King Juliast announces the appointment of several new barons to help manage Underocean’s growing population, as a small but steady stream of immigrants arrives from Aquas. However, unlike the barons of Undersea, these barons will have no ability to check the king’s power and for the moment will not have specific territories assigned to them, but will instead act as roving representatives of the king.

Of note is that one of the new barons, Torin Deepwatcher, is a non-spellcasting merrow. (*See Va. 10, Va. 19.*)

What the PCs Can Do: If they are well-established heroes of Underocean, they may be among the new nobility.

Nuwmont 19, AC 1017: Sultan Angered.

Location: City of Ylaruam, Emirate of Alasiya, Emirates of Ylaruam. OW

Description: The survivors of the demon attack return to Ylaruam and report of the event. Fearing that many demons could still be in the region and enraged at the blasphemous act of animating dead Ylari to further Entropic purposes, the sultan begins to consider the idea of a full scale inspection of the desert. He then sends new troops to Tel Akbir. (*See Nu 5, Nu. 17; Nu. 20, Nu. 22.*)

What This Means: The sultan is quite embarrassed. On one hand, he is beginning to think that he has not defeated the demons as completely as he had thought and that the demons may still prove a problem to Ylaruam. He would prefer not to send new men to Tel Akbir with the risk of triggering a war with the Thyatians when he is not sure in his own border. But he doesn’t want to lose Tel Akbir and especially not to be untrue to his word to Farid.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are among the ones who battled the demon in the desert, it could be upon them to tell the sultan of the situation. Hassam could remember them once he has decided how to confront this situation once more and they could be sent to find and eliminate hidden crèches of demons. Otherwise, if they had remained in Ylaruam, it could be the second occasion for them to join a heroic quest against the Thyatian infidels.

Nuwmont 19, AC 1017: Broderick vs. Karszamon.

Location: City of Ionace, Ionace Island, Nayce. AS

Description: The topic of this specially convened Nayce Council meeting is to

choose the next commander in chief of the Naycese forces.

The first subject brought to discussion is the fates of Broderick and Karszamon, though, for on opening the meeting Queen Zynnica demands a way to bring Broderick back. (Prudently, Favian Vern had avoided bringing up that topic himself, as he feared Karszamon would renew his challenge and for good this time.) According to Karszamon, the two of them cannot exist at the same time, for his body has been destroyed and one must remain within *Frightcorps* while the other occupies Broderick's body. Karszamon is genuinely surprised that several council members pause to consider whether Broderick should be returned to his own body, rather than him, Karszamon, an aristocrat! When the vote is held, Karszamon wins over absent Broderick, though the atmosphere is heavy and the council rescinds its decision and schedules another vote on today's topic in three days. (See *Nu. 9, Nu. 17; Nu. 22, Fy. 27.*)

What This Means: Though he was not magically-gifted, Broderick was a competent and loyal man who on numerous occasions helped various rulers. They trusted him and relied on him, despite his lower status. He was also the quiet symbol of the renewal some were trying to bring to the Nayce under the impulse of Favian Vern; more than a symbol, he was concrete if discreet evidence of the good of the new ways and his disappearance in favor of Karszamon is a great step backwards to the old Alphatian ways. Whatever happens next, this is a great loss for the reformists' wing.

Meanwhile, this event makes Karszamon realize that what happened one way, might happen the other, too. Though he's confident that he can resist any attempt by the commoner to return to his body, he decides to shelve *Frightcorps* and research a means to destroy it. He also vows to oppose those who would oppose the natural order of things by preferring a simple commoner over a great master of the arcane, a sure sign of the decay of the Alphatian way that could

only lead to an end to the Alphatian superiority.

Nuwmont 20, AC 1017: It's Going to End Soon... and It's Going to Make Me Feel Better.

Location: Emirate of Tel Akbir, Emirates of Ylaruam. OW

Description: Ettore Ottaviano reaches Tel Akbir during the night. After a rapid discussion with Iulius Scaevola, the *centarch* who led the reinforcements from Port Lucinius, he decides to move as swiftly as possible. The officers plan a lightning strike and assault Tel Akbir. When the troops begin to storm the city walls, many citizens revolt and attack the guards, with Sarapammon and Ralak Ahman al-Mustafa casting spells from inside the city to help the Thyatian troops enter it quickly. Most of Farid's troops surrender quickly and when the cold winter sun illuminates the city, Ettore Ottaviano has the traitor Farid executed. (See *Nu. 17, Nu. 18; Nu. 22, Va. 1.*)

What This Means: The nearly immediate reconquest of Tel Akbir shows the strategic ability of Ettore Ottaviano. Luck was also on his side, as well, along with key support from within Tel Akbir. Farid's Ylari advisors are captured along with many of Farid's troops.

Among those fighting against Farid in Tel Akbir is his sister, Jamila bint Nadir. She and Ettore Ottaviano happen to meet during the struggle and become intrigued with each other.

Akir al-Sudif of House al-Azrad tries to hide his involvement, but palace staff and other witnesses are soon reporting his unusual degree of friendship with Farid during the secession attempt. The Thyatians, especially Eusebius, are looking for any excuse to curb the influence of Darokinian merchants in Thyatis, especially ones like al-Azrad House, which are seen as friendly to Thyatian enemies.

What the PCs Can Do: Ylari PCs might help delay the Thyatian victory, but will be hamstrung by the fact that the people of Tel Akbir will try anything to help Ottaviano's

forces enter the city. Alternatively, they could encourage Farid to flee, hoping to fight again another day.

Nuwmont 20, AC 1017: Nayce Dome Insurance.

Location: Kingdom of Notrion, Continent of Bellissaria, Nayce. AS

Description: King Corydon is informed by the Nayce Council that even though the domes are finished, their transportation to Torenal Site will have to await the arrival of an escort fleet. They inform him that the fleet has been organized and deployed; elements of it should be reaching Aaslin within the next few days. Corydon is much relieved. (*See Nu. 12; Va. 1, Ya. 26.*)

What This Means: Organizing the escort and support fleet has been no easy task for the Nayce Council. The usual indecision and rhetoric have slowed the organization process. The fleet is a hodgepodge collection of vessels from various kingdoms' fleets, mostly what each kingdom feels they can spare.

What the PCs Can Do: King Corydon will hire a party to defend the precious domes against any sabotage attempt.

Nuwmont 21, AC 1017: Blood Calls for Blood.

Location: Throughout Kingdom of Qeodhar, Nayce. AS

Description: In response to a number of raids conducted by Antalian militants against Qeodharan positions in northern and eastern Qeodhar last year [*please refer to the AC 1016 edition of the almanac. Ed.*], Baron Norlan's forces begin a campaign of terror to make his opponents pay for their activities. Over the next few weeks, predominantly Antalian hamlets in northern and eastern Qeodhar are raided and opposition is crushed ruthlessly. The fact that most of the Antalian minority in Qeodhar has already been displaced from the heartland and has gathered in these peripheral settlements, only makes the job

easier for Norlan's soldiers. (*See Va. 15, Va. 27.*)

What This Means: This is a deliberate ploy to crush domestic unrest, before it gets out of hand. Norlan also fears that news of the situation will reach other rulers within Nayce; it is bad enough that he enjoys little status as it is—proof that he is unable to control his own dominion would destroy what little remains of his credibility.

Nuwmont 21, AC 1017: Conclusions about Hresha-Rhak.

Location: Town of Port Fewalskij, Barony of Fewalskij, Confederacy of Klagorst. WB

Description: Jasin Pankow receives the reports from his agents. They have discovered that the hresha-rhak, through merchants all over the western coast of Brun, bring slaves from several areas of the continent to their territories. They do not know, however, what their reason for doing so happens to be. Jasin Pankow, considering the situation, decides that it is not Fewalskij's concern to find out what the strange race does with the slaves, but decides to talk with hresha-rhak representatives, because he does not want them to disguise their mercantile activities, pretending to transport different cargoes. (*See Nu. 11.*)

What This Means: Slavery is legal all over Klagorst, so Pankow is quite puzzled about the reasons why the merchants would choose to hide their cargo. He is convinced that it is simply a question of illegal acquisition of slaves and does not want this to happen. If the hresha-rhak want slaves, they had better stick to the law and not kidnap people, as Pankow fears they have done. Anyway, by informing the hresha-rhak of his concerns, he hopes to have them understand that they have to abide by the law in the future.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs may be the agents who uncovered these activities. Depending on the DM's preferences, the truth behind the hresha-rhak's activities may be much worse than presented in the almanac!

Nuwmont 21, AC 1017: The Capitulation of Mchetos.

Location: Duchy of Mchetos, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: After spending a week in Kerendas, Eusebius and his troops march across the river and take control of Mchetos. Callastian Jowdynites, the aged duke, is nowhere to be found. Eusebius orders his troops to search the land for him, but they are unable to locate him. Eusebius muses aloud about sending the army further west to bring other recalcitrant rebels who sympathize with the enemies of the *imperium* to heel. Justin Karameikos, who was within earshot when Eusebius speaks, looks shocked and appalled. Eusebius merely winks at him and smiles.

The next day Eusebius and part of the imperial army set sail from Kerendas. They stop over at Terentias before continuing on to Hattias. Eusebius also dispatches official envoys to travel to Mirros in order to negotiate an official recognition of Karameikos and an improvement of relations, in return for some concessions. Among the envoys are several Vyalian elves. Several of the Karameikans who have decided to return to their homeland travel with the entourage and will act as guards and intermediaries. But most, including Justin, stay behind in Thyatis for now. (*See Nu. 7, Nu. 14; Va. 1, Va. 3.*)

What This Means: Jowdynites has vanished. He was a very old man and it is not known for sure if he survived the Crown War or not.

Eusebius is not normally a humorous man, but he is currently in good spirits. After the utterance, he speaks privately with Justin to make sure there was no misunderstanding and about the envoys he planned on sending the next day. Justin is mollified and lets his men know about this so those who've decided to return can travel with the same group. But Eusebius was also making a point—crafty and devious, he knows that word of his joke will get out and reach the ears of King Stefan and his advisors once the party of envoys and Karameikans arrive.

He is counting on Stefan wanting to avoid even the possibility of war to make him more tractable to the Thyatian Empire's moderate requests of its Karameikan progeny.

What the PCs Can Do: Players can be part of the group sent to Karameikos to negotiate things with Stefan, or they can investigate the mysterious disappearance of Callastian Jowdynites.

Nuwmont 21, AC 1017: Mivosians Annex Parthenaeum.

Location: City-State of Parthenaeum, Meghala Kimata Plains. DV

Description: On its march towards Polakatsikes, the Mivosian army approaches the minor City-state of Parthenaeum, which lies roughly one-third of the way along the route. Noting that the city-state's defenders have noticed his army's approach, the Mivosian commander sends a handful of representatives to the main gates, to demand Parthenaeum's surrender and surplus food, in exchange for which no harm shall befall the people of the city-state. While his messengers go about their task, the commander orders his catapults into a position where they can bombard any visible defenses and several phalanxes of soldiers are positioned in two long rows along the northern and southern hills that flank the city-state.

Parthenaeum's ruler, King Callicles, observes the positioning of Mivosia's forces and listens to the message delivered to him by the messengers. He then asks the messengers to relay his response, that he will think on the matter and provide an answer by sundown. Hours later, the Mivosians observe that the banners of Parthenaeum are taken down from the main dome of the palace, just as a runner, dispatched from the city-state, arrives under guard at the camp. He bears the message that King Callicles has agreed to surrender, under the terms offered by the Mivosians. Upon hearing the news, the commander orders his forces to bed down for the night, while he and his senior officers enter Parthenaeum to work out the

finer details of the surrender. (*See Nu. 8; Nu. 27, Nu. 28.*)

What This Means: Parthenaeum is a fair-sized city-state, having roughly 12,000 people living within its walls. King Callicles is well aware of the size and martial power of Mivosia and, much as he is disgusted by doing so, he realizes that his forces would likely lose in a siege and much of Parthenaeum would be destroyed. Being a fairly just king, who cares about the welfare of his people, Callicles feels that it would be better to be a vassal of Mivosia and live, than to stand against them and die.

For the Mivosians, Parthenaeum is important in that it lies on the way to Polakatsikes and, as one of the largest city-states in the area, it has resources which could be used in the war effort—such as men to conscript in armies, foodstuffs to feed the army and skilled craftsmen to fashion weapons and equipment. Furthermore, this city-state may eventually become the administrative center of a future province of the Mivosian Empire; thus the Mivosians were interested in obtaining it intact. Although fully prepared to besiege Parthenaeum, the Mivosians are happy that there is no need to do so.

About half of the Mivosian force will remain in Parthenaeum as a reserve force, while the remainder will continue on its way to Polakatsikes. A large number of Parthenaeum men will also be pressed into military service over the next few days, as well.

Fourth Week

Nuwmont 22, AC 1017: The Next Commander in Chief.

Location: City of Ionace, Ionace Island, Nayce. AS

Description: The topic of this specially convened Nayce Council meeting is, again, to choose the next commander in chief of the Naycese forces.

King Verothrics begins contentiously by bluntly declaring that, since a large chunk of the imperial troops are Verothian and that his men are the best Nayce possesses, it is only sound that a Verothian senior officer be promoted to the position of overall commander.

Furious that the King of Veroth attributes himself all the laurels while it is Thothia that fought Alphatia's battles a few years ago, Representative Ragmon throws his support (and by extension that of his allies) in favor of Karszamon. Likewise, other adversaries of a strong Bellissaria follow the same logic and support Karszamon. Favian Vern doesn't like either prospect, but reasons that he'd better support Karszamon on the chance that maybe someday Broderick can be brought back.

Since even several of the Bellissarian nations fear the prospect of a strong Veroth, Karszamon wins the position by a considerable margin. He decides to rename his office to "Supreme Marshal-Defender of the New Alphatian Empire and of Alphatia That Lays Still in the Depth of the Sea." (*See Nu. 17, Nu. 19; Fy. 27, Sv. 7.*)

What This Means: This council session is an example of the fierce politicking that now takes place at the council, with the immediate threat of Thyatian and other foreign empires no more in central focus.

It is clear that the confederal faction, that was the driving force of the constitution of Nayce, whose goal was a new Alphatian way for the good of all, with Favian Vern as the main figure, is no more in control.

Likewise, the Thothians' grip on the council is eroding inexorably, which, in addition to the trouble at home, is really putting Pharaoh Ramenhotep's strategy of empire-building in jeopardy.

At the same time, the Bellissarian continent, while apparently a strengthening bloc, is kept in check by internal competition and lack of trust as much as by the opposition of the more peripheral kingdoms to any attempt at centralization in Bellissaria.

The emerging faction seems to be the conservative Alphatians, especially Arkans and Aquans, though they too are dispersed and uncooperative, as fits their generally chaotic and haughty character.

Nuwmont 22, AC 1017: The Rise of Shazula.

Location: Tanagoro Plains. HW

Description: Tanagoro warriors of the Shazeke Tribe discover a raggedly-dressed old woman butchering a freshly-slaughtered aurochs calf. The warriors arrest her and drag her into the village to stand trial before Chief Shazula. The old hag, Izala, claims to be a shaman and have the ability to see the future. For such visions had led her here and the butchering was part of her routine of divination and to confirm the visions she had been having of the chief. Shazula inquires to these visions, stating that the crone's life is at stake. Izala goes on to tell the Shazeke chief that she had had visions of him, rising to the very throne of the Tanagoro people and ushering in a new age where the Tanagoro would be feared and respected among their neighbors.

Much interested, Shazula orders the bringing of food and drink to the crone and urges her to continue. Licking her lips in anticipation, Izala obliges and continues relating her visions. She cites that the road to ultimate power will at first be slow, then rapid as his obstacles give way. But his destiny is not to be just a king, but a legend. His legend will unfold by his elevating of the Tanagoro to higher plateaus. His posterity will live on through his child and his children's children. However she cites that fate is a frugal bitch and that the wrong choice in a wife to bear his children may unravel everything.

Shazula asks the now eating crone who this wife and mother of a dynasty is to be. Between mouthfuls of food she responds that the future is cloudy, but the woman is of Tanagoro heritage but is not within Tanagoro lands. She is of uncommon beauty, with ample skills in the martial ways of their neighbors. She declares that she

knows not her name, nor her current location. However she does see her as possibly being in Milenian lands. She also declares that fate has declared a weakness to his rise; a weakness that she is all too well aware of but cannot vocalize in mortal terms. Citing that that is all the Immortals have granted her, she turns her attentions back to stuffing the food into her mouth.

Shazula sits there, quietly watching the decrepit woman feast before him. Once she has finished, he motions to his guards to take her away. Surprised, Izala declares that only she can guide his rise, that only she knows what weaknesses may purloin his destiny. Shazula states that the matter of her poaching on his people's livestock is not negated by her visions. She has committed a grievous crime against his tribe and the penalty is death. With that, he stands and executes his own sentence. (*See Fl. 15, Ya. 9.*)

What This Means: In reality, Izala is little more than a con artist, being neither a shaman nor a soothsayer. In truth she had been the second wife of another chief that had passed away. She had been exiled from her own village for plotting against the new chief after he had refused to appoint her to an advisor's position. Since then she had been roaming the Tanagoro Plains living off handouts, scavenging and stealing when need be. She had been caught butchering a calf and had quickly fabricated the whole shaman story to try to gain her freedom.

Shazula is the embodiment of the Tanagoro warrior chief, an attribute that endeared him to Korolo's father. Korolo is not the cunning tactician and formidable warrior that his father was. He instead prefers civil engineering projects and focusing on the domestic attributes of rule. Though the idea of being king is intriguing, Shazula prefers dealing with his warriors and displaying his own combat abilities. As a chief, he dreads what political duties he has. The idea of being hampered by being king is too much for him to stomach. As a warrior Shazula has few beliefs in prophecies, preferring to believe that he and he alone, dictates his destiny through his strengths and weaknesses on the field of battle.

Shazula has some serious doubts as to Izala's claim of being a shaman. Many tribes hold the shamans as sacred members of society and would be greatly angered by them coming to harm. She never mentions her home tribe or allies that may take umbrage at her coming to harm. Likewise, she did not bear any items that denoted her as a shaman, nor did she bear any of the curious mannerisms that shamans usually display. Lastly, her visions and quest to find him are undermined by her stopping to butcher a calf—prudence would have dictated that she seek out Shazula first.

At best, Shazula accepts Izala's visions as an amusing tale. He is at first tempted to forgive her of the crime of poaching Shazeke livestock. However, she earns his wrath by pressing the point after he orders the guards to take her away from him. He cannot and will not take such displays of insolence from anyone, much less some old hag. As such, he carries out the normal sentence for poaching: death.

Nuwmont 22, AC 1017: Too Late!

Location: Duchy of Tel Akbir, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: 800 men from Ylaruam reach the city of Tel Akbir late this afternoon. Soon they are discouraged when scouts sent ahead see the situation in the city and discover the truth!

They soon begin to retreat to their country, hoping not to encounter Thyatian troops.

Tel Akbirans loyal to Thyatis had rushed to the city, alerting Ottaviano to the coming of the Ylari troops. He mobilizes his cavalry, chasing the Ylari forces back to the border. There is some skirmishing between the forces, but few losses on either side. (*See Nu. 19, Nu. 20; Va. 1, Va. 14.*)

What This Means: The Ylari did not expect the Thyatians to react so fast to Farid's defection. Their forces are not strong enough to fight the Thyatian troops in Tel Akbir. Recognizing this, their commander quickly orders a retreat and they manage to return to Ylaruam without much trouble.

In Tel Akbir itself, imperial officials begin investigating the activities of House al-Azrad's merchants in the conspiracy of Farid, taking Akir al-Sudif and other al-Azrad merchants into custody for questioning. When Darokin hears of this, the council protests and Eshram denies any attempt by his house to interfere with Thyatis or promote a revolt. But investigators quickly discover that Akir and some others were providing funds to Farid and they have trouble believing that Eshram and his house were not involved in supporting the conspiracy. Eshram is telling the truth, however, as he was not involved in any way.

The operations of al-Azrad House are severely disrupted by the investigation, however. Imperial officials impound most properties (warehouses and goods) owned and operated by al-Azrad House in the region during the investigation in Tel Akbir, preventing most transactions from taking place. A less disruptive investigation is begun in Biazzan as well; though goods aren't impounded, the suspicions that are raised end up costing al-Azrad many deals.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are part of the Ylari troops, they may be sent to the city as scouts and discover the situation. The DM would probably enjoy spicing up things, having them sighted by the Thyatian guards, compelling the PCs to kill them silently in order to escape from an unpleasant situation...

If they have fought with the Thyatians, either in the army or among the citizens, they could be able to hinder the pace of the fugitives and be able to capture and kill more Ylari. Anyway, the outcome of the skirmishes will probably end up being the same.

Nuwmont 22, AC 1017: ... And the Best-Laid Plans Come to Naught.

Location: City-State of Kastelios, Serpent Coast. DV

Description: During a rainy night, by some warehouses on the northern shores of the Amoros River, a furtive band of cloaked

individuals busily unloads a line of horse-drawn carts, moving the goods onto a waiting low-slung sailing ship. The work seems to be progressing well, until one of the men falls dead, his neck punctured by a crossbow bolt! Before anyone can react, city guards seem to spring up everywhere—even some of the smugglers shed their cloaks and reveal their identities as guardsmen. A spirited melee ensues, but the smugglers soon realize that there is no way they can win—or even escape—and those who were not felled in the fighting surrender.

The guard captain, taking control of the situation, orders a detachment to march the prisoners to the dungeons to await trial, while the others are to examine the cargo in detail. (*See Nu. 18; Nu. 26, Va. 9.*)

What This Means: The successful raids of Nuwmont 18 enabled the city guard to capture a number of criminals, who, after interrogation, revealed the planned smuggling of a few loads of raw opium (which is illegal in Kastelios) to Tanakumba and from thence to locations throughout the Savage Baronies. The city guard already had a couple of undercover agents planted in some of the crime families and these agents were able to confirm the information, as well as place regular guardsmen amongst the smugglers to aid in apprehension of the criminals. Although not a devastating blow to criminal operations in the city-state, the confiscation of the opium does cost them a substantial amount of money.

When they hear of the operation, the criminal overlords of Kastelios will not be pleased; they will become suspicious of both their own underlings as well as the intentions of the Kastelian Assembly, which until now had, for the most part, respected the unspoken agreement between the crime families and the government. They reason that the raid of Nuwmont 18 was too well-timed to be a coincidence; either someone is feeding the city guard information, or the government is truly breaking its deal with them.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs will have to think fast on either side—as criminals trying

to escape the city guard and as law enforcement officers trying to prevent anyone from escaping.

Nuwmont 23, AC 1017: Stonewall's Plea Repeated.

Location: City of Andaire, Kingdom of Alphas'ar, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: King Koblan Dracodon of Stonewall appears before Empress Eriadna and her imperial court to ask for imperial assistance against the famine that now threatens Stonewall. There is some discussion, but Koblan understands that the matter has already been decided upon and that Stonewall will have to solve its own problems. This so infuriates Koblan that he addresses Eriadna and her advisors with anger and hostility and accuses them of being biased against his nation simply because there are many commoners and few aristocrats there and because they don't like the many warriors in his nation. In the end Koblan states that if Eriadna is unwilling to help, then he will have his nation do what they must to survive! Then he and his small delegation (including Selcomad and Rogart) quickly leave for Draco. (*See Nu. 3, Nu. 14; Va. 5, Th. 2.*)

What This Means: Koblan was never much of a diplomat and all his arguments were mere repetitions of what Selcomad had already said in court earlier. Thus, there were no new arguments to consider, in which case Eriadna felt that her ruling should stand. Koblan may indeed have a point when he claims that the antipathy of aristocrats towards Stonewall may have something to do with the decision. It is not a secret that a great many aristocrats feel that Stonewall is nothing but a settlement for common rabble and are perfectly willing to let them all starve. On the other hand, Koblan's outbursts also mean that he has now lost any chance he might ever have had for support from Eriadna's court.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs can do little here, as Koblan is determined to address Eriadna and once he does, he will

get into trouble. Unless the PCs are skilled diplomats, it is unlikely that they will even be part of Koblan's delegation.

Nuwmont 23, AC 1017: Gold Mines Opened.

Location: Bylot Hills. WB

Description: The first gold mines in Bylot Hills are opened by the Antasynians. The village of Fletrip doubles its population in a few days as miners and prospectors move in. Some of the gold is sent to Hule's treasury, while the rest is used to raise and equip Antasynian armies against the rebels in Monzag. (*See Va. 10, Fl. 15.*)

What This Means: The Master knows that he must take initiative in Bylot Hills before Zuyevo does, so he has his Antasynian allies open the gold mines, thus helping both them and himself while expending very little. Later in the year, as Hulean armies return from other lands, some will be sent to Bylot Hills to guard the mines against any Zuyevan incursions.

What the PCs Can Do: Hulean or Antasynian PCs might be charged with helping open the mines and guard them against attacks. PCs who support the rebels might try to disrupt the mines' operation.

Nuwmont 26, AC 1017: Retribution.

Location: City-State of Kastelios, Serpent Coast. DV

Description: Thesius Palakratidos, a respected member of the Kastelian Assembly, is found dead this morning in his home, apparently killed by strangulation. Many Kastelians suspect that this killing was not a random act because Thesius had always been an outspoken critic of what he saw as lethargic efforts to eliminate crime in the city-state. The spokesman of the assembly, Xenthos Sarantakos, issues a statement, that following the customary period of mourning, a by-election will be held in Thesius's electoral district to vote for a successor. (*See Nu. 18, Nu. 22; Va. 9, Va. 12.*)

What This Means: Although the people of Kastelios are truly saddened and disgusted over the murder of Thesius, who was dearly loved by his constituents, most people in government and many in the rest of society, suspect that the killing was in retribution for the operations of Nuwmont 18 and 22. Those Kastelians who are aware of the informal arrangement that has existed between the government and organized crime are, for the most part, against it, but at the same time they feel that the city has too many external concerns to devote very much of its energies to wiping out the crime families forever and that the deal, though unpalatable, is far better than the alternative.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are in any way associated with the assembly, they may be asked to investigate the murder discreetly.

Nuwmont 26, AC 1017: Nomads Approached.

Location: The Sanctified Lands, Hulean Empire. WB

Description: The nomads who entered the Dark Wood in Sviftmont last year have been wandering around the Dark Wood for weeks, finding little food and grazing for their horses. Today they are surprised when a group of priests in white robes approach them, bringing food and drink in generous amounts. Though suspicious, the nomads accept the offerings. The priests spend an afternoon telling them about Hulean legends and doctrines. They leave in the evening, promising to return with more supplies. (*See Nu. 1; Th. 12, Sv. 1.*)

What This Means: The Master is taking the first steps at converting the nomads who entered the Dark Wood. If he succeeds, they will prove a useful resource.

Nuwmont 27, AC 1017: And Is This the Price We Pay for Freedom?

Location: Town of Deletria, Meghala Kimata Plains. DV

Description: The peaceful atmosphere of the town of Deletria is shattered by the

appearance of over a hundred weary individuals, who implore the town guards to allow them to enter the town. When pressed as to the reason for their arrival in such a state, they relate how their farms and villages have been overrun by Mivosian soldiers. Without further word, the fleeing countryfolk are granted admission into Deletria.

Scant hours later, the town's defenders observe pillars of smoke rising from behind nearby hills to the north and the occasional scream. The noises grow louder as the minutes pass and, as the town guards gather along the northern defenses and ready their weapons in preparation for an as-yet unseen threat, they observe a force of heavily-armored soldiers march over the hills, heading directly for Deletria, followed by three small catapults. Not wishing to lose a moment's time, the town guards open fire with their short bows, taking down some soldiers in the front ranks, but before they can prepare a second volley, they hear the din of battle—coming from the south! As some of them turn to face the new threat, they notice that the southern defenses have already been breached and many buildings are already burning.

Even as they assess this threat, the soldiers marching from the north charge the Deletrian positions. Though they do not break through immediately, they are able to pose enough of a threat that the defenders cannot muster sufficient force to meet the attack from the south and hold off the northern assault at the same time. That and the chaos in the streets as townsfolk desperately try to escape the fighting, make any effort to coordinate the defense of the town almost impossible. Soon, the Mivosians crush the remnants of Deletria's forces and proclaim the battle a victory. The commander then announces to his soldiers that they will have liberty of the town until sunset tomorrow. (*See Nu. 8, Nu. 21; Nu. 28, Va. 2.*)

What This Means: Since the annexation of Parthenaeum, the Mivosians have been looting their way to Polakatsikes, driving forth villagers and farmers who refuse to

swear allegiance to Mivosia and sustaining themselves with what they have been able to confiscate. Deletria is the second significant settlement that they have encountered. Although the Mivosians had to exercise some degree of caution when dealing with Parthenaeum, no such concern is present in the case of Deletria. This small town, having little more than 2,500 people within its walls, is more of a trading hub than a center of military control. The forces it mustered against the Mivosians would never have been enough to hold them off and now it has become the latest acquisition of the growing Mivosian hegemony on the Meghala Kimata Plains.

Once the town has been secured, the Mivosian commander will order the execution of one-third of the remaining town guards and will enslave the families of the executed. Of the remaining townsfolk, one-third will be expelled from their homes, given until sunrise the next day to leave Deletria under pain of death. In the meantime, the Mivosian soldiers will be busy looting everything in sight, having been given free license by their commander to do so. This is intended to dissuade the Deletrians from rising up against their new overlords, as well as to provide an outlet for the Mivosian soldiers.

Nuwmont 28, AC 1017: Parliament Warns the King.

Location: City of Leominster, Bishopric of Leominster, Kingdom of Bellayne. SC

Description: After an all-night sitting in the Commons, a measure is passed by a single vote denouncing the king's handling of the nation last year. The Commons also votes to demand that the king visits the parliament to explain his position and plans for the upcoming year. (*See Nu. 7; Va. 11, Va. 15.*)

What This Means: Most members of the parliament are as shocked as the king himself about the clash of arms last year. This measure represents an attempt by the parliament to reopen negotiations with King James before things get even more out of

hand.

Unfortunately the demand was penned in a somewhat harsh tone, so when the king reads it, the measure may have the opposite effect. In the event this proves not to be a problem, as the king does not appear to give it a second glance.

What the PCs Can Do: Characters can take sides in the growing conflict and make contacts that will give them a prominent position, or try to act as intermediaries in negotiations between the parliament and the king.

Nuwmont 28, AC 1017: The Shadow Lengthens Amid Much Speculation.

Location: Town of Polakatsikes, Dominion of Polakatsikes, Heldannic Empire, Meghala Kimata Plains. DV

Description: Rumors of a great host of soldiers marching across the plains has spread to Polakatsikes, as townsfolk share what they have heard with their neighbors and in doing so, public tensions increase.

The Heldannic authorities, not wishing disorder to inhibit their continuing efforts to integrate the city-state into the Heldannic Empire, order scouts to venture northwestwards, towards Mivosia, in order to determine whether there is any truth in these tales. (*See Nu. 21, Nu. 27; Va. 2, Va. 6.*)

What This Means: If there is one thing Wolfgang Stimmel (the current Heldannic Governor of Polakatsikes) and Trimos Sortiropolis (the former leader) agree about, it is that anything involving Mivosia cannot be good. Their interaction with Mivosia last year was anything but friendly and both of them know that some sort of conflict is likely. Hence the decision to dispatch scouts to determine what is really going on.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs (whether they are Milenian or Heldannic) could be sent as one of the scouting parties. If so, the DM should set up several wilderness encounters (against bandits, wild animals, Mivosian scouts, or worse) to challenge them.

Events: Vatermont

First Week

Vatermont 1, AC 1017: A Nighttime Intrusion.

Location: Strait of Alinquin, Nayce. AS

Description: The Surshield warship, the Feyos, is traveling to Aaslin, Notrion, to assist in the escort operations for the completed Torenal Domes. During the night while most of the crew are asleep, the vessel's second mate and helmsman spot several glowing apparitions moving about the crowded main deck. The junior officer sends a sailor to summon the captain and to alert the ship's contingent of marines. Their wait is short, as the captain and a platoon of quickly-armed marines soon join them.

Pointing out the glowing figures, the second mate quickly relates their movements to his captain. Captain Klastynn motions for the marines to move in and challenge the boarders. The marines creep down to the main deck and begin moving forward. The intruders quickly detect their approach and they turn to meet the marines. Seeing their surprise lost, the marines yell a challenge to the individuals to halt and identify themselves.

For a few tense moments, the intruders seem to talk in muffled tones to each other. Then they suddenly sprint towards the nearest side of the vessel. Amid a volley of crossbow and spell fire, the intruders dive over the side and into the lapping waves. Rushing to the side, the marines watch as the glow of the individuals grows faint as they move to deeper depths and away from the vessel.

Captain Klastynn orders all crew to their positions for the remainder of the night. The crew goes through the vessel from top to bottom but find no signs of damage or anything really out of place. Still, the incursion does warrant strengthening of lookouts and sentries during the coming nights. (*See Nu. 12, Nu. 20; Ya. 26, Am. 2.*)

What This Means: The intruders are lightning zombies from the ruins of the Alphatian city of Bluenose. Since their discovery last year, the lightning zombies have taken a keen interest in the Alphatian peoples living around them. Much of this is based off of their own curiosity about their former lives and the people that spawned them. It was this curiosity that influenced the lightning zombies to investigate the approaching sailing vessel. Their intent is to merely observe the Alphatians aboard the Feyos. The opportunity to actually board her during the night is an ambitious move, one that nearly proves fatal.

What This Means: If the PCs are onboard the Feyos it could be their first encounter with the lightning zombies. They may be sent to chase after them.

Vaterrmont 1, AC 1017: Hapta Ablaze.

Location: City of Hapta, Empire of Nithia. HW

Description: In the wake of yet another horrible murder—this time a prominent Nithian shopkeeper and his family—a large crowd of Nithian commoners march upon a neighborhood populated largely by Tanagoro merchants and laborers and proceed to loot everything they see. Those who try to stop them, Tanagoro and Nithian alike, are pushed aside and in many cases beaten severely. Even city guards who try to quell the disturbance are attacked, as the mob descends into a frenzy of looting and burning.

The unrest continues for several hours, until enough city guards have been mobilized to break up the crowds and imprison those who have been caught stealing or actively rioting, though many ruffians manage to escape. In the aftermath, an entire neighborhood has been devastated. (See *Nu. 4, Nu. 10; Va. 2, Va. 18.*)

What This Means: Demagogues have taken advantage of the tensions to pursue their own narrow agendas. In reality, there is no real methodology behind these activities; ringleaders wish only to engage in looting and burning against an ethnic group they

dislike and do not care who gets hurt in the process.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs may find their services urgently needed here; they will have their hands full saving innocent bystanders, opponents of the riot and the Tanagoro Haptans themselves. If they succeed in preventing serious injury or death, or even use clerical magic afterwards to heal the injured, they will gain staunch allies among those they helped.

Vaterrmont 1, AC 1017: Confidence Is High.

Location: Throughout the Thyatian Empire. OW, SD, DV

Description: A dark cloud seems to have lifted from the Empire of Thyatis. Where once people were grim and somber, they are more optimistic. Seeming to spread outwards from the city and Duchy of Thyatis, prosperity seems to rise with the confidence of the people. Tax receipts are unexpectedly large in the mainland regions, a tenth higher than normal for this time of year. Diligent citizens expose several foreign agents operating in Thyatis City and the Duchy of Thyatis to the government.

Trade is gradually recovering after the war and becomes more brisk as the impact of incorporating Minrothad into the empire and the economic reforms initiated last year begin to reach fruition. Justin Karameikos, always interested in trade and economics, makes a suggestion. He proposes that the additional income be used to promote even more trade and economic vitality instead of simply being spent immediately. Eusebius sees the wisdom in this idea, since in the long run more trade means more tax revenue.

As a result of Justin's proposal the imperial treasury announces a governmental loan policy, whereby the government will loan qualifying persons up to 5,000 *lucins* (the price of a small sailing ship or caravel) at a set interest rate (15%) for trade and business start up. With the government now competing alongside aristocratic lenders and syndicates, this fixes interest rates in Thyatis

for legitimate debt and previously usurious lending becomes uncommon. The longest loans given by the imperial government must be repaid at the end of two years, however, with most due by the end of a year (permitting merchants to complete caravan or ship routes, but less useful for long-term ventures). (See *Nu. 21, Nu. 22; Va. 16, Va. 19.*)

What This Means: This surge in confidence is in part a natural effect and in part a supernatural one. The Great War and the war with Thothia severely impacted the Thyatian economy. Thyatis started to recover from this last year, but the process was interrupted by the Crown War. Now that it is over, recovery might begin to resume. Also, the setbacks of the years of war and reverses caused people to become pessimistic and they hoarded money, in case things got worse. The victory has raised people's spirits and they are making purchases they had put off during the hard times. The defeat of Farid in Tel Akbir spurred confidence to even greater heights.

As for the supernatural effect, Eusebius has worn the *Imperial Crown* in public ceremony since it was recovered and throughout his procession across the empire. Many citizens have seen it and it seems to have had an effect on their confidence in their leaders.

Justin Karameikos has caught the emperor's attention as a wise and crafty man and if his loan program works out he will be listened to more in the future and suitably rewarded as well.

What the PCs Can Do: This is an opportunity for trustworthy characters (with no criminal or dubious backgrounds) to get into the trading game. Note that the Thyatian government will be very hard on people who skip out on their loans or default (using divination and the like to locate them if necessary), especially in the first few years of the program (to set an example). This is another way for the players to get involved: they could be hired to track down loan jumpers. A repo man's life is always intense.

Vatermont 1, AC 1017: Hattias Officially Submits to Eusebius.

Location: City of Hattias, County of Hattias, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Having stopped briefly in Terentias to inspect the *skyship* construction yards built there last year and meet with prominent citizens, Eusebius sailed to Hattias, landing at Pilion before traveling up river to the city of Hattias, which he reaches today. He receives the official submission of the city's officials. Eusebius does ensure that he does not harm Hattian pride more than it already has been. Most significantly he meets with and publicly thanks, prominent leaders of the Hattian resistance, which opposed the minions of Thanatos during the Crown War.

After spending several days touring Hattias and organizing a reconstruction program, Eusebius and his entourage travel northeast, to Vinton. (See *Nu. 14, Nu. 21; Va. 3, Va. 12.*)

What This Means: Eusebius is taking care to insure that all the areas of Thyatis that rebelled against him are completely subdued. While in each area, he places agents loyal to himself in various civil and administrative positions, to keep an eye on things for him and make future revolts more difficult.

Vatermont 2, AC 1017: Geron Besieged.

Location: Town of Geron, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: The elves who captured the town of Geron back in AC 1015 are surprised by a sneak attack made by a strong contingent of Denagothian troops. The elves barricade themselves inside the town, trying to resist the best they can manage, even though they know their fate is sealed. (See *Nu. 2; Va. 28.*)

What This Means: Back in AC 1015, the elven crusaders captured the small town of Geron, a Denagothian outpost that watched over the only safe pass that leads into Wendar. From here, the elves marched on towards the Denagothian Plateau, with a small warband of a hundred elves left back

to garrison the town. During AC 1016, they were hit by sporadic forays of humanoids, but were able to repel them with minor casualties. However, with each passing week they realized they would have been no match for a small well-trained squadron of Denagothian pikemen, so sent messengers to Wendar asking for reinforcements to hold Geron. Unfortunately, Bensarian was already in power when these requests arrived and he never replied to them, reporting instead to the Church of Idris about the situation in Geron. So this attack was planned in the middle of the winter, when the elves would be more vulnerable, to claim back the old frontier town, with the Denagothians sure that nobody will come to the elves' aid.

Vaterrmont 2, AC 1017: Knights Bolster Defenses Even More.

Location: Town of Polakatsikes, Dominion of Polakatsikes, Heldannic Empire, Meghala Kimata Plains. DV

Description: Wolfgang Stimmel, Governor of Polakatsikes, issues orders to his garrison and the newly-formed Southern Legion of Vanya, to coordinate efforts aimed at bolstering the town's defenses even more. He also orders a detachment of 50 knights to secure a number of villages lying to the north and northwest. (*See Nu. 27, Nu. 28; Va. 6, Va. 10.*)

What This Means: Although scouts have been dispatched, Wolfgang is not going to wait for the news; he wants to do everything he can to fortify the Heldannic position in this region, including securing other settlements in order to delay any Mivosian advance from reaching Polakatsikes.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs could be part of the patrols sent to secure outlying villages, or they could oversee the completion of the fortification efforts.

Vaterrmont 2, AC 1017: A Period of Remarkable Peace.

Location: Town of Lothar, Continent of Iciria. HW

Description: It has been almost three years since any outsiders have made contact with the Nithian outpost of Lothar and since that time, aside from the occasional scuffle, the three groups occupying the town have been largely at peace. The only events of note during that period were the occasional incursions by carnivorous dinosaurs. Uartner Semsu, Lord of Lothar, reflects on this today and drafts a letter, to be sent to the Nithian *Pharaoh*, requesting colonists to help clear more land and settle the region properly. (*See Tb. 10, Fl. 14.*)

What This Means: With its remote location near the Sea of Yr, Lothar has remained untouched by the occasional strife which erupts in the nearby Milenian Empire, or the Jennite lands. Owing in large part to this isolation, all three groups residing here—Nithian, Antalian and Heldannic—have for the most part been able to cooperate in ensuring the basic essentials of life are met. This still has not prevented some problems from arising—the six Heldannic Knights had been trying, largely unsuccessfully, to convert the Nithians and Antalians to their faith, until finally giving up late last year; and the Nithians still tend to look down on the lighter-skinned companions as being less civilized. Despite the relative peace here, the effort required to carve out a habitable colony has been very taxing and only so much can be done before the services of professional engineers and other workmen are needed.

Vaterrmont 2, AC 1017: Emergency Rule Imposed.

Location: City of Hapta, Empire of Nithia. HW

Description: Nephren-Amen, ruler of Hapta, makes a public declaration, to the effect that, outside of regular working time, all residents are to remain in their homes until the beginning of the next sleep. Only city guards who are on duty, or those with special permits bearing the governor's seal, will be permitted to remain outside. Those who violate this ruling will be imprisoned. (*See Nu. 10, Va. 1; Va. 18, Fl. 13.*)

What This Means: The establishment of a curfew, it is hoped, might clear the streets of unwanted rabble and perhaps make it easier to find the killer (since he or she will likely be wandering the streets, he reasons). Only time will tell if this will work.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are helping to solve this mystery, PCs will be given permits to move freely during the “night.” Encounters with city guardsmen will be frequent, so they should ensure that they do not lose their documents.

Vaterrmont 3, AC 1017: The First Sorties.

Location: City of Helskir, Dominion of Helskir, Heldannic Empire, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: By order of the *ordensgeneral*, several squads of Heldannic Knights are sent into the territories surrounding Helskir, both to determine the lay of the land and to gauge the defensive capabilities of their enemies. They will report back over the next couple of weeks, detailing the positions of enemy forces and locating likely targets for future attacks. (*See Nu. 4; Va. 20, Th. 2.*)

What the PCs Can Do: If they are with the knights, PCs could be sent along. This is a good way of introducing them to the wilds of the northern Isle of Dawn (which is still in large part untamed), as well as providing opportunities to stage encounters with remnants of Helskir’s defensive forces, some of whom have likely fled to the surrounding forests and villages. If they are on the side of Helskir, the PCs could take the opportunity to ensure that some enemy scouts never return.

Vaterrmont 3, AC 1017: Immigration to Heldann Continues.

Location: City of Freiburg, Territory of Heldann, Heldannic Empire. OW

Description: While reviewing matters of state in his private office, *Oberherr* Wulf von Klagendorf is approached by one of his retinue of personal attendants, who states quietly that he brings good news. After

signing a routine document, Wulf focuses his attention on the other man, who then informs his master that he has received fresh news regarding the continuing immigration of Hattian settlers to the Heldannic Territories. In saying this, he presents Wulf with a folded piece of parchment.

Wulf takes a few moments to read the message in detail and then orders the attendant to relay an order to all of the *ordensgeneralem*: that the resettlement of Hattians into the Heldannic Territories is continuing apace and that every effort should be made to encourage them to settle in Heldland. (*See Va. 13, Va. 22.*)

What This Means: Since Kaldmont of last year, another 20,000 Hattians have arrived in Freiburg and Kammin, seeking new, safer lands to settle in face of continued upheavals in Hattias due to the Crown War. Much of the knights’ bureaucracy has been turned to the comparatively new task of identifying the settlers, allocating land to them and ensuring they reach their new homes safely. These newcomers, in addition to the roughly 15,000 Hattians who arrived last year, present a logistical nightmare to the authorities. In spite of these problems, Wulf considers this unexpected immigration to be a tremendous opportunity—one which will allow the Heldannic Order to solidify its hold on the newly-conquered territories of Heldland.

What the PCs Can Do: While there is nothing the PCs can do directly, this situation may be of benefit to them in the sense that they may be able to obtain some land if they are among the migrants. Of course, if they do gain land, they will be obligated to clear it, build a permanent habitation and render it productive—definitely a challenge for adventurers if there are plenty of wild animals or humanoids running about.

Vaterrmont 3, AC 1017: Deputation Reaches Mirros.

Location: City of Mirros, Kingdom of Karameikos. OW

Description: The envoys of the Empire of Thyatis reach Mirros and petition for an audience with King Stefan. They are greeted warmly by Stefan's palace staff, but asked to wait, because, according to them, the king is a very busy man these days. (*See Nu. 21; Th. 4, Th. 5.*)

What This Means: Stefan is making the Thyatians wait in part to show his ire at the Thyatians for supporting Minrothad. Also, Olivia recommended a delay, which she will use to find out what the Thyatian envoys want, so that Karameikos can be prepared for any surprises.

What The PCs Can Do: Karameikan characters can act on behalf of Olivia and Stefan to try and get information out of the Thyatian envoys.

Vaterrmont 3, AC 1017: The Taterhill Races.

Location: City of Glantri, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: The Council of Princes meets to vote on several minor orders of business. As their final order of business for the day, they are presented with a proposal by Archduke John Beaumarys-Moorkroft of Westheath. His plan is to host annual summertime horse races, to boost the morale of the Glantrian populace and improve the economies of the small towns of the principalities, which suffered greatly from the recent wars. The regal horse races will be attended by the nobles throughout the principalities and will be a proud show of solidarity among the rulers of Glantri. Lord John proposes the venue of these horse races to be Taterhill, a modest village just north of Glantri City and implores the council for funding.

The proposal does not receive enough votes to pass, but it is not shot down. It will pass on to parliament for the final appeal. (*See Va. 12, Va. 15.*)

Vaterrmont 3, AC 1017: Meet Your Ancestors!

Location: City of Mirros, Kingdom of Karameikos. OW

Description: The streets near the north gate of Mirros are packed with onlookers hoping to get a sight of the mysterious inhabitants of the Lost Valley. Sages from the Mage's Guild in Mirros, intrigued by evidence that the Valley Traldar are related to the Karameikan Traladarans, have convinced a group of the valley dwellers to come to the city.

The Valley Traldar are overwhelmed by the sights around them and scared by the vast numbers of strange-looking people they see. They are unconvinced that they are related in any way to these skinny, hairy people. They aren't the only ones.

A contingent of priests from the Church of Traladara arrive on the scene, to inspect their rumored "cousins." Seeing only short, bald barbarians, the priests denounce claims of their ancestry as heresy. Someone in the crowd throws a stone at one of the Valley Traldar and soon a riot ensues. Fortunately, the magicians of the guild manage to protect the Valley Traldar from being seriously injured and the king's guard is able to break up the riot before it gets too far out of control. (*See Nu. 4, Nu. 8; Va. 4, Va. 16.*)

What This Means: Contact between very different cultures is often devastating. The long separation of the two Traladaran peoples has worked changes in both and they are very evident. The revelations of the Traladarans' history that are being brought forth due to contact with the Lost Valley are not going to be easy to believe. The Valley Traldar will return to their home with all due haste and it may be a long time before they feel comfortable venturing out again.

Vaterrmont 3, AC 1017: Bubblin' Crude.

Location: Village of Norfen, Republic of Darokin. OW

Description: While out hunting near the Malpheggi Swamp, a local villager makes an amazing discovery. When his arrow misses

its target, landing instead in the ground, a black substance bubbles up out of the marshy ground—oil! The man quickly returns to his village and begins the process of staking out his claim.

What This Means: The Malpheggi Swamp has been gradually sinking in size over the last decade, due to the decreased runoff from the Sump in the magical forest of Canolbarth. Last year's realization that the *Trees of Life* can counter the Entropic effects of the shadowelf curse on the forest has led to a halt in the deterioration of the swamp. Nevertheless, the villager's discovery shows that there may be an untapped wealth of mineral resources in the swamp—resources that can more easily be accessed now that its area has shrunk. When word of the discovery gets out, there will be increased settlement in the region, both by the Darokin Council hoping to expand its territory and by greedy entrepreneurs hoping to strike it rich.

Vaterrmont 4, AC 1017: Cape Town Renamed.

Location: Town of Cape Town, Hinterlands, Thyatian Empire. DV

Description: In a proclamation issued by the colonial administration in Raven Scarp, the coastal village of Cape Town is renamed Cittanova (New City).

What This Means: Nothing much is behind this occurrence—the inhabitants of Cape Town were predominantly of Kerendan extraction and they never referred to their home by its official name. Since everyone seemed to call the place Cittanova, the administration figured it would be more efficient to honor the unconscious selection of the townsfolk and change the settlement's name officially.

Vaterrmont 4, AC 1017: Church Representatives Speak Out.

Location: City of Mirros, Kingdom of Karameikos. OW

Description: Priests of the Church of Traladara declaim the so-called Lost Valley

in an inflammatory speech before their congregation. They feel that the rumors coming out of the valley, about its Hutaakan and Traldar inhabitants, are heresy, directly contradicting the Song of Halav and they protest any contact with the peoples of the valley.

Elsewhere, in a separate but just as inflammatory speech, Alfric Oderbry of the Church of Karameikos addresses his own congregation. He states that the Valley Traldar are evidence of just how barbaric the Traladaran people really are and that the tales of their Hutaakan overlords show that they need someone to guide their lives and paths—someone like the Thyatians.

Incidents of violence between Thyatians and Traladarans rise dramatically following these speeches. (*See Nu. 8, Va. 3; Va. 16, Va. 19.*)

What This Means: Some people look for a means to advance their own causes wherever they can find it. Alfric Oderbry has long been opposed to the Traladarans and their church and sees the Lost Valley controversy as fuel to stir up anti-Traladaran sentiment. For their part, the Church of Traladara are truly convinced that the information that is coming out of the Lost Valley is against their doctrines and cannot be believed.

Vaterrmont 4, AC 1017: Firestorm Orders Heliograph Network Expanded.

Location: Thyatian-Controlled Dominions, Isle of Dawn, Thyatian Empire. SD

Description: With the other Thyatian rulers of dominions on the Isle of Dawn either on the mainland aiding Eusebius in the Crown War or deposed, Thrainkell Firestorm has been largely in command of the region. He has, however, made no moves towards seeking independence, but instead concentrated on continuing the process of restoring the region in the aftermath of the conflicts that wracked it over the last decade and spurring new settlement. Today he announces a project to expand and improve the signaling system

that has existed in Westrouke for a long time. It will be extended to other Thyatian dominions, to connect to the communities of West Portage, Kendach and Redstone as well. The system will also be improved, to use flashes of light focused and enhanced with mirrors and lenses. The goal is to create a communications network less reliant upon magic, so it can be used on the Day of Dread and other unforeseen circumstances. (*See Va. 21*)

What This Means: Firestorm got approval for this plan from the emperor and the other Isle of Dawn rulers before initiating it. The other Isle of Dawn rulers and new ones appointed by Eusebius, will be returning to resume control over their dominions by the beginning of summer.

This communications network will supplement other, generally magical, means of communication used by the imperial government and its military forces on the Isle of Dawn, but it will also be available for use by traders and other civilians—for a fee—to send messages. Eventually similar heliograph networks will be built in other regions of the Thyatian Empire, including the mainland. The tower's flashes will be focused so they will be clearly visible to the next station down the line, but not as clear outside that line of sight.

What the PCs Can Do: Areas where heliograph towers are to be built might be infested with monsters and the characters could be hired to clear them out. Or a tower could be taken over by monsters or other enemies and the PCs sent to investigate the situation and eliminate the threat. Others might continue to look into the mystery of Firestorm's less-independent policies and what brought on his apparent change in character.

Vaterrmont 4, AC 1017: Harbingers of Conflict.

Location: Somewhere in Neathar Lands. HW

Description: A diplomatic group from the Hatfei arrives in Makekei territory to petition the Makekei ruler for compensation on the

lost deer, or to at least establish an understanding of hunting territory where their lands meet. Following a brief dinner reception, the Hatfei party voices its grievances. To their surprise the Makekei ruler, Chief Horn-Devil, meets their parley with indifference. He cites the matter as too trivial to worry over and cites that the deer was on his people's land. As for compensation he offers that the meal that the Hatfei have just shared in should more than cover the food a single deer provided, the comment drawing some muffled laughter from the assembled Makekei. The Hatfei oblige Horn-Devil's decision and soon after leave for their own lands. (*See Nu. 14; Va. 22, Fl. 2.*)

What This Means: Though Chief Devil-Horn can understand the situation, he sees the matter as minor, even comical. To him and his fellow Neathar, it is just a deer, with the Hatfei being frustrated at losing a hunted animal to fate and to an imperfect hit. Conscious of maintaining peace between the two tribes he hopes that offering a simple dinner will suffice. For the Hatfei the matter is developing into less of a matter of the deer than it is the matter of tribal honor. To them the conduct was a further travesty to that honor.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs may be the wronged party, coming to the other tribe's territory to conduct a diplomatic settlement that would restore cordial relations between the tribes, while getting a just replacement for the lost deer.

Vaterrmont 4, AC 1017: A Map Is Found.

Location: Town of Kota-Jayang, Merry Pirate Seas. HW

Description: Captain Buraganu's agents in Kota-Jayang have provided him with a treasure map from a trusted and reliable source. The treasure lies to the northwest, on an island reportedly inhabited by the primitive kara-kara, or orcs of the sea. Although dangerous, the prize of jewelry seems worth the risk. Buraganu consults

with Kray, who endorses the idea. (See Nu. 12; Va. 7, Va. 11.)

What This Means: Buraganu is eager to locate this horde and reclaim the support of his crew, so he is willing to risk encountering the kara-kara.

Vaterrmont 5, AC 1017: Stonewall Plots.

Location: City of Draco, Kingdom of Stonewall, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: King Koblan Dracodon again meets with his advisors, including Selcomad and Rogart, to plan where they can get the supplies they need. After the meeting, scouts are sent to various areas of Alphatia. (See Nu. 14, Nu. 23; Th. 2, Th. 4.)

What This Means: Koblan and his advisors have decided to go to war to get what they need. Now they need to establish where it would be best to get it, so they have sent spies (rogues), which Stonewall has to a much larger degree than other Alphatian nations, to all corners of the empire to acquire information. They need to establish where they can best gain the food they need to support Stonewall's large population and then gather strategic intelligence on the military strengths and, particularly, weaknesses of such nations, so that they can invade!

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are stealthy, then it's time to put those skills to use. The DM should use the descriptions of the various Alphatian nations and cities to set up such spy missions.

Vaterrmont 5, AC 1017: Jailbreak in Gargoña.

Location: Town of Ciudad Real, *Baronía de Gargoña*. SC

Description: Los Elegidos have been busy in Gargoña since the Narvaezans took the place over: the jails of Gargoña are brimming with those who refuse to follow Ixion with the required piety and the formerly peaceful city is no longer a stranger to the odd public execution. However, on this night not everything goes according to

plan for the inquisition. A black masked figure sneaks into the Ciudad Real jail and, knocking out several guards, manages to get about two dozen prisoners into the streets. Unfortunately, about this time a guard the an in black did not notice raises the alarm and rescuer and rescued flee towards the docks to a waiting ship. Manning the small vessel single-handedly, the man in black dispatches the Narvaezans foolish enough to board the vessel and heads for the open sea and safer harbors. (See Th. 2, Th. 4.)

What This Means: Swashbucklers have always enjoyed humiliating the inquisition and Gargoña has no shortage of swashbucklers. The jailbreak enrages the local garrison and provides a ray of light to the native Gargoñans as the occupation wears on.

Vaterrmont 6, AC 1017: A Family Urging.

Location: City of Rardish, Kingdom of Randel, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: Queen Junna summons Rardish's City Administrator, Alphatar, before her to discuss a planned measure to redecorate the capital's interior to make



it more fashionable. Junna is quite proud of the changes the clerics have formulated and wants to show them off to her uncle Alphatar before going public with them. As Junna goes over the plans, she notices that her uncle remains quiet and even a bit agitated. As she finishes her presentation, she notices that his demeanor is quite scornful. She demands to know what the problem is.

Alphatar tells his niece that such renovations are unneeded and too costly. The Randel people are too militaristic in their demeanor to support such flagrant

visual displays. He tells her that such funds could be better used to rebuild Randel's military power and prestige, which are so demonstrative to the Randel mindset and social structure. Alphatar goes on to tell her that her "artsy" doctrines have already caused a good deal of dissension within the very traditional and very militaristic populace.

Though obviously enraged by the criticism, Junna dismisses Alphatar to return to his post. After he is gone, her cleric advisors first try to get her to have Alphatar arrested and charged with insubordination. When Junna opposes this, Sister Riddlynn tries to persuade her into removing him from his position as Rardish's administrator. This she opposes as well. Instead, she admits that he might be right in some of his opposition, Randel cannot afford such luxuries as a renovation of the capital. Likewise, the Randel are fanatical militarists.

Junna decides to take some advice from her uncle and not implement the changes to the city. Likewise she will try to accommodate the militaristic populace by turning attentions to the military. Though Randel's armed forces are severely limited as compared to pre-war levels, the underlying military mindset is too prevalent in the populace to ignore. However, Junna has had little contact with the Randel people; her formative years were spent among the Order of Alpathia and its doctrines of peaceful prosperity. (*See Va. 12, Th. 5.*)

Vatermont 6, AC 1017: To Brace Oneself 'Gainst a Dark Tide.

Location: Town of Polakatsikes, Dominion of Polakatsikes, Heldannic Empire, Meghala Kimata Plains. DV

Description: Scouts return to Polakatsikes today and bring bad news: the host of soldiers spotted several days previously and which was rumored to be Mivosian, has in fact turned out to be so. The scouts estimate that, at their current rate of travel, they will arrive in Heldannic lands in roughly one week's time. Upon hearing this, Wolfgang

Stemmel orders his forces to redouble their efforts.

Later that day, in a private message to Vanya's Rest, Wolfgang requests reinforcements, in order to stem the Mivosian tide. (*See Nu. 28, Va. 2; Va. 10, Va. 13.*)

What This Means: The scouts' report is correct; the rumors have turned out to be true. Whether Wolfgang's forces turn out to be sufficient, however, is another question entirely.

Vatermont 7, AC 1017: A Secret Meeting.

Location: Lands of Jen, Esterhold Peninsula. SK

Description: Talin, the leader of the rebel Jennites of Verdan, meets with several chieftains of the Jennite people. He tells the chieftains that the rebel Jennites, long enslaved by the Alpathians, are now free and wish to rejoin their ancient brethren. If they do so, they can join forces and finally take back their homeland from the hated Alpathian oppressors. (*See Va. 11, Th.26.*)

What This Means: Talin is trying to forge an alliance between the free Jennites and his own rebel Jennites against the Alpathians on the Esterhold Peninsula. The free Jennites have long hated the Alpathians and a great number of them still suspect the Alpathians of having caused a devastating disease among their herds two years ago, so the hatred of the Alpathians is fresh. Talin soon realizes this and tells the chieftains of the free Jennite tribes that they can finally drive the Alpathians off if they join forces.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are on the side of either the free Jennites or the rebel Jennites, then this is their chance to add their own suggestions to the proposed alliance. If they're allies with the Alpathians, particularly those in Verdan, however, they can do some spying here which could be rather critical to Verdan quite soon. There is no obvious reason why they would know of this meeting, though, unless they're secret agents sent to spy on Talin himself.

Vaterrmont 7, AC 1017: A Vote Is Taken.

Location: Town of Kota-Jayang, Merry Pirate Seas. HW

Description: Buraganu proposes the mission to the crew of the Butchery (a two-masted brigantine), but they are skeptical of such a dangerous raid. He makes an impassioned plea, in which he pledges his word that the prize of the kara-kara will make them all rich men. The crew is persuaded by this and they make preparations to set sail. (See *Nu. 12, Va. 4; Va. 11, Va. 12.*)

What This Means: Buraganu is desperate to retain his ship and the loyalty of his crew. Listening to the advice of Kray, the quartermaster, he pledged his word in order to sway the crew. The kara-kara prize had better be priceless, for the pirates take such oaths very seriously.

What the PCs Can Do: Take part in the vote, perhaps advising the captain, or persuading other crew members.

Vaterrmont 7, AC 1017: Cool Talks.

Location: Barony of Ylourgne, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: The group of Long Runner exiles fleeing Wendar arrives at the *Forteresse d'Ylourgne*, on the Glantrian border. Their leaders, Coolhands and Brendian Erendyl, request an auction with the baron to gain permission to cross the Glantrian border and proceed through Nouvelle Averoigne towards the Principality of Erewan. After a long and tense meeting, Baron Vincienzo di Randazzi grants the elves the permission to travel across his territory to reach Erewan. However, he informs the clanmasters they might be the targets of lycanthrope attacks during their march and that neither the House du Marais nor the House of Sylaire will take any responsibility for these assaults. Coolhands and Brendian are left pondering the implications of their decision. (See *Va. 10, Va. 24.*)

What This Means: Coolhands and Brendian Erendyl are leading the second

group of Alheimers that last year migrated from Wendar in order to escape the prison camps. [See *Fyrmont and Sviftmont of AC 1016. Ed.*] Coolhands was originally a Belcadiz elf and she pushed for a migration to New Alvar. However, the Long Runner elders, who remember the Belcadiz' haughtiness towards the Erewans—the other Glantrian elven clan that has always been supported by Alheim—insist on going to Erewan, where they think they will be welcomed because of the Erewans' kinship with the Erendyls. Together they led their people—7,100 elves of which 1,300 are Long Runners, 5,500 Erendyls and 300 are elves from minor Alheim clans—along the western trail between Glantri and the Adri Varma Plateau and arrived at the border with Sylaire after a long and tiring trek. The way across the Wendarian Alps would have been shorter to reach Glantri, but Coolhands didn't want to risk encounters with dragons and humanoids and she didn't want to brave the Boldavian ways in the middle of winter. They are now trying to reach Erewan to seek refuge at the court of Princess Carlolina until good news will come from Beasthunter. However, the warnings of the baron have now left the two clanmistresses wondering if the price they'll have to pay to reach Erewan may not be too high.

Second Week

Vaterrmont 8, AC 1017: Same Old Foe, More Heretical Than Ever.

Location: Border between Schattentalen Lands and Azcan Empire. HW

Description: After a long period of relative peace, the southern border of the Azcan Empire suffers from brutal raids by the Schattentalen. The Schattentalen soon reoccupy all the territory from which they had withdrawn and then press hard into Azcan territory. Large war parties roam the jungles and emerge from hidden tunnels and engage Azcan warriors ferociously. Many battles take place, the most important one being the siege of the southernmost Azcan

fortress, Calpaquelli Keep. (*See Fe. 11, Fy. 18.*)

What This Means: With their war against the Shadow Elves over (and lost), the Schattenalfen are turning their anger back at their traditional enemy, the Azcans. They are encouraged to do so by their patron Immortal, Atzanteotl, who is enraged at the plot which the Immortals Quetzalcoatl, Oztzitiotl and Kalaktatla have successfully staged against Him. Meanwhile, the ability of the Azcans to defend themselves is undermined by the efforts of the underground led by the followers of Atzanteotl, who still has a large amount of support in the empire.

Vatermont 9, AC 1017: Sabotage!

Location: Town of Leenz, Principality of Aalban, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: The warehouses of Montgolfière & Urbaal, Ltd. are set ablaze in the early dawn hours. They are extinguished before they spread to other warehouses and buildings in the area, but there is significant damage to two commercial blimps that are being constructed. It will be several months before the business partners can repair their damaged vessels. In the meantime, they have only one functional dirigible and many of their more skeptical backers will pull out of the venture project. (*See Nu. 14.*)

What This Means: This is a deliberate plot by the Free Anachronic Society of Aalban, one of Glantri's secret factions. The members of the F.A.S.A. despise scientific innovation and they see the Montgolfière-Urbaal blimp as a heresy against the ways of Glantrian society. With this attack, they have dealt a serious setback to the businessmen's hope for a commercial venture. The entrepreneurs will press on with the one blimp they have, but the F.A.S.A. will likewise continue in their attempts to shut Montgolfière & Urbaal down.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs may be hired by the members of the F.A.S.A. to set the fire and destroy the blimp business, or they may choose to investigate the causes of the fire after the fact.

Vatermont 9, AC 1017: Election Day to Come!

Location: City-State of Kastelios, Serpent Coast. DV

Description: Following the customary 10-day period of mourning for Thesius Palakratidos, Xenthos Sarantakos, spokesman of the assembly, announces the candidates for the forthcoming by-election. All of them are known local residents from a variety of professions and they are scheduled to present their views and political philosophies at the public forum in three days' time. (*See Nu. 22, Nu. 26; Va. 12, Va. 14.*)

What This Means: Kastelios is governed by a system of representative democracy, whereby local constituents elect one of their neighbors for a six-year term to promote their own interests and look after their concerns. Owing to its small size, such a system can function effectively, although seats on the assembly cannot remain vacant for long, for fear of letting constituents think their voice is not being heard. Another quirk is that local loyalties are so strong in Kastelios that appointing someone to represent another district is unthinkable, as that person will not be considered a local. Hence the need for the by-election—and quickly.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are well-known (i.e. Name-level) and live in the district in question, the PCs could run in the by-election.

Vatermont 10, AC 1017: The Way to Erewan.

Location: Barony of Ylourgne, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: The Alfheim refugees led by Coolhands and Brendian march into Averoignian territory heading southwards, along the River Isoile. Their final destination is the elven Principality of Erewan, in the southeastern corner of Glantri and they are resolute to brave whatever dangers they find on their path to reach it. (*See Va. 7; Va. 24.*)

What This Means: After a long talk with all the surviving Long Runner and Erendyl elders and the representatives of the minor clans present in the expedition, Coolhands and Brendian reached the conclusion that all of them want to find a safe sanctuary where to spend the rest of the year. For this reason they don't care about the possible threat posed by the lycanthropes and have expressed their will to go on with their march. The elves believe they are numerous and powerful enough to repel any pack of deadly werewolves that will assault them.

What the PCs Can Do: They can go along the expedition if they belonged to the group of elves that stayed in Wendar during the time of troubles. In that case they had plenty of opportunities to act as guards and scouts in the past months and they will be needed also to stop the inevitable assaults of the lycanthropes let loose by Synn in this part of Glantri last year. If they are not elves but are in Averogne, they may be hired during the trip by the elves to help them against the werewolves and every other kind of deadly monster prowling the area.

Vatermont 10, AC 1017: Hule Counters Rebels.

Location: Olgarian *Levja* and Monzag *Banat*, the Converted Lands, Hulean Empire. WB

Description: The Master has sent orders to bring the rebellious provinces in the Converted Lands back under control. Since most of his regular armies are either abroad or in the east cleaning up the remnants of last year's nomad invasions, Hosadus has his humanoid armies from the Janizary Lands strike at Olgar. Goblins and orcs from the nearby reserves pour over the border, overrunning Zayetska and Lubova within days. The rebels desperately organize a defensive front against the humanoid hordes.

Elsewhere, the Antasynians are steadily equipping their armies using the gold from Bylot Hills. As soon as new soldiers are ready, they are sent northeast to apply pressure against the rebels of Monzag, who

now control more than two-thirds of that disputed province. They are reinforced by nearby trolls and bugbears. The Monzags are put under greater and greater strain, as Antasynian forces steadily increase in number, but manage to hold them back with assistance from the Sendaryans. In both Olgar and Monzag, several recovered villages are put to the torch. All men are slain, while women and children are taken away. The women are sold into slavery, while the children are taken to Greatrealm, for unknown purposes. (*See Nu. 23; Fl. 15, Fy. 16.*)

What This Means: The Master needs to regain control over the rebellious territories, so he is using his allies and minions to do that for him. In the process the loyalty of Antasynians and humanoids will increase as they profit from the spoils of war. The imprisoned children will be indoctrinated into the teachings of Bozdogan and turned into fanatic warriors. It is certain that the rebels would be greatly demoralized if they saw their own children fanatically fighting against them and Hosadus is going to use it to his advantage.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs on the side of the rebels can organize resistance against the Hulean offensive.

Vatermont 10, AC 1017: Legal Trouble for Underocean.

Location: City of Ionace, Ionace Island, Nayce. AS

Description: Allanas, an Aquan wizard who recently built a research tower in Underocean, files a claim against the government of that nation. As it turns out, the tower was allegedly dangerously close to the nomadic merrow's fish herds and the merrow Baron Torin ordered the tower moved or destroyed. When Allanas failed to comply, Torin ordered Underocean military forces to destroy the tower.

Normally, this would be a straightforward case. However, Allanas claims that since Torin is not a spellcaster, he had no legitimate authority. The mage demands

compensation and that Torin be punished to the full extent of Alphatian law.

In a statement, Underocean's representative claims that Underocean's own laws of equality for the spellcasting and non-spellcasting populace, derived from similar laws used in Undersea, take precedence over the general Alphatian ban on non-spellcasting nobility. (*See Nu. 19; Va. 19, Va. 25.*)

What the PCs Can Do: Allanas, outraged at the treatment he received from the Underoceaners, may hire the PCs to punish those he feels offended him. [*Underoceaners is the best translation into Thyatian we could find for the triton word Kellaraven, literally "those from the waters beneath the ocean." Similarly, Underocean is a translation of Kellaraver, the actual name for the kingdom. Ed.*]

Vatermont 10, AC 1017: The March of the Weary.

Location: Village of Treminius, Dominion of Polakatsikes, Heldannic Empire, Meghala Kimata Plains. DV

Description: Heldannic cavalry on patrol are surprised to see the arrival of a long column of individuals, apparently unarmed. Upon sighting the fortifications erected around the village (currently occupied by a detachment of Heldannic Knights), the travelers beg permission to pass, so that they might put as much distance as possible between themselves and the "Mivosian scourge at our heels." After a few moments conferring amongst themselves, the knights refuse the refugees entry, telling them to head north, away from the field of battle. Seeing little alternative, the refugees turn north, watched carefully by the knights. (*See Va. 2, Va. 6; Va. 13, Va. 16.*)

What This Means: As the Mivosians continue their advance towards Polakatsikes, they are systematically destroying any settlements which oppose their rule and driving forth the survivors. Even in those villages and towns which do acquiesce, some inhabitants opt to abandon their homes instead of remaining under Mivosian rule. While many are fleeing ahead of the

Mivosians, many more are heading north and west, to areas which, they believe, are free of conflict.

Vatermont 11, AC 1017: Isle of the Kara-Kara.

Location: Open sea northwest of Town of Kota-Jayang, Merry Pirate Seas. HW

Description: The Butchery arrives at the island located on Buraganu's map. The pirates prepare a landing party and follow the map into the island's interior. Before long, drums begin to play and they are assaulted and overrun by hordes of chanting, kara-kara savages. The pirates retreat to the ship, but the orcs of the sea pursue them in outrigger canoes, inflicting even more casualties. Eventually, Buraganu is able to steer the ship away to safety. (*See Va. 4, Va.7; Va. 12, Va. 13.*)

What This Means: The kara-kara are a singing and chanting people who can increase their fighting prowess while doing so. They were too strong for the pirates to defeat on their own terrain. This does not bode well for Buraganu, who now has led two failed raids in a row.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs can join the landing party and explore the jungle island, leading the fight to hold off the kara-kara.

Vatermont 11, AC 1017: Brothers in Arms.

Location: Camp of free Jennites, Land of Jen, Esterhold Peninsula. SK

Description: Having negotiated for days, an alliance is finally forged between the rebel Jennites, led by former governor Talin and some free Jennites tribes. The Jennite chieftains have listened to Talin's proposals and considered them and they have decided that they like the prospect of chasing off the hated Alphatians. Plans are then made for the forces of the two sides to meet in the forests and hills north of the Jennite Mountains in order to attack the forts on the Verdian border. (*See Va. 7; Th.26, Fl. 14.*)

What This Means: The free Jennites and the rebel Jennites who used to be oppressed

by the Alphatians, have united. It won't be long before the Alphatians in Verdan, particularly those in the three strongholds on the border to the lands of Jen, learn of this the hard way!

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are Alphatian allies, then they should hasten back to warn Verdan of the impending invasion. Along the way, the DM should naturally stage a number of attempts by both rebel and free Jennites to stop them. If they do well, they might get to help prepare the strongholds for the coming aggression. If the PCs are with the Jennites, then they may help plan the attacks on the strongholds and participate in them. They could also infiltrate the strongholds to discover flaws in their defenses for the aggressors to exploit, or they could do the opposite of the above: they could be sent to stop Alphatian spies from bringing news of the plans back to Verdan.

Vatermont 11, AC 1017: Rioting in Edairo.

Location: City of Edairo, Kingdom of Thothia, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: Several priests and lay followers of the now banned spider religion in Thothia stage a protest outside the central temple of Rathanos. What begins as a simple protest against the denunciation of their faith soon escalates into a full-scale riot, as they rile up bystanders and begin to attack the Rathanian priests with stones and hurled fruits. When the city guard comes to deal with the problem, they too find themselves caught up in the action, as guards square off against one another—victims of religious discord.

The *pharaoh's* personal guard has to be called in to deal with the problem, but not without some unfortunate loss of civilian life. As the guards clear away the quelling rioters, one of them notices something odd about his sword—it is dripping a purplish fluid that isn't blood. He looks around for the body of the city guardsman he was forced to stab.

To his astonishment, there is a man-sized spider body in city guardsman clothing lying in the middle of the street. (*See Va. 26, Kl. 22.*)

What This Means: The werespider agents of the araneas on the plateau have been stirring up religious discord in Thothia ever since late last year. Using their human guises to pose as priests, they have been stirring up Thothian sentiments in the ancient Entropic faith that the araneas and their patron Arachne Prime had instilled centuries ago in the Thothian community. Ever since his coronation, Ramenhotep XXIV has been trying to rid his empire of the faith—he knows personally that it claimed his father and that his stepmother Aketheti was an Entropic creature herself.

Until now, though, Ramenhotep had thought the religious discord was being caused by his rival, Haptuthep. Now he has physical evidence that the araneas have returned to Thothia. Though he does not yet have the means to combat them effectively, the insight will help him to better decide the next step to maintain his empire.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are in Edairo, they will most likely be caught up in the riot. Perhaps they can be the ones to capture or kill the werespider instigators.

Vatermont 11, AC 1017: Raiders in the Night.

Location: City of Norchester, Earldom of Penwick, Kingdom of Bellayne. SC

Description: Goblinoids from the Yazak Steppes manage to sneak past the border guards and raid the outskirts of the town of Norchester. Little real damage is done, but many homes are plundered and the locals there demand retribution. During the subsequent days, rumors fly throughout northern Bellayne about the possibilities of larger scale goblinoid incursions in the future. (*See Nu. 7, Nu. 28; Va. 15, Tb. 4.*)

What This Means: Pressure will be placed upon the King of Bellayne to increase the defenses of the northern reaches of his kingdom by the locals.

What the PCs Can Do: Characters could be sent to guard the northern border and exact reprisals against the goblinoids. The king is especially likely to send characters on this job if they have indicated they are inclined to side with the parliament against him, but as good patriots they will likely not be able to refuse a mission that is indisputably in the interests of Bellayne.

Watermont 12, AC 1017: New Information on Taterhill.

Location: City of Glantri, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: Princess Isidore d'Ambreville of Nouvelle Averoine, Chamberlain of the Land, receives some interesting information regarding the Taterhill races proposal of Archduke John Beaumarys-Moorkroft. Her agents in the *Paparazzi Glantri* have learned that the archduke has been buying large tracts of land in the Taterhill area, due to the sudden drop of market prices since the war with Ethengar. Of course, most of the Taterhill land is already owned by the wealthy Stratford family of Fenswick, of which Lady Anne Beaumarys-Moorkroft, the archduke's mother, is the sole living inheritor.

The princess ponders what to do with this information. (See *Va. 3; Va. 15.*)

What This Means: The *Paparazzi Glantri* is a Glantrian magazine that provides the latest in trends, gossip, rumors, intrigues, speculations and miscellany about the Principalities of Glantri; the *Mystaran Almanac* and the *Paparazzi Glantri* occasionally work together.

Watermont 12, AC 1017: Eusebius Reassures Senate.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: After leaving Hattias, Eusebius spent several days in Port Lucinius, checking on the status of the fleet being prepared to sally forth against the Twaelar when the shipping season begins. He then returned to the city of Thyatis, reaching it

yesterday. Today Eusebius meets with the imperial senate. Several senators voice their concern that Eusebius might try to dispense with rulers of the various dominions defeated in the Crown War and attempt instead to rule them directly through appointed governors. Eusebius declares he has no such intention; he is simply taking time to ensure that those elevated to rule those dominions are selected properly, so that their nobles will be loyal and honorable. He does propose that in the future all those who seek to succeed to the rule of dominions following the death or abdication of a current ruler have their positions ratified by both the senate and emperor. He presents this in a manner so it seems like only a minor alteration of past practice, since all nobles had their authority confirmed by the emperor and had to recognize the authority of the imperial senate. He has Domitius Enobarbos, one of his most subtle and capable supporters in the senate, draft a bill on the measure, which is then scheduled for debate in a few weeks. (See *Nu. 14, Nu. 21; Va. 21, Th. 23.*)

What This Means: Though Thyatis is changing in a number of ways; many of its old institutions are still important and respected. As strong as Eusebius's authority is after defeating the last open opposition to his reign, he knows he would find it difficult and controversial to dispense with Thyatis's traditional hierarchy of nobility. The alteration he proposes is a bit more sweeping than he presents it as, however. If passed by the senate, it would tend to reduce the hereditary aspect of dominion succession. Eusebius hopes to make the measure more popular among the senate by adding the provision that they would also have authority in ratification of rulers.

What the PCs Can Do: Characters who rule dominions will definitely be interested in the outcome of this measure. Political scheming and intrigue to sway votes will come to play here. Characters who oppose Eusebius's wishes on the matter will have a steep hill to climb in mobilizing support for defeating it—plus they will earn the ire of

the emperor. This is doubly true if their efforts are successful.

Vatermont 12, AC 1017: Official Announcement of New Uniforms.

Location: City of Rardish, Kingdom of Randel, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: In a move to show her support of the military, Queen Junna announces her intent to redesign the Randel military uniform. Junna commissions several renowned Alphatian clothes designers to propose a new uniform, the best design to be determined by her as the winner. The announcement is met with mixed feelings, as most see no need for a redesign of a uniform that has served the Randel so well for so many years. Still, that she is offering some attentions to the armed forces is encouraging. (*See Va. 6; Tb. 5, Ya. 1.*)

What This Means: Encouraged by the urgings of her uncle, Junna has decided to make a move to improve her standing with the armed forces. This redesign of the Randel battle-dress is unneeded, but Junna sees this attention to uniforms as a way that she can support the military sects first-hand while implementing some of her artistic ideals. She also sees it as a means to pave the way for her next decree.

Vatermont 12, AC 1017: Mutiny on the Butchery.

Location: Open sea northwest of Town of Kota-Jayang, Merry Pirate Seas. HW

Description: The crew of the Butchery has had enough of Captain Buraganu. The pirates are furious at this latest failure and the broken oath of their captain. Redbeard Kray leads the pirates in taking over the ship and apprehending Buraganu. As quartermaster, Kray keeps Buraganu under arrest and directs the ship to the east. (*See Va. 7, Va. 11; Va. 13, Va. 14.*)

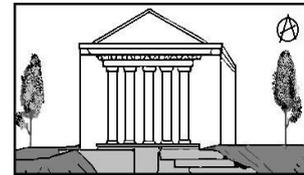
What This Means: Redbeard set up Buraganu from the beginning—the *karakara* map was a fake. In a classic double-

cross, he is using this as a bid to gain the captaincy of the ship.

Vatermont 12, AC 1017: Candidates Share Their Views.

Location: City-State of Kastelios, Serpent Coast. DV

Description: In the open-air amphitheater of the public forum, candidates running in the by-election, numbering eight in all, introduce themselves to their potential constituents and outline, in turn, why they think they should be elected. One of the candidates, an ambitious young merchant named Adonai Stephanos, delivers a well-crafted, charismatic speech, in which he promises to advocate building upon the successes derived from last year's accord with Thyatis and expand Kastelios's trading network. In closing his speech, he outlines to the people present that he will make it a personal commitment of his to further the cause advocated by the late Thesisus Palakratidos, that of building a just society for all Kastelians.



Once all of the candidates outline their views, Xenthos Sarantakos instructs the constituents to return to the public forum tomorrow to cast their votes. (*See Nu. 26, Va. 9; Va. 14, Tb. 7.*)

What This Means: In an electoral contest where personal style has an important impact upon the outcome, those who possess a personal magnetism—as Adonai certainly does—start off in an advantageous position. Although he certainly seems sincere, it is more his personable nature and his aura of competence, which attract many voters. Some observers will note amongst themselves that, although Adonai talks big, the specific details of his future plans are all very sketchy—more so than those of his opponents.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are well-known locally, one or more of the PCs might be a candidate in the by-election. Players who enjoy acting should be

encouraged to act out their characters' speeches if they so choose, perhaps with other players playing temporarily the parts of the other NPC candidates, though the DM should play Adonai if this is done. If one or more PCs is a candidate, public opinion should still sway in favor of Adonai; otherwise, future events in this scenario should be modified or ignored.

Vaterrmont 13, AC 1017: Zuyevan Minister Dies.

Location: City of Zuyganev, Zuyevan Empire. WB

Description: The Zuyevan Minister of State dies of old age. His replacement is Vasily Stolbov, a young and energetic nobleman. (*See Nu. 1; Fl. 17.*)

What This Means: At first glance, there is nothing special about this situation. The former minister was old and everyone expected him to die at any time. However, Vasily, the new minister, is not what he seems. Last year, after the Master of Hule was "killed" by Zuyevan-sponsored adventurers, he disappeared for a week. After gaining his revenge on the adventurers, Hosadus spent some time determining his Zuyevan foe's strengths and weaknesses. He also recruited some agents in Zuyevo, in order to undermine that realm from within. One of those agents was the nobleman Vasily Stolbov.

Zuyevo is a large country and appears strongly unified. However, most of its lands are governed by nobles and officials, many of whom formally respect the *tsar* but also look out to fill their own pockets. The Master's agents are capitalizing on that latter trait; many of them worm their way into the power structure as advisors to the aforementioned nobles and officials, encouraging them to take advantage of everything they can. Vasily Stolbov was one such corrupt nobleman. He does not realize that he is working in the Master's interests—but he listens to his "faithful advisors" and is not interested in bringing prosperity to Zuyevo or fighting Hule; he is only interested in his own benefit. And now, due

to his own and Hosadus's machinations, Vasily is in a very powerful position.

Vaterrmont 13, AC 1017: Migrants Revolt.

Location: City of Freiburg, Territory of Heldann, Heldannic Empire. OW

Description: Already under intense pressure due to the large numbers of Hattians arriving in Heldann, the ad hoc immigration processing system devised by the order's top bureaucrats collapses, after having shown signs of extreme organizational pressure. Delays caused by detailed record-keeping of all Hattian immigrants (intended to calculate the total acreage of granted lands, as well as foregone taxes in accordance with last year's policies [*see AC 1016 almanac. Ed.*]) lengthen tremendously, until, unable to take it anymore, a large group of Hattians tries to break out of the cordoned-off areas reserved for newcomers.

Swiftly, soldiers descend on the immigrants, at first trying to dissuade them from further rowdiness and later, as the migrants begin to attack the soldiers, to put down the revolt. The violence is over within a short time, but a large number of immigrants lie dead or wounded in the streets of Freiburg. (*See Va. 3; Va. 22, Ka. 12.*)

What This Means: Although the large numbers of Hattian immigrants are more than the senior Heldannic Knights could ever hope for, they have also proven to be something of a curse. The Heldannic bureaucracy, never very well-developed, began showing its limitations within weeks, as clerks trained to handle military logistics were forced to tend to the needs of civilian migrants—something which is not quite the same. Making matters worse is that the region allotted to the migrants as living quarters while they awaited processing—a row of empty warehouses near the docks—proved to be totally insufficient. Faced with overcrowding, disease and long waiting periods, some of the migrants had had enough. Although the revolt has been

crushed, the anger at the authorities for doing too little, too late will not subside soon.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are working for the Heldannic Order, high-level PCs with suggestions concerning how to handle the immigrant housing and processing questions will find many willing listeners—some of whom are high-ranking knights.

Vatermont 13, AC 1017: New Captain Is Elected.

Location: Open sea north of Town of Kota-Jayang, Merry Pirate Seas. HW

Description: The crew of the Butchery calls for the election of a new captain. Redbeard Kray, the popular, but sometimes brutal quartermaster, is the leading candidate. His role in leading the mutiny and reputation with the crew weigh in his favor. Other sailors dislike him for the overly cruel punishments he is known to administer. When the vote is taken, Kray is the victor with half the votes and two other pirates splitting the remaining votes. Redbeard Kray is now Captain of the Butchery. A new quartermaster is elected to replace him. (*See Va. 11, Va. 12; Va. 14, Va. 17.*)

What This Means: Kray is a ruthless pirate, but his success has earned him a decent following. He was able to bribe other crewmen with extra shares and to influence even more votes through fear. The fact that the two other candidates split the vote was the key to his election. The new quartermaster is an ally of Kray, meaning Redbeard has additional power, without the check and balance of a dissenting quartermaster.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs with significant experience can be considered as candidates for captain. With enough influence and bribery of their own, perhaps they can even win.

Vatermont 13, AC 1017: Enemies Sighted!

Location: Villages of Treminius and Doleria, Dominion of Polakatsikes, Heldannic Empire, Meghala Kimata Plains. DV

Description: Heldannic positions in the villages of Treminius and Doleria are tested by advance elements of the Mivosian army, which, after scouting their enemy's makeshift fortifications, begin peppering them with arrows. The Heldannic forces retaliate, launching several volleys of crossbow bolts at the invaders. The sniping continues for several hours, until the Mivosians pull back. (*See Va. 6, Va. 10; Va. 16, Va. 17.*)

What This Means: The Mivosians had no intention of conducting a full-scale invasion quite yet; they wish to test their opponents' battle-readiness, first.

Vatermont 14, AC 1017: A Sailor Gets a Royal Audience.

Location: City of Greenwood, Kingdom of Foresthome, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: Admiral Halzunthram from the Navy of the Lakes gets an audience with Queen Kikania of Foresthome. For several hours they discuss the possibility of building impressive canals in the kingdom to improve transportation and increase trade. Admiral Halzunthram assures the queen that the navy includes some of the best Alphatian engineers for such matters and that sailors who are members of the Grand Council, or who have connections in it, are working for a larger recognition by the empire. Queen Kikania, who like most aristocrats never gave much credit to the minor naval guild, is most interested and promises her support. (*See Va. 19, Th. 3.*)

What This Means: Halzunthram is the leader of the Hollow World section of this naval organization that operates a great number of galleys both for trade and warfare. Though he is a fighter, Halzunthram is considered nobility nonetheless as he is a (spellcasting) servant

of the Immortal Protius, though he is generally treated as less than equal by those who should be his peers. [*In other countries he would be called a paladin. Ed.*] After the sinking of Alphatia he took over the leadership of the Navy of the Lakes as the former Chief Admiral Ardannabras was stranded with the Alphatian troops in the Outer World. The navy is a mixture of a trader's guild and a mercenary unit. Unlike most organizations in Alphatia—with the notable exception of the imperial navy and army—the ranks are open to all without restriction based on nobility; like in the imperial navy, spellcasters tend to be in charge though it is less blatant in the Navy of the Lakes. It is a minor Alphatian guild and was never able to achieve much of its goals in biased imperial Alphatia and it was always viewed with suspicion by most noblemen. This has not hindered the leaders of the various kingdoms, who have often hired the navy as a coast guard, but the political influence of the navy has always remained negligible. On the other hand the sailors have always shown a strong faith in the empire, so there is no persecution by official authorities either. [*The titles given members of the Navy of the Lakes are internal to that organization only; they have nothing to do with similar titles from the imperial navy and do not bestow any privilege outside the navy. Ed.*]

The primary interest of the Navy of the Lakes is to sail Alphatian waterways with galleys. To restore their trade now that the seas encompassing Alphatia are gone, the sailors have developed a plan to connect the natural waterways—lakes and rivers of the interior of the floating continent—by an extensive system of canals. This plan is not completely new, but until now it was laughed at, on those rare occasions the navy got the opportunity to expose its ideas at all. The kings and queens of Foresthome notably opposed this plan strongly (and made sure the Navy of the Lakes was never taken seriously or allowed to gain any sort of influence) as it would alter the kingdom with a possibly endangerment of the woods. So the Navy of the Lakes has drawn many plans

over the years but not one of them has been even close to being tried—until now.

Since the reappearance in the Hollow World, though, all Alphatians who can remember the days on the Outer World see that the economical situation has largely deteriorated. An important part of the problem is that, without any seas, naval trade has almost disappeared and it cannot be replaced aerial transportation for the foreseeable future. With the former port cities now useless as sources of food (from fishing and especially food imports), many freemen of the coastal cities have left their homes heading for Lake Llyn, eventually rejoined by aristocrats displacing whole estates—including their servants and slaves. The situation in Foresthome is nowhere as critical as it is in Stonewall, where the food problem is actually becoming dangerous, but it is bad enough that Queen Kikania is seriously considering allowing the construction of canals in her kingdom.

What the PCs Can Do: It is possible that Alphatian PCs, notably non-spellcasters, are part of the rather open-minded Navy of the Lakes. In that case, they may now have influential positions within the navy (possibly because of the gaps resulting from the war and the sinking). If they do, they may realize the grave transportation problem Alphatia is facing and be the ones who bring forth the idea of using the old plans of the navy to build canals. It will be difficult for them to get appointments with prominent nobles and even more so to convince them, but if they do they will become the uncontested leaders of the navy (except for jealous rivals, naturally) and maybe even important characters in Alphatia.

Vatermont 14, AC 1017: Marooning of Buraganu.

Location: Sharkfin Sea (between Towns of Puerto Morillos and Kota-Jayang), Merry Pirate Seas. HW

Description: In his first act as captain, Redbeard orders Buraganu to be stranded on a sandbar in the Sharkfin Sea and left to die. The former captain is left on a sandbar

at low tide with only a flask of fresh water and a vial of sea snake poison. (See *Va. 11, Va. 13; Va. 17, Va. 23.*)

What This Means: Marooning is a common punishment of the pirates and most will choose to kill themselves with the poison, before starvation, or worse. Once the tide comes in, Buraganu will be swept out to sea, to be left to the mercy of the sharks.

What the PCs Can Do: Merciful PCs might suggest a less cruel means of execution for their former captain, suggest that Buraganu be given a last request, etc. As an alternative, to set up PCs opposed to Redbeard, you could have their ship come upon the marooned captain, in time to rescue him from the sharks. In this case, Buraganu would most likely sign the articles of his rescuing ship.

Vatermont 14, AC 1017: Cabal Reaches Rialtos.

Location: Town of Rialtos, Province of Septentriona, Isle of Dawn, Thyatian Empire. SD

Description: Several ships arrive in the harbor of Rialtos today. The passengers claim to be colonists sent out from mainland Thyatis to settle the province. The town's officials weren't expecting them, but aren't surprised. The new arrivals claim they were allotted lands upriver. They sell the ships to local Thyatian and Minrothaddan merchants and use the money to purchase provisions and supplies before setting out a few days later. (See *Nu. 7, Nu. 16; Th. 2, Kl. 3.*)

What This Means: This is actually the group of Thanatos followers and unrepentant rebels who landed in Ierendi last month. The plan is to use barges to travel upriver and then to disappear into the wilderness of the Great Escarpment and establish a new base of operations there. They figure their unexplained disappearance will go largely unnoticed since the Shadow Coast is still largely a wilderness filled with barely-understood dangers.

What the PCs Can Do: Characters who happen to be in Rialtos are unlikely to be

aware of the significance of the band of "colonists" passing through town.

Vatermont 14, AC 1017: And the Winner Is...

Location: City-State of Kastelios, Serpent Coast. DV

Description: The former constituents of the late Thesius Palakratidos gather in the public forum, to learn who will be their representative on the assembly. To the surprise of some, Adonai Stephanos is proclaimed the victor, having won by a fairly wide margin in yesterday's voting. Presenting himself to his new constituents, Adonai thanks everyone present for their support and restates his pledge to protect and promote their interests in the assembly. (See *Va. 9, Va. 12; Th. 7, Th. 25.*)

What This Means: Adonai Stephanos won the by-election by a comfortable margin of victory; he will have considerable leeway to act as he wishes, so long as his aims do not conflict with the desires of his constituents.

What the PCs Can Do: If one or more of the PCs were candidates in the by-election and paid close attention to Adonai's speeches, they may suspect that something shady is going on. If so, they can try to investigate Adonai's activities, though it will be hard to find anything incriminating, as Adonai is a private family man. If a PC won the by-election, subsequent events will have to be altered, though the PC will now enter the world of politics—which may prove to be more perilous than any monster.

Vatermont 14, AC 1017: Ghoul Attack.

Location: Torenal Site, Sunken Arogansa, Nayce. AS

Description: One of the outlying perimeter picket defenses reports ghoulish troops assaulting its position. Hurriedly, the Torenal garrison mobilizes *submersibles* and aquatic mercenaries to venture out to investigate. Arriving on the spot, they encounter a group of ghouls clamoring over the picket position, trying to gain entrance;

also, several small groups are visibly attacking the small view ports. Though the defenders inside have taken a toll on the assaulting undead, the bunker is quickly filling with water thanks to the series of leaks at the view ports. Luckily, the arriving reinforcements make short work of the ghouls before the water rises too high. (See *Nu. 7, Nu. 18; Va. 25, Th. 2.*)

What This Means: On the surface, this attack seems fairly small and of little consequence. However, the attack offers more far-reaching troubles that will only be recognized later. The ghouls have recognized that the mortals need air to live beneath the waves. They have also realized that it will be less costly to them to attack the mortals through their air breathing needs. One such way of doing this is to cause a breach in their underwater havens and flood the interior.

What the PCs Can Do: They can fight the ghouls.

Watermont 14, AC 1017: Demobilization in Thyatis.

Location: Throughout the Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: With the apparent conclusion of the Crown War and the suppression of the attempted coup in Tel Akbir, Eusebius's authority as emperor is finally undisputed. However, the burden of maintaining so many soldiers while the empire's economy is still in a fragile state is becoming onerous.



Therefore, in a special ceremony the emperor thanks each of the units from the far reaches of the Thyatian Empire and beyond that rallied to him in his time of need. Each is given a citation of meritorious service, a token of the emperor's and the senate's appreciation and then permitted to return home. There is one man, though, that

shivers when he understands that there will be no need for his services anymore.

This is also done with respect to most of the reserve forces that have been on active duty throughout Thyatis's Era of Crisis (as it is becoming known). They are demobilized, again with the thanks of a grateful emperor and senate. Some of those who have found they like the military life continue on, joining regular units, but most return to their homes.

Many of those who are mustered out of active duty have received grants of land in the empire and so are better off for having served. They continue on as reservists.

The mercenaries, however, are continued on in imperial service—though some individual soldiers do leave, others are recruited into their place. These mercenaries are organized into a special guard unit, the Antalian Guard, which the emperor plans to make wide use of. (See *Nu. 15, Va. 1; Sv. 4, Ka. 11.*)

What This Means: For as long as people can remember the Thyatian Empire has maintained inordinately large armed forces. Even after the Great War the surviving forces, though reduced severely in quality, were relatively large. While the empire was at the height of its powers, this was not a problem. However, this large armed force put a severe strain on Thyatis in the weakened condition it was in during the period after the Great War. Eusebius recognized last year that for the empire to be able to recover, he needed to reduce the strain the large standing army was putting on it. Furthermore, even for the military to be able to recover its strength and quality, it needed to be restructured.

Therefore Eusebius initiated a program to reduce the size of the imperial military but increase its quality, making it more effective and flexible while being less of a societal burden. The eruption of the Crown War delayed the implementation of this plan. Plus, it struck the empire at a time when Eusebius's forces were most vulnerable, disorganized by the reorganization and not yet re-formed into the new force structure.

But now the empire has a respite where it can complete the process. The new units have completed their initial training and are beginning to enter active service.

As for the empire as a whole, it is still facing conflicts on several fronts—the war with the Twaelar goes on, the Heldannic invasion of Heldun is still a threat and fighting in the Davanian Hinterlands is heating up. But Eusebius plans on confronting these and other conflicts merely with his reduced, regular forces. Considering that the size of these forces is still large compared to that of the empire's foes, he is probably not making a mistake.

What the PCs Can Do: Characters who had been serving more-or-less as part of the Thyatian military can take this opportunity to retire from active duty. However, more to the point from an adventuring stand point is the fact that, with a reduced armed forces, the empire will seek to solve various problems by non-military means. It will thus be in greater need of agents—adventurer-types—to pursue its goals.

Watermont 14, AC 1017: Hopeless Dove.

Location: Idris Tower, Forest of Lothenar, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: In the days following their first meeting, Christopher Dove and the mysterious wizard have gone on with their secret meetings, helped by the local rodent population. Dove has come to trust the wizard, who introduced himself as Vespen and disclosed him many secrets of the tower that holds them prisoners. However, the most unsettling news is revealed today, when Vespen crushes Dove's trust in Wendar's intervention in Denagoth by saying that the current regent of the kingdom is in fact a puppet of the Church of Idris. Shocked, Dove asks how it is possible that King Gylharen (who has always fought against the Shadow Lord's attempts at invading Wendar) is a spy of Idris. At this, Vespen merely grins through the rat's fangs and informs Dove that King Gylharen is no longer alive and that a coup organized by the Church of Idris has replaced him with

Bensarian of Kevar. To Dove's growing astonishment, Vespen also explains the old sage is no more in control of his own body and mind, now possessed by a powerful wizard of the Onyx Ring (a secret sect faithful to Idris) and that Wendar will plunge into darkness as the months pass. Vespen adds he is aware of this because he was formerly a member of the Onyx Ring himself, but later betrayed Idris to save his relatives, who got executed nonetheless after his treachery. Dove is left pondering the news alone when the rat-messenger scuttles away in a crack in the wall. (*See Nu. 10; Th. 17, Th. 28.*)

What This Means: Dove is deeply shocked by the news he has gathered so far. It seems Idris and the Shadow Lord are gaining power in Wendar at an alarming rate and Dove fears the worst for himself as well as for Wendar. He doesn't know there are still many elves fighting against the Shadow Army in the Great Forest of Geffron and his only thought now goes to the day he will finally see the sun again. After this last revelation, he is completely persuaded that Vespen is a reliable friend and source of information, but he has understood that if even this powerful wizard is unable to break free of this dungeon, he has next to no chance of doing so himself.

Third Week

Watermont 15, AC 1017: No Races for Moorkroft.

Location: City of Glantri, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: Before the final vote on the Taterhill races proposal, Baron Gerrid Rientha of Egorn requests permission to speak before the parliament. His request granted, the baron presents information he has gathered regarding the ownership of the lands of Taterhill. The House of Lords bursts into chaos. The representative of House Ritterburg is the first to withdraw his support, followed by Duke Eachainn McDougall of Hightower and Baron

Qenildor Erewan of Celedyl. Many other nobles follow their lead.

At the final tally, the Taterhill races proposal receives a total of nine votes (the archduke himself was the sole supporter of the bill). The majority of the nobles vote nay, while the rest abstain. The archduke silently swears vengeance upon all his detractors. (*See Va. 3, Va. 12; Fe. 18.*)

What This Means: Being a wise politician, Princess Isidore opted not to confront the archduke with this information herself. Rather, she passed this information on to Baron Gerrid Rientha, the acknowledged archenemy of the archduke.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs may be the agents in the employ of the princess sent to uncover the archduke's dirty little secret. If discovered, they will have made a permanent (and powerful) enemy in the person of Lord John Beaumarys-Moorkroft.

Watermont 15, AC 1017: The Jarls Decide.

Location: Town of Østmark, Kingdom of Qeodhar, Nayce. AS

Description: The assorted *jarls* of the Antalioan communities of Qeodhar meet once again to discuss recent events. The news is grim: Norlan's forces have razed no less than four villages over the past few weeks, with those who tried to defend their homes being massacred. News is also spreading of survivors being marched southwards, deep within government-held territory, their fate unknown.

Many of the *jarls*, upon hearing of recent events, grow furious over the continuing oppression being forced upon their countryfolk. The current campaign of harassing isolated government patrols is no longer sufficient; the assembled men agree that the fight should be taken to the Qeodharans themselves—and soon. (*See Nu. 21; Va. 27, Tb. 16.*)

What This Means: Word of Norlan's deeds has become known to almost every Antalioan on the island and with it the knowledge that, if nothing is done soon,

they could face annihilation. Hence the perceived need to escalate the conflict.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are on the side of the Antalioans, they could very well have brought the news to the *jarls*, otherwise they could aid in planning counterattacks (if they have sufficient combat experience). If the PCs are working for Norlan, they could act as spies, sending information concerning the Antalioans' plans back to Farend.

Watermont 15, AC 1017: A Strange Sight.

Location: Sea of Rax, near continent of Suridal. HW

Description: While flying about over the Sea of Rax, near the continent of Suridal, the crew of the Alpathian *skyskip* *Wayseeker* notice several glowing balls of light rise from the eastern horizon, very rapidly. Intrigued, Captain Adath orders his crew to cautiously steer the *skyskip* towards this bizarre phenomenon. (*See Va. 17, Va. 18.*)

What This Means: The *Wayseeker* has been commissioned this year to explore the region around the continent of Suridal, which has thus far been ignored by Alpathia, whose attention was directed towards events on the main continent of Iciria. Initial surveys near the northern coast of Suridal seemed to indicate that it was uninhabited. This may not be the case, however...

Watermont 15, AC 1017: King Appeals to Parliament.

Location: City of Leominster, Bishopric of Leominster, Kingdom of Bellayne. SC

Description: Finding the royal treasuries to be not nearly as full as would be desirable, thanks partly to the huge debts left by the previous monarch, Queen Catherine, the king appeals to the parliament for money to raise the local militias in defense.

Given the antics of the king last year, the Commons refuses after a heated debate between Blythe-Jackson and Treeby, fearful of what else the army might be used for once it has been raised. (*See Nu. 28, Va. 11;*

Tb. 4, Tb. 8.)

What This Means: King James is unable to muster and fully arm the territorial army regiments based in the north. Instead he must rely upon the standing army of Bellayne for defense. After some thought, James decides not to divert regulars from the south to cover the north. Orders go out to the commanders of the northern garrisons to be doubly vigilant in the future.

Vatermont 15, AC 1017: Once Bitten...

Location: Emirate of Alasiya, Emirates of Ylaruam. OW

Description: A series of attacks on residents of Tel al Kebir point to a case of vampirism striking the town. Several gravesites show evidence of recent exhumation and townsfolk have been bitten and drained of blood. The *sheik* puts his militia on the lookout and priests of the Eternal Truth begin to actively seek out signs of undead activity. (*See Tb. 6, Ya. 5.*)

What The PCs Can Do: Grab those stakes, break out the garlic and get ready for some vampire-slaying!

Vatermont 16, AC 1017: Jowett Steps Down.

Location: City of Mirros, Kingdom of Karameikos. OW

Description: A special congregation of the Church of Karameikos is called. In a surprising move, Oliver Jowett, patriarch of the church, announces his retirement. He names his successor as Sherlane Halaran, Baron of Threshold. The ceremony is solemn and respectful. When it is over, however, a suspiciously quiet Alfric Oderbry is the first to leave, followed by a file of members of the Order of the Griffon. (*See Va. 3, Va. 4; Va. 19, Tb. 2.*)

What This Means: Jowett sees trouble on the horizon, for his church and for Karameikos. The aging patriarch knew that his failing health would not be strong enough to help weather the church, so he has passed the reins on to someone else. He had Halaran travel secretly from Threshold

for this occasion, so as not to tip off Oderbry, whom he suspected might react badly.

Sherlane Halaran will step down from his baronial duties; his niece, Aleena Yurevich, will be confirmed as the new baroness in his stead by King Stefan.

Vatermont 16, AC 1017: Proposals in Minrothad.

Location: City of Minrothad, *Exarchate* of Minrothad, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description:

Demetius Vannopolus, the current *Exarch* of Minrothad, informs the guild masters' council that the imperial government is interested in purchasing



several fast Minrothad clippers. They debate the idea and agree to it, so long as all the clippers are built in Minrothad by guild shipwrights.

Demetius also tells Oran Meditor that the empire would appreciate the help of the Seahome elves in fighting the Twaelar. Meditor replies that Minrothad is a nation of merchants, not fighters and that if they wished to fight a war they would not have needed Thyatian help in the first place. The two discuss the matter, with Vannopolus attempting to persuade Meditor. Eventually Meditor agrees to allow the Thyatians to hire volunteers among the water elves, but not to conscript anyone. He also agrees to send a deputation, again of volunteers, to attempt to negotiate with the Twaelar. (*See Va. 1; Va. 19, Fl. 9.*)

What This Means: The Thyatians will put a number of clippers to use on postal routes throughout their sprawling empire. This will improve the Thyatian communications network. Though magic items (such as *scrolls of communication* and *mirrors of sending*) and spells (such as *sending* or even *teleport without error*) are used for important government

communications, magic isn't always reliable (especially given the Day of Dread) and for many common uses these methods are too expensive or restrictive. The clippers will allow people to send small packages and letters and have them arrive faster than they otherwise might and facilitate the spread of information. The Minrothaddan shipbuilders will try to keep the secret of the methods of constructing clippers to themselves, however, though it's not clear how long that will last.

The Thyatians will manage to recruit a small but skilled group of water elves, which, coupled with some aquatic elves from Actius, will help serve as scouting parties in the continuing battles against the Twaelar. But the envoys dispatched to negotiate a resolution to the war, a party that will eventually include both Thyatians and Minrothaddan elves, might have more chance of success.

What the PCs Can Do: Players might enjoy travelling to the heart of the Twaelar Merrow Empire as part of a group unlikely to be immediately viewed as supper. The difficulties of negotiating with the Twaelar should not be underestimated, however.

Vaterrmont 16, AC 1017: Mivosian War Machine on the Move.

Location: Villages of Treminios and Doleria, Dominion of Polakatsikes, Heldannic Empire, Meghala Kimata Plains. DV

Description: Heldannic positions in Treminios and Doleria come under more concerted attack, following several days of quiet. The initial Mivosian sorties are pushed back with withering volleys of crossbow fire, but soon light catapults begin to bombard Heldannic positions, slowly taking their toll on the defenders. As the residents of the two villages, already in the process of fleeing since hostilities commenced, begin to panic and flee en masse, the Heldannic infantry begins to find it increasingly difficult to hold their ground in the rising confusion.

By day's end, the Heldannic forces are forced to withdraw from both villages and

take up defensive positions atop a number of hills to the southeast. By sundown, Mivosian scouts are entering the villages, finding them abandoned, with anything of value already taken by the departing villagers. They then entrench themselves, waiting for the main body of the Mivosian army to join them. (*See Va. 10, Va. 13; Va. 17, Va. 18.*)

What This Means: Only a token force of Heldannic Knights and soldiers was stationed in Treminios and Doleria, enough to survey the surrounding countryside, but too few to hold back a concerted assault. Of the 50 knights and soldiers stationed here, plus almost 100 locals who volunteered to help them hold back the Mivosians, about one-third were killed and around 30 villagers were also killed in the crossfire. The remaining villagers, numbering around 500, fled southeast towards Polakatsikes. These men will be pulled back to Polakatsikes in the coming weeks. The Mivosians took fewer than 30 casualties.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are with the Heldannic Knights, the PCs can try to inflict more casualties upon the Mivosians, or otherwise slow their advance, though unless they are of extremely high level, the best they can hope to achieve is a delaying action of a few days at most. If they are with the Mivosians, the PCs could try to prevent the Heldannic soldiers from withdrawing in as organized a manner, or try to trap them in the villages.

Vaterrmont 16, AC 1017: Arkan Raid.

Location: Isolated farmsteads, Lower Arkan, Kingdom of Arkan, Nayce. AS

Description: Though winter is relatively mild, several raids on food reserves and farmsteads are reported in Lower Arkan. Local rulers mount expeditions to drive off the lowlife, but the bandits know the hills and caves better than the understaffed militias.

What This Means: During the Arkan takeover of the Yanniveys, the local lowlife were merely, if ruthlessly, pushed toward their best-defended hideouts, when not

wiped out or pressed into service as farm slaves. They have continued to plague the newly-gained dominions ever since and are now getting organized and bold enough to launch more important attacks. The local rulers of Lower Arkan are snubbed by the traditional aristocracy of Floating Arkan and get no help from the king and must fight off the bandits with their limited means, i.e. ineffectively. Lower Arkan is gradually turning into a dangerous frontier land, a fact the Floating Arkans couldn't care less about.

What the PCs Can Do: The pay is low and the risks are high, but the petty nobility of Lower Arkan is looking for adventurers and mercenaries. In this new land, this could lead to serious opportunities at troop commanding or dominion administering.

Vatermont 17, AC 1017: Counterstrike!

Location: Northeast of Village of Doleria, Dominion of Polakatsikes, Heldannic Empire, Meghala Kimata Plains. DV

Description: As the Mivosian army continues mustering in the now-abandoned villages of Treminius and Doleria, a force of 25 Heldannic cavalry, accompanied by 50 archers (members of the Southern Legion of Vanya) harry the enemy force on the plains just outside of Doleria. Thinking that they were secure, as the original Heldannic force was still encamped in the hills southeast of the villages, the Mivosian sentries are caught unawares and killed swiftly. Before the invaders realize what is happening, small squads of Heldannic cavalry are riding through the camps, slashing wildly with their swords at anything that moves, while the archers add to the chaos with sporadic flights of arrows.

Before long, however, the Mivosians bring themselves to order and begin forming up their soldiers into coherent squads to eliminate the intruders. A number of their pikemen manage to trap the stragglers, but for the most part the cavalry manages to evade their enemies. Seeing that the element of surprise has vanished, the cavalry captain blows his horn to sound a general withdrawal and the Heldannic Knights ride

to safety with all due haste, pursued by Mivosian light infantry armed with spears. Some of these pursuers are taken down by arrows before the Mivosians, unwilling to lose any men needlessly, order the pursuit to be called off. (*See Va. 13, Va. 16; Va. 18, Va. 24.*)

What This Means: The Heldannic forces know that they are outnumbered by the Mivosians and thus must fight strategically. There is no chance here for glorious charges into battle; they must use hit-and-run tactics instead and otherwise try to keep the Mivosians guessing as to where the Heldannic troop concentrations are located. Another necessary change is the reliance upon local troops to bolster their own numbers; aside from the Southern Legion of Vanya (which is composed of Polakatsikan volunteers), the knights have been forced to raise local levies to hold back the Mivosians. These are people whom the knights realize may have an interest in turning against them in favor of the Mivosians, on account of the fact that the knights themselves were invaders not too long ago [*AC 1015. Ed.*] and that, unlike the Mivosians, the knights are not of Milenian stock.

What the PCs Can Do: Heldannic PCs (or those allied to the Heldannic Knights) might be part of the raiding party, in which case they can try to do as much damage as possible in a short time. Otherwise, Mivosian PCs might be dispatched to capture one of the raiders for interrogation.

Vatermont 17, AC 1017: Treasure Island.

Location: Sharkfin Sea, Merry Pirate Seas. HW

Description: Redbeard finds another map amongst Buraganu's possessions, which leads to a treasure on a nearby island. Kray presents it to the crew and they decide to make a run at it. They arrive at the island and a landing party is chosen by Kray and the new quartermaster. Those who voted against Kray for captain and the other candidates themselves, are placed in the lead group. The map leads to a hidden jungle

cavern that proves to be a green dragon's lair. The wyrm's breath and physical attacks decimate the front ranks, but it is eventually slain by Kray and the remaining pirates, which include a mage. The surviving pirates claim the dragon's hoard and load the riches on board the ship. (See *Va. 13, Va. 14; Va. 23, Th. 24.*)

What This Means: Kray had the map to the dragon treasure all along and he was aware that a dragon would be there. He used the incident to accomplish several goals: Buraganu was further discredited, for holding out on this treasure map; he eliminated his potential rivals and most of the crew who were not in his camp; and he succeeded in claiming a very fabulous prize for himself and his crew. With the newfound wealth and his rivals dead, Redbeard is now in complete control of the Butchery.

What the PCs Can Do: Take part in the dragon-slaying. PCs loyal to Redbeard can play a major role in fighting the wyrm after it destroys the frontline fodder opposed to him. If the PCs are in the frontline, they may be able to turn the tide and prevent the deaths of the other pirates. In any event, it will not be clear that Kray knew of the dragon and was using this to eliminate his rivals. It would be viewed as a test of loyalty to the new captain to lead the expedition. PCs successful in slaying the dragon would earn favor with Kray, even if they voted against him in the election for captain.

Vermont 17, AC 1017: Meeting the Natives.

Location: Western coast of Suridal. HW

Description: After heading towards the site of the strange lights two days ago, the crew of the *Wayseeker* now find themselves flying above the continent of Suridal itself, once the clouds below them thin out. Instead of virgin, unsettled lands, they are amazed to see a vast network of roads, towns and other evidence of civilization stretching below them. As the Alphasians begin making notes of their surroundings, a bright flash of light appears behind the vessel.

Before anyone can react, four bright lights erupt from the clouds behind the *skyship*, which then quickly dash across the sky, looping around the ship. An alert observer exclaims with amazement that the lights appear to be flying chariots, apparently made of fire. As Adath and his executive officers absorb this news, one of the flying objects breaks away from the others, which continue circling the *Wayseeker*. As it slowly draws near the port side of the *skyship*, it soon becomes clear that it is indeed a flaming chariot, pulled by a team of pegasi, themselves made of fire. The strange craft bears two passengers, one of whom, an armored woman, addresses the *skyship's* crew in a language they cannot understand.

Using magical means, Adath is able to understand what the woman is saying. He learns that his *skyship* is flying over an empire known as Selhomarr, a nation that covers a large portion of the continent of Suridal. He also learns that his vessel was spotted several days ago and that this group of flying chariots was dispatched to intercept him in order to determine his intentions. The woman, who identifies herself as Tessia, requests permission to board to discuss Adath's intentions. (See *Va. 15; Va. 18, Va. 24.*)

What This Means: Adath and his crew have unknowingly entered Selhomarrian airspace and their presence in the region has been known for several days. The emperor of Selhomarr, thinking that the *Wayseeker* might have hostile intentions, sent Tessia and her squad to investigate.

Vermont 18, AC 1017: The Stalker Observed!

Location: City of Hapta, Empire of Nithia. HW

Description: While on patrol during curfew, a squad of city guards is startled by a scream coming from one of the nearby houses. Not wasting any time, they smash open the door and are confronted by a horrid scene: standing in the shadows in the dim room, over the body of a woman, is a tall, gaunt individual, with pale, taut skin.

Before any of the men can react, the murderer fixes them with a cold stare and they find themselves immobile! They can only watch with horror as the man picks up the woman's body and brushes by them as he leaves the house. They feel an intense chill wash through their bodies as he passes and by the time they find themselves able to move once more, their quarry has seemingly disappeared into the warren of streets that is Hapta. (See *Va. 1, Va. 2; Fl. 13, Fl. 23.*)

What This Means: Although only a handful of men have now seen the mysterious assailant, speculation and rumor will only spread even faster concerning his true nature. It will soon become apparent that something does not match up, as the reported sightings of the killer last year [*Sv. 22. Ed.*] were of a dark-skinned man. As time passes, the distinction between truth and rumor will become blurred and the killer will turn into some utterly inhuman monster in the eyes of the people of Hapta.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs were with the city guards at the time of the encounter, they will be affected in much the same way, but should not be allowed to capture or kill the mysterious killer.

Vaterrmont 18, AC 1017: A Great Discovery.

Location: *Wayseeker*, above the continent of Suridal. HW

Description: Having spent many hours in discussion, Adath concludes an agreement with Tessia that will allow him to venture deeper into Selhomarrian territory, in exchange for consenting to an armed escort of flying chariots. The first stop for the *Wayseeker* will be the capital city of Selhomarr, Calimnis. One of the flying chariots is sent to the capital city to report to the emperor, while the remainder accompany the skyship—one chariot leading the way and the remaining two following behind. (See *Va. 15, Va. 17; Va. 24, Va. 25.*)

What This Means: Adath has acquired some basic information about Selhomarr from his discussion with Tessia. He learned that Selhomarr is an ancient empire, one that

has existed for so long in the Hollow World that its historians have documented the appearance of many other cultures. It is also a nation of great clerics and sages, with millennia of accumulated lore. Intrigued by this nation, which has existed here for so long, Adath decides that Alphatia would benefit by learning more about it.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are serving on the *Wayseeker*, they will have an opportunity to learn something of the empire that lies below them.

Vaterrmont 18, AC 1017: A Strange Withdrawal.

Location: Villages of Treminius and Doleria, Dominion of Polakatsikes, Heldannic Empire, Meghala Kimata Plains. DV

Description: A considerable portion of the Mivosian force that is currently occupying the villages of Treminius and Doleria withdraws to the north, much to the puzzlement of the Heldannic forces stationed to the southeast. By the afternoon, roughly 250 Mivosians remain in the area and these entrench themselves further. (See *Va. 16, Va. 17; Va. 24, Va. 25.*)

What This Means: The Mivosian army is up to something, that much is obvious to the Heldannic forces, but their ultimate intent remains unclear. Those Mivosians who remain, however, are more than sufficient to hold off a Heldannic counterattack for the near future.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs serving with the Heldannic Knights might be ordered to spy on the Mivosians, in order to determine what is going on. If they manage to find any useful information, future events could very well be affected.

Vaterrmont 19, AC 1017: Meeting in the Headquarters.

Location: Lakim Island, Kingdom of Foresthome, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: Admiral Halzunthram, Admiral Solturnun and Rear-Admiral

Clarendon from the Navy of the Lakes convene in the navy's headquarters on Lakim Island in Lake Llyn. Admiral Halzunthram tells his fellow officers about the results of his audience with the Queen of Foresthome. Admiral Solturnun, a member of the Grand Council, is pleased to hear the good news and promises to initiate a debate about the canal plans immediately. As an appropriate date Solturnun sees the first session in the upcoming year AY 2017 on *Alphamir3* [*Thaumont 3, AC 1017; the Alphatian year starts on Thaumont 1. Ed.*]. Admiral Clarendon is even more excited about these good news as he and his staff are responsible for the old canal project, so he returns merrily to his work to dust off some old reports and maps. (*See Va. 14; Th. 3, Th. 4.*)

What This Means: Admiral Solturnun, being an experienced wizard, has been a member of the Grand Council for quite a number of years now; there he fights for the political goals of the navy, though with little support and just as little success. Now, with the support of Queen Kikania of Foresthome, the chances of getting an imperial concession—or at the very least being listened to—are better than ever before. Rear-Admiral Clarendon is the only one of the three who is not a spellcaster and consequently not a nobleman. He spent some years as a thief on the docks of Aasla until he was captured by the crew of a navy's ship. He was given the choice between being delivered to the constabulary or joining the ranks of the navy. He chose to become a sailor and since then he has proved to be the best expert in logistics the navy has ever had. His task within the navy is to improve the routes for the galleys of the navy and one of his ideas was the construction of canals, though the navy was never able to put it to test so far.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs could be sent to spy on the plans of the navy or they could be sailors themselves with the task of foiling any acts committed by spies.

Vatermont 19, AC 1017: Got Any Other Bright Ideas?

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: When he arrived in the City of Thyatis last year Justin could not help noticing the many aqueducts that brought water to The City and the water mills that lined the Mesonian River. When he visited Kerendas, he noticed that it too had a couple aqueducts, though not as many as the capital. An idea began to germinate in his head and he began to discuss it with several engineers that were part of the imperial army. Upon returning to the city of Thyatis, the concepts were brought to the attention of academic engineers and physicists at the imperial academy.

Today the results of these discussions, a plan for using the aqueducts not only to bring water to The City but also to harness them to power additional water mills, is brought before the *Praefect* of the City, Nikephorus Logotharion. Justin and Nikephorus developed a friendship last year and the two share many of the same interests. The *praefect* immediately sees the potential of this plan and orders work begun on it at once. (*See Va. 1, Va. 16; Am. 10.*)

What This Means: Alone among major nations, Thyatis makes significant use of aqueducts to supply water to its cities. If this water can be further harnessed to power additional mills, economic productivity in Thyatis will increase and the perceived need for slave labor will drop. Eusebius will hear of this almost immediately and soon order its implementation in other Thyatian cities that have aqueducts. He also continues to be impressed by how much creativity and initiative Justin Karameikos has.

Justin Karameikos is not a genius, but he's an insightful man who is seeing Thyatis with the fresh eyes of an outsider. Thus he comes up with ideas that do not occur to people for whom these things (aqueducts etc.) have become so much a part of the backdrop that they don't even think about them—or how they might be put to other uses. But the

Thyatians are smart enough to recognize the quality of Justin’s ideas.

What the PCs Can Do: Some of this construction will involve digging chambers deeper into the ground below The City. Crews might stumble across forgotten chambers or catacomb tunnels, which the PCs might be employed to explore.

Vaterrmont 19, AC 1017: Underocean’s First Day in Court.

Location: City of Ionace, Ionace Island, Nayce. AS

Description: Alphatian courts hear the case of Allanas vs. Underocean. The case has inflamed sentiment both in Underocean and among traditional elements of the nobility. The tritons feel the case threatens their independence, while some mages claim an Underocean victory would be the nail in the coffin for Alphatia’s long and proud traditions of bias against non-spellcasters.

As protesters rally outside the court chambers, the court hears the initial arguments of both sides in a closed hearing. (See *Nu. 19, Va. 10; Va. 25, Th. 8.*)

Vaterrmont 19, AC 1017: Church of Traladara Raided.

Location: City of Mirros, Kingdom of Karameikos. OW

Description: Several members of the Order of the Griffon, a fighting order of the Church of Karameikos, break into the Church of Traladara. They attack and beat several acolytes, but are finally brought to heel by *bold* spells of some of the more powerful priests. They scream imprecations at the Traladarans, shouting that, “On behalf of the true patriarch of the Church of Karameikos, Alfric Oderbry, we will crush you!” They are delivered into the custody of the king’s guard to await sentencing.

At the Church of Karameikos, Alfric Oderbry is nowhere to be found. Even more alarmingly, several senior members of the Order of the Griffon and many more acolytes of the church, have abandoned their

quarters as well. (See *Va. 4, Va. 16; Th. 2, Th. 14.*)

What This Means: Oderbry was incensed by Jowett’s declaration of successor and has gathered all of his loyal henchmen to his side. He will begin a campaign of terrorism against the Church of Traladara, which he believes is his holy quest.

What the PCs Can Do: They can hunt down Oderbry’s faction and bring them in to the proper authorities.

Vaterrmont 20, AC 1017: Heldannic Might in Helskir Grows—Anna Announces a Fresh Offensive.

Location: City of Helskir, Dominion of Helskir, Heldannic Empire, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: Having reviewed the reports of her scouts in detail, *Ordensgeneral* Anna von Hendriks decides the time is ripe to advance further into Helskir. Their numbers bolstered by an additional 500 soldiers newly-arrived from the Heldannic Territories, the knights venture outward into the surrounding territories, while the people of Helskir are watched closely by those who stay behind. (See *Nu. 4, Va. 3; Th. 2, Th. 13.*)

What This Means: Being well aware of the perils inherent in spreading one’s forces too quickly and too thinly, Anna decided to send out scouts to probe enemy lines and determine where likely targets would lie. This way, she would be able to use her relatively scant forces (numbering about 2,200—including the reinforcements) to best effect. Complicating matters is the fact that the occupation of Helskir will require a significant portion of her forces, otherwise the city could be lost and with it a secure landing point for further operations in the northern Isle of Dawn. She reasons that 200 handpicked knights should be able to maintain order, while the bulk of her force sets out to pacify the surrounding territory.

As for her scouts, they reported the existence of several villages within 20 miles of Helskir, as well as what appeared to be fortifications—perhaps bases in use by the

remnants of the Helskiran army. She reasons that such vulnerable targets should fall easily.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are with the knights, the PCs could be part of the invasion force, or they could be tasked with watching the people of Helskir. Anna is wary of revolts among the Helskirans; if she trusts the PCs, they could be given the important task of spying on important cityfolk and crushing any signs of open revolt. If they are with the Helskirans, the PCs could use the departure of so many troops as an opportunity to stage a few revolts, or carry out acts of sabotage.

Vaterrmont 21, AC 1017: Nomination of Isle of Dawn Rulers.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description:

As debate over the proposed ratification measure rages in the imperial senate, the emperor proclaims his intention of nominate the pro tempore rulers of the Isle of Dawn dominions. He asks the senate to ratify the title assignments to the loyal dominion rulers: Thrainkell Firestorm, *Exarch* of Westrourke; Uthgaard McRhomaag, Baron of Caerdwicca; Phileus Furmenglaive, Count of Furmenglaive; Anaxibius and Stefania Torion, Count and Countess of Redstone. He also proposes to temporarily assign the other dominions' rule to the three loyal rulers, until the senate and the emperor will be able to agree on suitable candidates to the titles. Even though the measures proposed by Eusebius are very reasonable, the debate is two days long, because of the proposal of Leana Scaurus, leader of the aristocratic faction. She pushes for an immediate nomination of the new rulers, based on the idea of giving them to the nearest loyal



relatives of the old dominion rulers. In the end, the senate rejects her proposal, although the emperor promises to consider the idea of the aristocratic faction. (*See Va. 12; Tb. 23, Fl. 11.*)

What This Means: This is a part of the process of rewarding those who were loyal during the war. It is also part of the process of Eusebius strengthening his authority. The ratification of titles for those who already held them is billed as a recognition of their service, but also sets a new precedent.

Fourth Week

Vaterrmont 22, AC 1017: Migrants Dispersed.

Location: City of Freiburg, Territory of Heldann, Heldannic Empire. OW

Description: By the order of *Oberherr* Wulf von Klagendorf, all Hattian migrants in Freiburg awaiting the completion of their processing may, under guard, move to the nearest large population center to their destination and await processing there. Once issued, this order is carried out swiftly and several thousand Hattian migrants are loaded onto vessels destined for Forton and Landfall, while others board river boats to head up the Naga River towards Altendorf, or overland to Grauenberg. (*See Va. 3, Va. 13; Ka. 12.*)

What This Means: Wulf, seeing the ineptitude of the Heldannic bureaucracy in the face of continued immigration and rising tensions, decided to step into the matter and try to resolve things himself. Although he thinks this move will resolve the problem, he is incorrect. By trying to do the bureaucracy's job, he will no doubt make several enemies for himself in that organization and in arranging to have many of the migrants move closer to their ultimate destinations, he is exposing more of them to banditry and humanoid raids en route.

Vatermont 22, AC 1017: Sweet Gathering Turns Sour.

Location: Somewhere in Neathar Lands. HW

Description: At a normally festive gathering of several Neathar tribes, members of the Hatfei and Makekei tribes clash once again over the matter of the deer. As the arguments become more heated, weapons are wielded. In the end one Hatfei is wounded and one Makekei is killed before the confrontation is broken up and the combatants dispersed. The death of the Makekei hunter leaves a sour note on the normally festive gathering and soon after the various tribesmen depart for their own lands. Almost going unnoticed is the romantic interaction between Tyana of the Hatfei and Zallon of the Makekei. (*See Nu. 14, Va. 4; Fl. 2, Ya. 6.*)

What This Means: The gathering of tribes has been a traditional practice where the tribesmen can gather to discuss matters, to barter and to have a day of fun. However this gathering is different as the tensions growing between the Hatfei and Makekei are clearly displayed. The gathering had seen much sniping between the two, finally culminating in a direct argument by the more vocal members of each tribe, including several of the hunters involved in the deer incident. Two of the hunters engaged in melee, with the Hatfei hunter, Duma, delivering a fatal blow before being wounded himself.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs can try to stop the fight, or, if they are Hatfei or Makekei, defend their tribe's honor.

Vatermont 23, AC 1017: The Butchery Arrives in Baraga.

Location: City of Baraga, Merry Pirate Seas. HW

Description: Redbeard decides to put in at Baraga instead of returning to Kota-Jayang. The crew is in need of some much deserved rest and recreation and there is no better place for this than Baraga, especially with the wealth of a dragon hoard in their pockets! The tales of the Butchery are

spread throughout the city. (*See Va. 14, Va. 17; Tb. 24, Tb. 25.*)

What This Means: This is a good move to increase the crew's morale and to spend some of their hard-earned money. It is also a better place for Redbeard to recruit new members for his crew to replace those lost over the previous campaign.

Vatermont 23, AC 1017: Independent Member of the Parliament Elected in Lichfield.

Location: Village of Lichfield, Bishopric of Kittings, Kingdom of Bellayne. SC

Description: A surprise in Lichfield: despite campaigning along broadly royalist/parliamentary lines, an independent is elected member of the parliament for Lichfield. Even more unusual, the individual in question turns out to be a somewhat reclusive wizard who lives alone some distance from the village itself. So, duly, Philip Southwell will represent Lichfield in the House of Commons. (*See Nu. 5; Fe. 23.*)

What This Means: The unrest in Bellayne has not gone unnoticed. In neighboring Herath, the wizard-king has found the whole debate in Bellayne amusing and potentially dangerous to Herath should the unrest spill over the border. To ensure that Bellayne is kept in line, the wizard-king appointed one of his more powerful minions, an aranean lich named Vezhrya, to infiltrate the Parliament of Bellayne.

The real Southwell was silently dispatched by Vezhrya some time ago and the master of disguise proved to be charismatic enough (and with some simple magic) to sway the local farmers of Lichfield sufficiently to ensure his election. In the guise of Southwell, Vezhrya will report on the goings on in the parliament to his master, Yahav IV.

Vatermont 24, AC 1017: Military Reorganization Received and Passed On.

Location: City of Andaire, Kingdom of Alphas'ar, Floating Continent of Alpathia,

Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: Eriadna is presented with a report on the planned reorganization of the empire's military forces in the Hollow World. After conferring with her military and economic advisors, she tentatively approves the report and passes it on to the Alphatian Grand Council for further study and approval.

The plan is fairly straightforward; there is a lessened need for the large imperial forces that Eriadna had organized after the reawakening in the Hollow World. The imperial units will be demobilized to smaller and more efficient numbers with an emphasis on the aerial units. The excess troops will go back to their home kingdoms and be used there according to the desires of their monarch. (*See Th. 21, Fe. 8.*)

What This Means: Following the reawakening in Hollow World, Empress Eriadna reorganized the empire's kingdom armies into a single force under imperial command. Given the general anarchy and the real potential for trouble, the move was accepted and implemented by the Imperial Throne and Grand Council. The years since have seen a lessening need for such a force. Already, several Alphatian kingdoms have demobilized aspects of their own sovereign armed forces.

Last year, it was decided that the Alphatian Empire had no real need for its large and costly armed forces. Given its lofty nature and protective skyshield, attack from the more primitive Hollow World peoples is doubtful. The existing military forces are to be reorganized. The report is an official sign of the work being done to carry out the plan. Eriadna is a bit taken back by the number of troops demobilized and hesitates at wholeheartedly approving it for implementation. Instead, she passes the report on to the Alphatian Grand Council as a precaution against hostile dissension from the rank and file.

Vatermont 24, AC 1017: A Mivosian Encirclement?

Location: Town of Polakatsikes, Dominion of Polakatsikes, Heldannic Empire, Meghala Kimata Plains. DV

Description: Word reaches Wolfgang Stemmel, Governor of Polakatsikes, that the City-state of Syropolis has come under siege by Mivosian forces. His scouts' reports are later verified by those of his cavalry patrols, who send word of the arrival of a number of refugees from Syropolis, some of whom asked for asylum. Already familiar with the local geography, Wolfgang realizes that the city-state lies northeast of Polakatsikes; clearly, the Mivosians are trying to encircle Heldannic positions by conquering the surrounding territory. Unable to do anything at this time, he issues the order for his soldiers to prepare for battle. (*See Va. 17, Va. 18; Va. 25, Va. 28.*)

What This Means: Syropolis, a small city-state inhabited by roughly 3,000 people, lies roughly three days to the northeast of Polakatsikes by foot. As with many of the city-states in this region of the Meghala Kimata Plains, the primary concern lies with defending oneself against sporadic raiding from the desert-dwelling tribes of the Meghales Amosses Desert and as such most armies in this area are lightly armored (for the sake of swiftness) and more of a defensive nature. Such a military structure is good for keeping the peace, but rather poor for holding off massed assaults by heavily-armored soldiers fighting in formation, equipped with war horses, artillery and battle magic. This was one factor contributing to the Heldannic victory in Polakatsikes two years ago and it is contributing to the string of Mivosian victories now.

Most of the people living in Syropolis will flee northwards or to the east over the next few days, if they can, but some came south. The city-state itself will likely fall within days.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are with the Heldannic Knights and witnessed the partial withdrawal at Treminius and Doleria, the PCs might have been able to figure out

what the Mivosians were planning to do, in which case they might be able to make it to Syropolis and aid the locals in holding off the assault. Even if they are high-level, the most they are likely to accomplish is a delaying action; there are simply too many Mivosians (roughly 1,000, with another 700 men conscripted from the conquered city-states). Nonetheless, their actions might allow more people to flee to safety.

Vaterrmont 24, AC 1017: Paradise Regained.

Location: Town of Erendyl, Principality of Erewan, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: The Alheim refugees arrive in Erewan's capital and are immediately welcomed by their elven brethren. Princess Carlolina sympathizes with the refugees' cause and formally offers them sanctuary in her principality as long as they wish. In exchange for her hospitality, she asks them to help her protect her forests from the dreadful lycanthropes, which are claiming many victims among her kin and from the occasional humanoid raid. At Coolhands's request to mobilize Glantri to intervene in the internal affairs of the neighboring Wendar, to stop the elves' mistreatment, Princess Carlolina makes the elf understand there is next to no chance the other princes will sponsor such a risky mission. (See *Va. 7, Va. 10; Th. 11, Fe. 18.*)

What This Means: The trek along central Glantri was not without problems and the elves were in fact attacked repeatedly by lycanthropes and other fierce magical beasts. However, the casualties among them were limited, thanks to the Long Runners' mastery of the magical arts and Coolhands and Brendian were able to reach Erewan in a short time. Princess Carlolina obviously welcomed the elves to replenish her



dominion's population with fresh blood and she is secretly hoping the elves will settle there permanently. They will be a useful help in the constant battle against the forces of chaos spreading across her lands. As for a possible Glantrian intervention in Wendar's internal politics, she knows the other princes will never back up such a request, especially now that the situation is so uncertain and chaotic even inside Glantri.

Vaterrmont 24, AC 1017: Arrival in Calimnis.

Location: City of Calimnis, Empire of Selhomarr. HW

Description: The *Wayseeker*, with its escort of flying chariots, arrives over the western outskirts of Calimnis. Citizens stop what they are doing and stare at the *skyship* as it coasts by, hundreds of feet above them. As the crowds gather, Adata and his crew look down upon the city and note its considerable size, the colorful buildings, as well as the intricate network of canals. The *Wayseeker* is directed over a large square, near the center of the city, which had already been surrounded by soldiers. Tessia tells Adata that he may maintain his position at this location during his stay. As the curious crowds gather around the ring of soldiers, a lone flaming chariot nears the starboard side and its driver offers to ferry Adata to the ground, where he may meet some of the emperor's aides. Wishing to learn more of this strange nation, the captain agrees, but only if his most trusted officers may come, as well. The driver considers this and agrees to make arrangements to ferry two other officers down.

Once on the ground, Adata is greeted by Aymir, Lord Seneschal of Calimnis and he leads everyone present to his personal residence, where the Alphantians will stay for the duration of their visit. The Alphantian captain is told that, as a representative of his people, he will be given an audience with the emperor the next day. (See *Va. 17, Va. 18; Va. 25, Th. 2.*)

What This Means: The various dignitaries and public officials of Calimnis,

informed by the advance scout of the Alphatians' imminent arrival, were prepared to meet them. Also included in the retinue of hosts are some of the wisest sages in the city, for Selhomarr does not know anything about Alphatia and this has been deemed an opportune time to obtain valuable information. During their stay, Adath and his two officers will have a small escort of soldiers (to both protect them and to ensure they do not stray far), but otherwise will have relatively free run of the city.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are with the Alphatians, the PCs might be accompanying Adath to the surface, where ample culture-shock and role-playing opportunities await. If the PCs are Selhomarrian, they might be assigned the task of obtaining strategic information about Alphatia.

Vaterrmont 25, AC 1017: Shipping Season Commences.

Location: Throughout the Thyatian Empire. OW, SD, DV

Description: Today marks the beginning of the shipping season in the Thyatian Empire. Many merchant ships depart on voyages of trade. Once again the imperial navy prepares to sortie against the Twaelar. Many ships have been refitted and units reorganized, retrained and re-equipped. All vessels are now protected with *shipshock* spells, set to discharge if the hulls are tampered with. The empire hopes to win decisively this year.

Also launched today, however, are a number of long-range exploratory trade expeditions, jointly manned by Thyatian and Minrothaddan crews, using large, well-stocked ships. One heads east, towards the Alphatian Sea and eventually Skothar, another sails west to make contact with the so-called Savage Baronies, while a third sails south towards Davania. The expeditions are not only jointly crewed, but also commissioned jointly, by the Thyatian mercantile families, the guilds of Minrothad and the imperial family (out of its private wealth). (*See Va. 1, Va. 16; Th. 13, Th. 17.*)

What This Means: This is a normal event, but marks the continuing revival and expansion of the Thyatian trading network. Though the imperial government is favoring native Thyatian mercantile operations, especially those of the City of Thyatis, the traders of Minrothad are benefiting from their new relationship with Thyatis, since trade is increasing due to new markets being opened and developed by colonization. It is mainly other tradesmen, especially those from the Western Defense League nations, who are being displaced as a result of these measures. This will continue to cause disputes and friction.

Many of the Thyatian trading vessels are travelling under a new, strange concept—they and their cargoes are insured. The shipping losses in previous years due to war, first with the Alphatians and then with the Twaelar, have caused Thyatian merchants to look for some way to limit the risks of trade. Persons shipping goods have begun to pay a fee to agents who promise that, in the event that the goods are lost or damaged, they will work to recover it or compensate the owner for the loss. Fees for this are high enough that in general the agents have made a profit, even though having to pay out to cover the occasional loss. These agents have tended to congregate in a members-only bistro near the Great Harbor, Lucan's of Thyatis and form syndicates among themselves to lessen their own individual risk, both cooperating with and competing against each other. Lucan Lachanodracon, the owner of the bistro, is not involved in insurance but provides the premises, reliable shipping news and a variety of services to enable his ships' captains, merchants and wealthy investors to carry on their business of insuring ships and their cargoes. Those who work in the bistro arrange contracts between shippers and agents, with each agent taking a share of the risk for an agreed-upon fee, signing their names one beneath the other on the policy together, with the amount they agree to cover. For this reason they are known as underwriters. Rumors that the major criminal organizations of Thyatis (such as the Shadow Hand) are involved

have not been confirmed, though many of Thyatis's wealthy mercantile families have promoted and invested in these syndicates. All the major mercantile families of Thyatis have a piece of the action. Even nobles who would otherwise disdain direct involvement in trade have invested in limited liabilities. But so far the guilds of Minrothad are not involved in the insurance underwriting business, except occasionally as clients.

What the PCs Can Do: Players with a yearning for combat with aquatic creatures can volunteer to sail with the fleet against the Twaelar. Characters who prefer visiting far away, exotic lands can join the exploration missions.

The syndicates often hire capable teams or use magic to recover or restore insured properties if this would save them money. Characters could be hired for salvage jobs.

Vaterrmont 25, AC 1017: Adath Meets the Emperor.

Location: City of Calimnis, Empire of Selhomarr. HW

Description: After having a stimulating conversation with several Selhomarrian dignitaries the previous day, Adath and his two officers are escorted into the main audience chamber of the imperial palace. There, the Alphatians come face-to-face with the aging, but still imposing, figure of Tamaris, Emperor of Selhomarr. Tamaris addresses them in Neathar, welcoming them to his realm in open friendship and in the hopes that they will enjoy their stay in Selhomarr. In return, Adath, also in Neathar, thanks Tamaris and he states that Alphatia would be interested in opening relations with the Empire of Selhomarr.

Tamaris then smiles broadly and invites Adath and his small entourage to accompany him to the Imperial Gardens, where they may all discuss various topics and engage in some good conversation. Once there and accompanied by various Selhomarrian advisors, Tamaris asks Adath and his officers many questions about his homeland and what life is like there. The ensuing conversation lasts many hours, until Adath

and his party begin to grow tired. Realizing that his guests need their rest, Tamaris concludes the audience and has the Alphatians escorted back to their quarters. In parting, he wishes them a pleasurable stay in his empire and grants them permission to freely travel Selhomarr's skies during their visit.

Declaring the initial meetings with the people of Selhomarr a success, Adath requests the emperor's permission to allow his crew a few days of shore leave. To this Tamaris consents. (*See Va. 18, Va. 24; Th. 2, Th. 3.*)

What This Means: Adath and his officers had many pleasurable conversations yesterday with the Selhomarrian dignitaries who met them. Both groups learned a considerable amount about each other. Word had been carried to Tamaris that the Alphatians spoke Neathar, in addition to possessing magic spells that facilitated translation—all of which made the audience less awkward. Today's audience was more of a formality; many of the preliminary details of the future relationship between Alphatia and Selhomarr will be developed over the coming months. Tamaris was eager to meet Adath, primarily to obtain information about Alphatia, but also to satisfy his own curiosity about the newcomers.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are Alphatian, they might get the opportunity to see Calimnis if they are granted shore leave, or they might be one of Adath's officers, in which case they will meet the emperor. Selhomarrian PCs will have the chance to learn more about the Alphatians.

Vaterrmont 25, AC 1017: Envoys Dispatched to Tynnae.

Location: Town of Polakatsikes, Dominion of Polakatsikes, Heldannic Empire, Meghala Kimata Plains. DV

Description: Amid reports that the Mivosians are pressing their advantage against the Syropolan army, Governor Wolfgang Stimmel orders envoys to head for the nearby City-state of Tynnae, which lies east of Syropolis. He hopes to forge an

alliance with the city-state, in the hopes of halting the Mivosian advance. (See *Va. 18, Va. 24; Va. 28, Th. 4.*)

What This Means: Isolated from other Heldannic holdings, the garrison of Polakatsikes is now relying increasingly upon local aid in meeting its strategic objectives. This is something that was previously unheard of within the ranks of the Heldannic Order, but it merely reflects the current political and strategic reality.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs could be among the envoys sent to Tyrnae.

Vaterrmont 25, AC 1017: Reinforcements Arrive.

Location: Torenal Site, Sunken Arogansa, Nayce. AS

Description: The Seashield troops, *submersibles* and aquatic mercenaries arrive at Torenal Site. With these reinforcements, morale is bolstered, and work continues. Among the reinforcements are Pidimigd and several other necromancers. Though priorities have led him and the other necromancers to Torenal to help in dealing with the ghouls, Pidimigd's interests are still focused upon the sentient undead discovered in Bluenose last year. However, it will be some time before he can focus on them.

Though Aquas had hoped to have Underocean troops already at the site, difficulties with negotiations and the recent legal problems have been holding up the deal. (See *Va. 14, Va. 19; Th. 2, Th. 11.*)

Vaterrmont 26, AC 1017: Alphantian Center for Disease Control.

Location: City of East Portage, Kingdom of Hillvale, Nayce, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: Thothian emissaries of Ramenhotep XXIV arrive in East Portage. They immediately head for the Alphantian Center for Disease Control building in the central regions of the city. With them, they bear the carefully wrapped body of the werespider that was slain in Eclair two weeks ago. (See *Vat. 11; Kl. 22.*)

What This Means: The Alphantian Center for Disease Control was created centuries ago to attempt to study and control the effects of lycanthropy on Mystara. When the lycanthropic plague of AC 425 spread from Alphantia outwards, East Portage was the primary route by which it reached the western nations of the world (carried by merchants). The center set up an institute in the city in order to attempt to contain the epidemic. Since the sinking of Alphantia, the institute in East Portage is now the largest and best maintained such institute in the world.

Ramenhotep has sent his agents here to enlist the center's help in combating the araneas. He is hoping they can come up with some means of detecting and countering the shapeshifting ability of the werespider infiltrators, that he might prevent them from rallying his people into religious antics.

What the PCs Can Do: The emissaries will need protection on the long trip from Eclair. Werespider and aranean spies might have uncovered their objective and will surely want to keep them from reaching East Portage.

Vaterrmont 27, AC 1017: A Reversal at Olmshaven.

Location: Village of Olmshaven, Kingdom of Qeodhar, Nayce. AS

Description: Olmshaven, a small Qeodharan port of 150 souls situated on the southeastern coast of the island, is surrounded by an assembled force of 270 Antalian warriors early this morning—utterly surprising the inhabitants. One man, who makes himself known as Cnut, tells the inhabitants that they must leave Olmshaven before midday, heading towards the west, or suffer the consequences. Many villagers, frightened at the spectacle, hurriedly gather their belongings and flee, while braver souls demand to know why they must do so. With a leer, Cnut tells them that his people are “reclaiming what is ours by right, from you who have taken it from us so long ago.” When it becomes clear that the Antalians mean to drive them out, by force if

necessary, the remainder of the inhabitants leave. (See *Nu. 21, Va. 15; Th. 16, Ya. 4.*)

What This Means: The *jarls* have agreed that, just as the Qeodharans have driven the Antalians from their homes, they should do the same thing in return. They also happen to have a rich oral tradition on their side, which tells them that they once ruled the entire island—something that makes them feel justified in what they are doing. Once the region is secured, some Antalian families will no doubt settle the region.

Vaterrmont 27, AC 1017: Border Raids Increase.

Location: Borderlands of the Hinterlands, Thyatian Empire. DV

Description: Throughout the Hinterlands, raids by Thratian (Hinterlander) warriors have increased throughout the last several weeks, striking at outlying Thyatian settlements and outposts. (See *Th. 6, Ya. 27.*)

What This Means: The Thratians (Hinterlanders) have been brought together under one leader for the first time in memory. Siobhan, daughter of Maeve, a leader of the Leopard Clan, has managed to convince most of the Thratians that now was the best opportunity to expel the invading Thyatians from Davania. She had hoped to strike while Thyatis was distracted by the Crown War, but convincing reluctant clan chiefs and organizing her forces for war took longer than expected. She hopes the ongoing war with the Twaelar will limit the amount of reinforcements Thyatis will send.

The Thratians' friends in the Kingdom of Emerond advised them to take this opportunity to secure an agreement of peaceful co-existence with the Thyatians. But after much debate at the Clan-Meets, the Thratians eventually rejected this option, desiring to expel the invader from Davania. In Thyatis, when Leilah ben Nadir hears of the increased attacks, she uses magic to transport herself back to Raven Scarp and begin organizing the Thyatian forces to respond.

What the PCs Can Do: Characters can participate in the conflict on either side.

Vaterrmont 28, AC 1017: Nova Svoga Is Finally Free!

Location: Border Territories of City-State of Nova Svoga. SC

Description: The people of Nova Svoga can finally breathe a sigh of relief as the last Hulean armies withdraw from the borderlands that they were still occupying. They reinforce their border fortifications and watch Hule with a wary eye, but to all appearances, Hulean armies have for the most part withdrawn from the borders of the city-states. (See *Nu. 1; Th. 5.*)

What This Means: This means more or less what it looks like. The city-states are of secondary interest to the Master at this time and he has withdrawn his forces for use elsewhere. However, he has left several gents in Nova Svoga, who will stir up trouble and promote internal rivalries.

Vaterrmont 28, AC 1017: The Turning of the Tide?

Location: Town of Polakatsikes, Dominion of Polakatsikes, Heldannic Empire, Meghala Kimata Plains. DV

Description: Governor Wolfgang Stommel receives the latest news: Tyrnae has agreed to a military alliance with the Heldannic Knights, in exchange for the future sharing of clerical knowledge once hostilities end. Without hesitation, Wolfgang dispatches 20 cavalry, 30 heavy infantry, as well as 15 high-level priests to Tyrnae.

As the soldiers commence their march to Tyrnae, Wolfgang receives more news from Vanya's Rest: the garrison will be sending an additional 200 men to Polakatsikes, as soon as possible, to aid the remote outpost's efforts aimed at repelling what appears to be an imminent Mivosian invasion. (See *Va. 24, Va. 25; Th. 4, Th. 9.*)

What the PCs Can Do: If they are with the Heldannic forces, the PCs could be sent to Tyrnae.

Vaterrmont 28, AC 1017: Geron Falls.

Location: Village of Geron, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: The starving elves' defenses are breached by the assault of the Denagothian pikemen, who storm inside the town and begin the slaughtering. At the end of the day the last elven survivors prefer suicide to surrender, knowing their fate could be far worse if the Denagothians enslaved them. (*See Nu. 2, Va. 2.*)

What This Means: Geron is now again under the control of the Shadow Army and Idris will undoubtedly use it to threaten Wendar's safety in the future.

Events: Thaumont

First Week

Thaumont 1, AC 1017: Grunalfs Sail North.

Location: Town of Kammin, Territory of Heldann, Heldannic Empire. OW

Description: After two months spent in the northern woods of Heldann, the Alfheim exiles are politely but firmly presented with an order to abandon the Heldannic nation within the month. The Alfheimers' request for refuge in Vanya's theocracy has been refused and they are forced to leave the nation to avoid further political and physical repercussions. The Grunalfs (and all the other elves belonging to minor clans that traveled with them) decide to migrate northwards, to reach the small elven Barony of Ironwood, where other brethren have been living since AC 1015, after the invitation of the elf mage Baron Elarianthas Blackblade. To avoid traveling through dangerous territories, the elves board some merchant ships sailing towards Alpha. (*See Nu. 1; Fl. 13.*)

What This Means: *Oberherr* Wulf von Klagendorf has decided to expel the elves because he doesn't want any trouble with Denagoth at the moment, especially seeing what has happened in nearby Wendar because of the Alfheimers. Now that they have been abandoned to their own fate, the Grunalfs' last hope lies in the northern lord Elarianthas Blackblade, accomplished mage and skilled fighter, who invited them to relocate to his dominion back in AC 1015, when the Alfheim reserves were created in Wendar. They have chosen sailing northwards because they had no other choice: going south through the Northern Reaches would have only brought them more problems and then both the Ylari and the dwarves would have blocked their way to Darokin or Karamaikos.

Thaumont 1, AC 1017: Zuyevo Seizes an Opportunity.

Location: Western Kingdom of Douzbakjian, Midlands. WB

Description: Last year Ustalam, leader of the northern Nomadic Empire (which stretched from the areas north of Zuyevo to Douzbakjian and other parts of the Midlands) was killed by the Master of Hule. The Zuyevan Empire now sees an opportunity to expand its influence in the Midlands. With an expedition of 12,500 troops (including Talmav cavalry, imperial hussars and the 6th 12th and 14th imperial infantry) under *Tsar Andrei's* firstborn son, Crown Prince Dmitry, Zuyevo plans to conquer as much of Douzbakjian and the Midlands as it can. This will allow it access to the rich resources of the region and the opportunity to open up another front from which to attack Hule should that become necessary. (*See Fl. 11, Ya. 1.*)

What This Means: Douzbakjian is the largest and most northerly of the Midlands nations. It cradles the southern rim of the Yalu Sea [*that great big body of water north of Hule. Ed.*]. Douzbakjian is populated largely by civilized humans and dwarves, many of whom were previously nomadic or barbaric. Douzbakjian is a major grain-producing nation and has strategic importance in that it controls access from the plains north of the Tunguska to the Midlands and Hule. This is a very important trade route that also gives control of the mighty Yalu River, which drains from the Yalu Sea. North of that sea are a number of scattered barbarian tribes as well as the feared white orcs, whose territory stretches right across the upper Borean Plateau from the Endworld Line to the Adri Varma Plateau. As such, control of Douzbakjian would give a conqueror influence and access to the Midlands, as well as wealth from imposing taxes on the trade caravans that go north and west from Hule and the Old World. The only other overland trade route would be through the heavily contested Bylot Hills which once was monster infested and now is the scene of constant conflicts between Zuyevo, Hule, Olgar, Monzag, Antasyn and also barbarian

tribes from the Zdredanyan Forest—i.e. the Sendaryan tribes.

Hule is seeking to expand its influence in Western Brun, but the Empire of Zuyevo is seeking to do the same. The two empires respond to the challenge differently, Hule with deception and intrigue, Zuyevo with force of arms.

Thaumont 2, AC 1017: Wayseeker Sets Out.

Location: City of Calimnis, Empire of Selhomarr. HW

Description: The *Wayseeker* silently pulls away from its resting place above the main square of Calimnis, heading due east. Friction between the crew and their hosts had erupted during their shore leave, but Adath was able to smooth matters over with the Selhomarrians. As the *skyship* leaves, some of the emperor's aides observe the spectacle, pondering what the Alphatians' arrival means for Selhomarr. (*See Va. 24, Va. 25; Tb. 3, Tb. 4.*)

What This Means: Despite the best of intentions, the Alphatians and the Selhomarrians possess many differences between them—enough to mar the otherwise positive encounter somewhat. To some of the Alphatian guests—particularly among the conservative spellcasters—the prominence of clerics among the Selhomarrian populace, as opposed to wizards, was viewed with some disdain. Some clerics of Xeron, the dominant Immortal of Selhomarr, perceived this attitude and were offended by it. Likewise, those Alphatians who had little exposure to foreign cultures did not take kindly to mere commoners addressing them directly, as though considering themselves to be in the presence of equals. Equally, however, there were instances where both peoples were able to interact without problems.

Many Selhomarrians, by contrast, viewed the Alphatians with cautious curiosity and sometimes outright suspicion. The prospect that any foreign nation possessed the ability to traverse the skies with such apparent ease caused many to wonder what the Alphatians'

true motive was for visiting Selhomarr. The imperial court will no doubt be under pressure in the coming months from advisors and prominent citizens to devise policies concerning Alphatia. Xenophobic organizations within the empire will no doubt seize the opportunity to advance their own agendas.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs with either the Alphatians or the Selhomarrians have a golden opportunity here to make a name for themselves in international diplomacy. Depending on what they do to ease tensions that might arise (assuming they do anything at all), the outcome of this first visit might turn out more favorably (or less so) than described here. If they do well, they could earn the gratitude of Adath and the Selhomarrians. Alternatively, if the initial meeting goes poorly, Eriadna (or one of her advisors) might send the PCs to Selhomarr during a subsequent visit to smooth things over; either way, this is a chance to expose them to this vastly different nation.

Thaumont 2, AC 1017: Stonewall Looks to Arkan.

Location: City of Draco, Kingdom of Stonewall, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: Intelligence reports of various Alphatian nations have been submitted to King Koblan and his court and they now consider those. It is decided that despite the distance, the best target for an invasion is Arkan. (*See Nu. 23, Va. 5; Th. 4, Th. 25.*)

What This Means: Arkan is far away and so transportation will be a big problem. On the other hand, it is the obvious target for several reasons, mainly because Arkan has large amounts of good farmland, but also because Arkan is more vulnerable to an attack. When Alphatia was brought into the Hollow World by the Immortals, almost all the aristocrats of Arkan remained in the outer world because they mostly lived on the nation's floating islands. This region, called Floating Ar, remained in the outer world when Alphatia was destroyed and then

recreated as a floating continent. Because of this, the population is almost entirely composed of commoners, meaning that Stonewall forces are likely to meet little magical opposition if they can bring their troops there.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are involved in this, they should definitely be the ones to perform the spy mission in Arkan. That way, they'll not only submit their findings to the court, but also be invited to participate in the planning of the invasion due to their first-hand knowledge of the land.

Thaumont 2, AC 1017: Almarrón and Saragón Respond.

Location: *Baronía de Gargoña*. SC

Description: *Don* Balthazar, Baron of Saragón, leads the Saragóner army into Gargoña from the west hoping to dislodge the Narvaezan forces under *Barón* Hugo from the barony. Meanwhile, *Barón* Maximiliano of Almarrón leads his forces north in an effort to capture *Barón* Hugo in a pincer movement. The Almarróñan and Saragóner forces make considerable headway against the Narvaezan skirmishing troops and begin to push them back towards Ciudad Real. (*See Va. 5; Th. 4, Th. 11.*)

What This Means: This is a result of *Barón* Hugo's unprovoked attack on Gargoña at the end of last year. While Almarrón and Saragón have been unable to get assistance from Cimarron or Torreón to aid them against Narvaez, they know that if they do not fight Narvaez, their baronies will be the next ones that *Barón* Hugo targets for invasion. The Almarróñan and Saragóner forces are making considerable headway because *Barón* Hugo is holding back his main forces for a counterstrike when the time is right. He has been told by visions he thinks are sent by Ixion (but are instead sent by a much more sinister force) that help will arrive if he just holds the Saragóner and Almarróñan armies in Gargoña for a while.

Thaumont 2, AC 1017: The Move Towards Military Might.

Location: City of Bluenose, Kingdom of Arogansa, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: Queen Detteria Scarback summons her chief military officers and advisors. She informs them that Arogansa needs to be taken seriously by its neighbors. For far too long the kingdom's focus on tourism has made them look like frivolous fools to their neighbors. Since Alphatians seem to respect power and might, Detteria proposes that attention must be given to giving the kingdom a powerful military.

Detteria points out that most of their neighbors have been severely weakened militarily as their forces have been integrated into the imperial forces. Arogansa should take advantage of this power vacuum and build up its own forces. Detteria initiates a program of recruitment and even conscription to fill the ranks with mundane troops. (*See Fy. 20, Am. 11.*)

Thaumont 2, AC 1017: More Terrorism in Mirros.

Location: City of Mirros, Kingdom of Karameikos. OW

Description: Several members of the Torenescu clan are attacked by members of the Church of Karameikos. The church members manage to escape before they can be apprehended by the city guard, but the Torenescu men claim they stated that they were agents of Oderbry and were taking their vengeance on Traladarans. (*See Va. 16, Va. 19; Th. 14, Fl. 6.*)

What This Means: The men were not actually agents of Oderbry. This was all a ruse by the Torenescu faction to take advantage of the chaos and undermine the authority of the Church of Karameikos and the king. While it advances their own interests, their story will serve to rile up the populace of the nation further and ironically aid Oderbry's group's aims as well.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs investigate and discover the Torenescu plot,

they may be able to help quell the growing discord between the Traladarans and Thyatians.

Thaumont 2, AC 1017: Battle of Two-Forks Ridge.

Location: Hilly country south of City of Helskir, Dominion of Helskir, Heldannic Empire, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: While marching through a hilly region known as Two-Forks Ridge—so named for the two forked, steep-sided valleys that cut through this land—the Heldannic force under the command of *Ordensgeneral* Anna von Hendriks is attacked by a massed force of Heldunian soldiers. Despite the initial surprise, in which some medium cavalry outriders are felled by missile fire, the knights are able to close ranks.

The battle itself is fierce, with no quarter asked or given. While the Heldunian forces count Alphatian irregulars, remnants of the Helskiran militia, Thyatian troops and a hardy band of Ostlander mercenaries among their numbers, this diverse grouping of military skill does not stand up to the Heldannic defense and counterattack. By early afternoon, it becomes clear that Anna's forces are carrying the day. With a triumphant last push, the knights surge forward, breaking the remnants of those forces encircling them and pursuing those who lose heart. (*See Va. 3, Va. 20; Th. 13, Th. 15.*)

What This Means: The Heldunian forces had numerical superiority (4,838 defenders versus 2,000 Heldannic soldiers), but the decisive factor in this battle was the level of skill of the troops involved. After the fall of Helskir in AC 1016, Asteriela dispatched messengers throughout the land, urging everyone—homesteaders and cityfolk alike—to defend themselves against the Heldannic invaders. In the months following the conquest and consolidation of Heldannic rule, a nascent defense force was formed, comprised of those Helskiran city guards who escaped and remnants of the kingdom's army. As significant portions of the country

remain in disarray due to the events of AC 1016 (including the relocation of the capital and the demobilization of troops in accordance with the treaty), this was the best that could be mobilized on short notice. To this was added two Thyatian reformatory cohorts, a unit of Alphatian irregulars serving as mercenaries and a band of Ostlander reavers (Harald's Hard Axes), who also sold their services to Heldun.

As might be expected, the battle turned out to be disastrous for Heldun with over half of their forces being killed or injured. The knights lost a little more than one-tenth of their forces. With such a crushing defeat, those Heldunian forces that survived were forced to retreat further southwards and regroup, while those casualties who were left behind either dead or captured. Times are grim for Heldun, indeed.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are with the defenders, the PCs could try to inflict more casualties on the knights (and if they are higher level, this is certainly possible), but unless they have an army of their own, it is unlikely that they will change the outcome of this battle. Likewise, if they are with the knights, the PCs could try to prevent more of their enemies from escaping, but word will still get out concerning the battle.

Thaumont 2, AC 1017: Cabal Establishes Base on Great Escarpment.

Location: Western portion of the Great Escarpment, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: After travelling up the Skull River and making a harrowing ascent up to the summit of the hundreds of feet high Great Escarpment, the followers of Thanatos reach a gloomy, secluded area. Here, in the grand tradition of villainous organizations everywhere, they begin to construct a hidden base. Efforts are also begun to bring the local monsters under their domination. They are several miles to the west of Stompor, where the refugees from Serraine have been living, but so far neither group has discovered the presence of the other. (*See Nu. 16, Va. 14; Kl. 3, Fy. 19.*)

What This Means: Once they have established themselves, the Cult of Thanatos will begin competing for power and influence with the other factions of the Great Escarpment. They will also eventually send their tentacles out into the human settlements of the nearby dominions, spawning plots and mischief.

What the PCs Can Do: Once firmly established, the group will become a source of opponents for PCs on the Isle of Dawn—and possibly beyond.

Thaumont 2, AC 1017: A Bizarre Captive.

Location: Torenal Site, Sunken Arogansa, Nayce. AS

Description: A group of Destroyers arrive at Torenal Site from an expedition out in the Arogansan seascape. As the airlock is opened the adventurers tell the docking officer to alert the garrison commander that they have a prisoner taken from an encounter with the ghouls. Under the watchful eye of several Naycese troops and a handful of mages, the Destroyers drag their undead quarry to a holding cell. Commander Deltart summons the necromancer Pidimigd to oversee the interrogation of the ghoul.

The Destroyers also show to Deltart some items recovered from the ghoul party that they had fought. Most items are ornate urns, vases and braziers; some are of obvious monetary value while others are simple household vessels. Deltart tells the adventurers that they can have the items after they are tested for enchantments. He arrogantly adds that as the site's commander he will lay claim to any items that he desires.

Deltart, Pidimigd and several accompanying troops endure the stench of the creature to question it. Except for Pidimigd, who seems more comfortable with it, the others stand back a few steps, trying to avoid the stench. The creature is obviously distracted by the abundant mortal flesh and avoids responding to their questions; instead, it keeps ranting about food and its hunger. More disturbing though are its references to the *Phylactery of Agmas*

and “the will of the dark one.” At hearing this, Pidimigd gasps and begins demanding more answers. However, the ghoul cannot or will not reveal anymore and the source of the trouble remains a mystery.

Undaunted, Pidimigd presses the interrogation with Deltart’s blessing. However, their magical and physical efforts are in vain—the interrogation ends as the agonized ghoul lashes out at them, freeing one its clawed hands from its bindings and struggling to free itself further. Deltart motions to a trooper to dispatch the creature with his sword and the ghoul slumps and dies. Deltart orders the corpse destroyed and convenes with Pidimigd to discuss their findings.

Having heard the words “phylactery” and “dark one,” Deltart suspects a lich is at work and behind the ghoul attacks. He presses Pidimigd on the subject. Though Pidimigd initially expresses ignorance on the matter, he finally offers that the *Phylactery of Agmas* is a legendary artifact of immense power. However, he cites that the name is a misnomer, the item being more akin to an artifact of Entropy than the item a lich stores its life force into. Though Pidimigd cannot offer any more information on the item, he does stress that Deltart take the matter seriously and send word to Ionace on its possible involvement. For his part, Pidimigd promises to research the matter for more answers. (*See Va. 19, Va. 25; Th. 11, Ya. 5.*)

What This Means: The ghoul knows very little; it’s just a foot soldier in the undead forces and as a ghoul has a low intelligence. The ghouls are searching for food as well as the phylactery. The “dark one” is a voice that has been visiting the undead, guiding them. One of the tasks the voice has placed upon the ghouls is a search for the *Phylactery of Agmas*. Being ghouls, they have no idea really what to look for and have been roaming the seabed ruins, collecting various items to be given to the voice.

The desired information about who is behind the attacks and where the ghouls are massing is not revealed. Deltart and

Pidimigd will have to look elsewhere for this information. Pidimigd will also have to look for more information on the phylactery. Though he is a necromancer, the artifact is almost mythical and he knows almost nothing about it. He is keenly interested in its recovery, preferably being placed in his hands for study, than some vague and mysterious “dark one.” The downside for Pidimigd is that Deltart’s order now sets back his own desires to meet with the sentient undead in Bluenose.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs signed up as Destroyers, they may be the ones who manage to first capture some ghouls and bring them back for interrogation. Once they learn of the *Phylactery of Agmas*, it’s likely they will want to find it.

Thaumont 3, AC 1017: More Consolidation Ahead.

Location: Dominion of Vanya’s Rest, Aryptian Savannah, Heldannic Empire. DV

Description: Heinz Kronenburg, Castellan of Vanya’s Rest, orders the creation of a cordon sanitaire around the region currently controlled by the knights. He sends out several detachments into the northern, southern and western hinterlands to scout the regions to be pacified and to assess the feasibility of constructing better fortifications. (*See Th. 14, Fl. 9.*)

What This Means: Since the raids undertaken by Meghaddaran warriors last year, the Heldannic authorities have been paying closer attention to the threat posed by that people. If the security of the Heldannic Order’s holiest shrine is to be ensured, a more extensive network of defenses will be required. Furthermore, the lands farther away from Vanya’s Rest are slightly richer than those already controlled; more (and better) lands will be needed if this dominion is to have a greater chance of becoming self-sufficient.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs stationed at Vanya’s Rest could be part of one of the patrols.

Thaumont 3, AC 1017: *Wayseeker* Visits Olathis.

Location: City of Olathis, Empire of Selhomarr. HW

Description: While flying high over the Selhomarrian coast, mapping out the terrain, Adath sees a large port city down below, further to the east. Realizing that the *Wayseeker's* stores should be replenished soon, he decides to set his ship down in the water, several miles out in the Bay of Lokam and then sail into the city. When he arrives in port, he discovers that many of the city-folk were aware of his arrival and both he and his crew are the subject of much curiosity.

While Adath and his crew try to make their way through the crowd of onlookers, a loud blasting of trumpets is heard. Quickly, the crowd parts, revealing a regally-dressed man approaching them. Speaking in Neathar, he identifies himself as Prince Caltir, ruler of the city of Olathis and the surrounding province of Regelnis. He tells them that he was heard of their arrival in Selhomarr and he wished to meet them personally. Surprised, but nonetheless pleased, Adath agrees. (*See Va. 25, Th. 2; Th. 4, Th. 6.*)

What This Means: Word of Adath's arrival in Selhomarr is spreading rapidly all over the empire. Before the year is out, there will not be a single village that has not heard of Adath and his flying ship, though most of what is discussed will be more exaggeration than fact. Thus, word of Adath's meeting with the emperor was related to Caltir beforehand and when he spotted the *Wayseeker*, he knew that the Alphatians could very well visit his city. Ever interested about news of the world outside of Selhomarr, as well as wishing to raise his own profile in the eyes of his political rivals, Caltir sees Adath as a possible source of information, as well as being an interesting foreigner.

Thaumont 3, AC 1017: The Political Discussion Begins.

Location: City of Andaire, Kingdom of Alphas'ar, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: Admiral Soltturnun starts the discussion about the Navy of the Lakes' canal-building plans in the earnest by asking for imperial support in such projects. To the big surprise of some members a majority votes for opening the discussion—the first time a proposition brought forth by the Navy of the Lakes isn't rejected from the start. (*See Va. 14, Va. 19; Th. 4, Th. 8.*)

What This Means: Soltturnun has done a lot of political work over the years. Now and this comes as a surprise to some, he has enough support at least to start the discussion. The planned canals have been opposed from the beginning for various reasons. The traditionalists simply had not wished to see such a big change to Alphatia. Among these had been the imperial government and the empress herself who were content with a wild and largely uninhabited inland. Also, the rulers of Foresthorne did not wish to see the foundation of new cities along the canals in their forests. Other opponents had seen a big economic rival in an increasing inland naval trade. Of course the economic point of view is turning dramatically for the canals right now.

A much bigger problem is the view of the navy itself. Many Alphatians have never believed in the navy's goals and they suspect the existence of a dark and sinister plan to overthrow the old establishment. These fears originated from the economic success of the sailors who have used their ships always to conduct trade on the rivers, lakes and coastal waterways. Additionally they had worked for the coast guards of quite a number of kingdoms. In doing this the Navy of the Lakes has earned money and even some influence—too much for many people! This influence is over-estimated, but it drives the opinions of some foes.

But the greatest problem for the Alphatian aristocracy was the fact that the navy is a very egalitarian organization. Every Alphatian joining the navy has about the same chances of advancement—an unheard of barbaric abomination! Not even the official navy of the empire offers such an opportunity. That the last three leaders of

the Navy of the Lakes and indeed many of its utmost members, were nobles, has done virtually nothing do decrease the anger of the foes.

There is a reason internal to the Council of Wizards for them to allow the matter to be discussed: the council is trying hard to recover from the Great War's devastation. Many wizards, whose lives had been magically extended, died during the Week Without Magic and several more during the bombardment of Glantri and the sinking of Alphatia. Several more were left stranded on the surface world and were not aware of Alphatia's survival in the Hollow World for several years and then had a hard time rejoining it. Thus, in the aftermath of the recreation of the continent in the Hollow World, Empress Eriadna, revived by the Immortals, could tighten her grip on power, with barely any resistance from the not-so-blessed council, allowing the empire to remain whole and strong despite the hard blows it had suffered. Now, with their numbers growing again, the wizards are struggling to regain their counter-power role. What better way to make themselves heard than to shock the rest of the aristocracy and the empress?

The winds of change are blowing now but only the future will show if they will be strong enough.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs who are members of the Grand Council can be involved in the ongoing campaign. For most others there will be enough work to be done, as the council is a political hotbed full of intrigue, spies and blackmail—now even more than usual! Certain members or bureaucrats might use the assistance of some adventurers.

Thaumont 4, AC 1017: The Man in Black Strikes Again.

Location: *Baronía de Narvaez*. SC

Description: At about one o'clock in the morning, the silence of the night is broken by an earsplitting explosion. Flames leap into the sky as one of the few Narvaezan galleons in Hugo's navy literally goes up in smoke.

Priests rush to put out the flames with their magic, but to no avail—Hugo's new cannons need powder and the magazine goes up before they get in range, raining pieces of galleon all over the harbor for hundreds of yards.

In the investigation afterwards, magical interrogations reveal the presence of a masked figure in the harbor before the attack—the same man who was responsible for the jailbreak in Gargoña, no doubt. The interference caused by the *vermeil* dust prevents the exact identification of the culprit, however. (*See Va. 5, Th. 2; Th. 11, Fl. 2.*)

What This Means: Narvaez has never been a naval power and so the military loss is not too significant—Hugo's navy simply is not that important. However, this blow was serious—galleons are not cheap after all! The jailbreak was a pinprick, but this attack stirs the Narvaezans into a fury. *Barón* Hugo tells his underlings that the capture of the man in black is to be of the utmost urgency from now on.

Thaumont 4, AC 1017: Stonewall Prepares Invasion.

Location: Kingdom of Stonewall, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: Stonewall quietly begins mobilizing its forces. The target for invasion has not become public knowledge because there are still important matters to address, but while these are being considered, the fighting forces are being assembled. (*See Va. 5, Th. 2; Th. 25, Fl. 4.*)

What This Means: Arkan is far away from Stonewall, so the invaders face a serious problem of both transportation and logistics. Magical means can be used to help in the effort, but they can scarcely solve it for Koblan and his people, so they must explore other options on this matter as well.

What the PCs Can Do: As unlikely as this may sound in Alphatia, this actually means that Stonewall may wish to hire foreign spellcasters to help their war effort for the simple reason that the nation has

relatively few spellcasters of its own. Then again, any PCs who have suggestions to make about solving the transportation and/or logistics problems will certainly note that Koblan is very interested in listening to what they have to say.

Thaumont 4, AC 1017: *Wayseeker* Heads North.

Location: City of Olathis, Empire of Selhomarr. HW

Description: After a pleasant day spent in the company of Prince Caltir, Adatah takes leave of his host, saying that he and his crew must return to Alpathia. Caltir is only too happy to help replenish the *Wayseeker's* depleted supplies, as well as carry out some brisk trading. As the ship pulls away from the docks, Adatah and his crew bid farewell and then proceed to prepare the ship for liftoff. (See *Tb. 2, Tb. 3; Tb. 6, Tb. 10.*)

Thaumont 4, AC 1017: The Battle Joined Once More.

Location: City-State of Tyrnae, Meghala Kimata Plains. DV

Description: Scant hours after the arrival of Heldannic forces, advance patrols of the Mivosian army are visible, ascending nearby hills and preparing what appear to be artillery emplacements. Losing no time, Tyrnaean forces rush out towards the enemy, establishing themselves in moderately defensible advance positions and commence sporadic sniping at their foes with longbows. Initially, it appears as though the defenders might have the advantage; no other Mivosian forces are detected. Nonetheless, it becomes apparent that both sides are fighting a war of attrition, a conflict which the Mivosians appear better-placed to win, given their greater numbers and use of conscripts from conquered city-states (many of the latter, it becomes clear, are working as artillery crews under armed guard). As soon as one artillery crew is taken down, another springs up elsewhere, while Mivosian archers begin to fire upon the defenders.

Realizing that this battle cannot go on for long, the Heldannic cavalry surges forth, overrunning a number of the knots of Mivosian archers, but even this serves as only a delaying tactic; more enemy archers are soon deployed, forcing the knights to retreat to Tyrnae. By day's end, the defenders are ensconced once more within Tyrnae's walls, while the Mivosian presence outside grows. (See *Va. 25, Va. 28; Tb. 9, Tb. 17.*)

What This Means: Through the use of conscripts from conquered city-states and villages (many of whom are kept in line with arrows aimed at their backs, or by the knowledge that some of their family members are being held hostage), the Mivosians have been able to expand their domain with minimal cost to themselves. Thus, they now have the leisure of playing with their opponents. In today's case, they sent token forces to see what the defenders' reaction would be, as well as wage psychological warfare by starting a war of attrition they know they can win. Only when the defenders seemed to be gaining the upper hand, or otherwise holding their own, did they bring more of their forces to bear. Now, the Tyrnaeans and their Heldannic allies are under siege.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs working for either side could be sent as spies to determine the opponent's weaknesses, or otherwise carry out acts of sabotage.

Thaumont 4, AC 1017: An Unexpected Assistance.

Location: City of Andaire, Kingdom of Alphas'ar, Floating Continent of Alpathia, Alpathian Empire. HW

Description: A member of the Grand Council from Foresthome, known to be a supporter of the royal point of view, makes a speech in which he declares his support in favor of the canal law. The Grand Council is puzzled. (See *Va. 19, Tb. 3; Tb. 8, Tb. 27.*)

What This Means: Queen Kikania has kept her promise. As she has changed her mind on the matter she has informed all

members of the Grand Council who are allied to her or her kingdom.

What the PCs Can Do: Some members are in need of information urgently concerning the reason that member from Foresthome has changed his mind. Political investigations might be useful.

Thaumont 4, AC 1017: Militia Bill Raised in the Commons.

Location: City of Leominster, Bishopric of Leominster, Kingdom of Bellayne. SC

Description: The parliament has not been ignoring the latest goblinoid raid in the north and has been debating at some length a means to resolve the situation. Today, the Militia Bill is presented to the Commons by Blythe-Jackson and Sir Hampden of the Wyndham Party. The bill will place all naval and military appointments under the parliament's control. The bill is hotly contested by the Royal Party, but in the end passes by a narrow margin, on the assurance that the reservists will be brought to bear against the goblinoid threat should the bill be passed. (*See Va. 11, Va. 15; Th. 8, Th. 19.*)

What This Means: There would be a massive shift of power in Bellayne should the Militia Bill become law. Currently the king and to a lesser extent the nobility have fairly direct control of the armed forces—this would be set to change. After being passed by the Commons, the Militia Bill is sent to the House of Lords, where it is likely to provoke a vigorous debate.

Thaumont 4, AC 1017: The Waiting Is the Hardest Part.

Location: City of Mirros, Kingdom of Karameikos. OW

Description: Having been forced to wait for an entire month, the Thyatian envoys are finally allowed to meet with King Stefan. They are greeted warmly, but the audience is brief. The Thyatian envoys express the emperor's praise regarding the bravery and honor of Justin Karameikos and the volunteers he led to Thyatis's aid. But they also tell Stefan that the emperor finds it

unfortunate that Stefan seems to have forsworn his Thyatian heritage to make common cause with its enemies, the Alphatians. The king announces he has other affairs to attend to and asks the envoys to discuss their main concerns with Lord Alexius Korrigan, the Seneschal of the Royal Estate.

The envoys tell Lord Alexius Korrigan that Emperor Eusebius would like to restore relations with Karameikos, but that there are some matters to be settled first. They point out that Thyatis still has not formally recognized Karameikos's status as an independent kingdom, but they might be willing to do so—if some things were resolved first. They produce maps that purport to show that Emperor Thincol's original grant of land to Stefan marked the border of Traladara at the Rugalov River.

Korrigan's own maps depict the border where it currently is, as the original frontier. The Thyatians counter by producing old land titles, for farms in northern Machelos, which now lay within the current border of Karameikos. They claim that these areas were ceded to Thincol in the trade.

The Vyalian elves among the Thyatian envoys then speak up. They say that they have been affiliated with Thyatis for centuries, but never considered themselves part of Karameikos. Korrigan says he will inform Stefan of the views expressed here and that they should return tomorrow. (*See Va. 3; Th. 5, Ei. 28.*)

What This Means: The current situation in Karameikos is very tense and Stefan knows that the Thyatians are pressing their "claim" now to take advantage of this fact. Unfortunately, it seems his hands are tied. Stefan wants to avoid conflict with Thyatis if he can, knowing that it might undermine his kingdom's growing prosperity.

Regarding the facts of the territory under dispute, there is merit to the position of both sides. For his part, Stefan has administrated the area under dispute since his deal with Thincol, without any question over his right to do so. On the other hand, while the Thyatian envoys' documents of

ownership are fraudulent, the Vyalia elves have never considered themselves to be under the authority of Karameikos. They have, on the other hand, long been allied to the Thyatian Empire. Thus, perhaps, Karameikos will lose its claim on the region, but get in exchange assurances from the Thyatians of good will and avoid the possibility that they might stir up problems in Karameikos and take advantage of the opportunity to try and reassert control over it. Eusebius is counting on Stefan's desire to avoid conflict and be friends with everyone to ensure that he gets his way.

Thaumont 5, AC 1017: You Did Not Free Me!

Location: City-State of Nova Svoga. SC

Description: The Church of Halav in Nova Svoga holds an official ceremony celebrating the liberation of that city-state from Hulean occupation and thanking Halav for His help. In the middle of the ceremony, a group of followers of Gareth bursts into the church, yelling that Halav abandoned His children and it was Gareth who freed the city. A fracas ensues and the Garethans are severely beaten by the followers of Halav and taken to the constabulary. However, soon a message is received from Anya, the ruler of the city, ordering the Garethans to be released and paid reparations by the Church of Halav. The Garethans are freed, but the Church of Halav flatly refuses to pay any reparations and Halavites across the city are outraged at Anya's orders. (*See Nu. 1, Va. 28.*)

What This Means: Hulean agents were involved, but only marginally. They have only helped to fan the fires that were already springing up between the traditionalist Halavites and the reformist Garethans. Anya, herself a follower of Gareth, is young and brash and her orders were impulsive and not well thought-out, only further escalating the tensions. The Church of Halav may soon call for a complete banning of Gareth's religion from Nova Svoga.

Thaumont 5, AC 1017: Militant Military.

Location: City of Rardish, Kingdom of Randel, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: Amid a degree of secrecy, Army General Brikstrist, Air General Hevrothria and several other prominent Randel officers meet inside the High Command Headquarters to discuss the current state of the military and the edicts issued by Queen Junna. Several officers offer suggestions of ousting the queen and asserting one of their own as the Randel ruler. Others promote patience in dealing with their queen and continue to try to sway her from the influences of the clergy and Sister Riddlynn. However several officers add that care must be taken in assaulting any Immortal's temple as it can draw in forces from other temples throughout the empire. The meeting convenes with the officers deeply divided and without any unified plan of action. (*See Va. 6, Va. 12; Fl. 8, Kl. 10.*)

What This Means: This meeting is a further sign of the alienation that has developed between the Randel militarists and Queen Junna over her procession of pacifist and non-militaristic edicts. Tempers are flaring and there is a sizable minority preaching a hostile removal of Junna. Other officers, aware that a forceful coup could have disastrous affects on the kingdom, opt for patience in getting things back to normal. Almost unanimously, the officers agree that at least part of the problem stems from the clerical influence of the queen's advisors, led by Sister Riddlynn. Several officers decide to look into the clerics on their own.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs may find their skills needed in partaking in some of these independent investigations. Given the royal ramifications, subtlety is required. Any investigator employer will eventually point the PCs towards the clerics and their role in influencing Junna.

Thaumont 5, AC 1017: Conscience of a King?

Location: City of Mirros, Kingdom of Karameikos. OW

Description: The Thyatian envoys receive an audience with King Stefan of Karameikos again. The king tells them that Lord Korrigan has brought the matters they raised to his attentions. Stefan says that he knows what Thincol granted him, as did Thincol and there was never any trouble over the border while his friend lived. He knows the border stands where he and Thincol agreed it should. However, in the interests of goodwill between the Empire of Thyatis and the Kingdom of Karameikos, he will agree to sign a treaty ceding the disputed area to Thyatis. The Thyatian envoys immediately hail Stefan as king, recognizing Karameikos as a fully independent kingdom. All parties hope for improved relations in the future.

This stuns the entire court, which is shocked by Stefan's action. Reactions are mixed, but most onlookers maintain a bemused but respectful air. After all, the area in question is still largely wilderness. The few inhabitants are mostly Vyalian elves who have never been integrated into Karameikos. Indeed, with the border fixed at the river, some rationalize that it might help with the kingdom's defense. (*See Va. 3, Tb. 4; Ei. 28.*)

What This Means: The ceded area consists of that portion of Karameikos that lays east of the Rugalov River. Most of it becomes part of the County of Vyalia, while the cleared farming areas along the northern border of Machetos become part of that county. Thyatis and Karameikos agree to jointly fund the construction of an imposing stone bridge across the river, the Kinship Bridge, as a symbol of their affinity and joint heritage.

One man who is not pleased with this when he hears of it is Sir Yuschiev, Baron of Rugalov. His barony now lies directly along the border with Thyatis. Yuschiev sees this cession by Stefan as a betrayal of Traladara. His hatred of Thyatians grows.

Thaumont 6, AC 1017: Twice Shy.

Location: Emirate of Alasiya, Emirates of Ylaruam. OW

Description: The last of the vampires that have been plaguing the town of Tel al Kebir is put to rest. The vampire is recognized to be a man from the nearby town of Cinsa-Men-Noo and is believed to have been the instigator of the vampiric epidemic. Word is sent out to both the *Sheik* of Cinsa-Men-Noo and the Sultan of Ylaruam that there may be trouble brewing in the Emirate of Nithia. (*See Va. 15; Ya. 5.*)

What This Means: The Emirate of Nithia has long been a source of evil and foulness in Ylaruam and recent events have only added to that reputation. Since the opening of the Dead Place in AC 1015, otherworldly demons have been a terrible, if rare, occurrence in the northern emirate. Now it seems a new threat—a plague of vampirism—may be building in the north and the rest of the emirates will have to take measures to guard against it.

Thaumont 6, AC 1017: Elves Move Out.

Location: Forest of Geffron, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: The frigid winter has claimed some victims among the elven troops stationed in the woods, but yet more numerous have been the elves that have mysteriously vanished in the last months. Suspecting evil at work, the elven Generals Durifern and Beasthunter have decided to move their troops to a safer location, far from the dreaded Drax Tallen and the eerie Aeleris Pits where the ghastly army of their ally Sylarion is stationed. With the first days of spring and the coming thaw, they march westwards steadily. (*See Tb. 15, Fe. 10.*)

What This Means: Even since Durifern informed Beasthunter of the deal stricken with the vampire elf Sylarion, Beasthunter had been suspicious of the undead lord. With each passing month and the elves' unexplained disappearances, Beasthunter's suspicions became real accusations and so he proposed that Durifern relocate to another place to avoid further problems.

Now Sylarion will have to ambush the Shadow Army if he wants to gather new food for his undead minions.

Thaumont 6, AC 1017: Ferocious Border Skirmishes Fail to Materialize.

Location: Borderlands of the Hinterlands, Thyatian Empire. DV

Description: Thyatian forces operating under Leilah ben Nadir's direction initiate a series of counterstrikes against the Thratian raiders plaguing the borderlands of the Hinterlands. Their efforts are largely thwarted, however: bands of raiders withdraw from an area when Thyatian forces approach and raids are conducted in areas that are sparsely guarded. Thratian forces shift nimbly, avoiding direct confrontations with large Thyatian forces, while their fellows increase raids where the Thyatian troops are not strong. (*See Va. 27; Ya. 27, Kl. 1.*)

What This Means: The Thratian (Hinterlander) forces, operating in accordance with Siobhan's strategy, are sharing information about Thyatian troop movements so they can strike where the Thyatians are not present and thus keep the pressure up. Leilah ben Nadir begins to notice the surprising level of coordination among the Thratian forces as the pattern develops. She begins to beef up her own troops in order to lead a campaign against them in person, recruiting some additional native levies and calling for reinforcements from Thyatis itself.

What the PCs Can Do: Characters can participate in the conflict on either side.

Thaumont 6, AC 1017: Dragons!

Location: City of Rethnaris, Empire of Selhomarr. HW

Description: Having spent the better part of two days flying high over the Bay of Lokam, one of the lookouts reports that land is sighted to the north. Realizing that he has reached the northern realms of Selhomarr, Adath orders the crew to reduce altitude.

Before long, however, it soon becomes apparent that all is not well. Consulting the maps provided by Caltir, Adath deduces that he is approaching the northern port city of Rethnaris, but there should not be so much smoke and fire! Soon, it becomes clear that the city is being attacked by a small group of red dragons and though the defenders are holding out, they are clearly at a disadvantage. Deciding that he must act, Adath orders his crew to prepare for battle.

The dragons are surprised at the arrival of such a large flying vessel, occupied as they are with ballista bolts and catapult stones from below, as well as a handful of flying chariots. Bringing his vessel's might to bear, Adath is able to seriously injure one of the creatures and give flight to another, while the remainder are beaten off by the city's defenders. Not long afterwards, the slightly damaged *Wayseeker* lands in a small lake nearby. The militia of Rethnaris approaches the disembarking Alphatians and thank them for their aid in repelling the dragons. Seeing the amount of damage the dragons have done, Adath orders his crew to assist the locals in clearing the worst of the debris and in locating survivors in the rubble. (*See Th. 3, Th. 4; Th. 10, Th. 11.*)

What This Means: Rethnaris has long been subject to attacks from the red dragons who live in the Kordithos Mountains to the north, having been razed during one brutal attack long ago, but rebuilt afterwards. Adath's intervention not only resolved the problem sooner than would have been otherwise possible; many lives and large sections of the city, were also saved. The people of Rethnaris realize this and are not slow in acknowledging the aid that has been rendered.

What the PCs Can Do: Alphatian or Selhomarran PCs can get involved in a nasty fight with dragons—there might also be a chance to acquire some treasure, if the dragons are pursued.

Thaumont 6, AC 1017: Murder at the Cosmopolitan Theatre.

Location: City of Glantri, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: On the gala night of the latest Glantrian opera *The Doom of Alphatia*, an assassin dressed as one of the characters (Volospin) makes an attempt on the life of Princess Dolores Hillsbury of Fenswick. The climax of the second act consists of the ensemble of actors flying up above the audience (as the assaulting Alphatian army), amidst a spectacular display of phantasmal lightning bolts, windstorms and “summoned” (illusionary) flying creatures. The assassin uses this opportunity to fly up to the theater box of Princess Dolores and fire two real *lightning bolts* at her. Princess Dolores is injured in the attempt, but when the assassin lands in the box to ensure the death of his victim, he is stabbed in the chest by Noussoir du Marais, Princess Dolores’s present beau and companion at the theater. The assassin falls to the lower box, that of Lord John Beaumarys-Moorkroft, Archduke of Westheath, who promptly *disintegrates* him, leaving no trace. (*See Th. 8, Th. 9.*)

What This Means: Princess Dolores Hillsbury has many enemies and with this attack, she realizes she is not as untouchable as she believed herself to be. She does not die from this assassination attempt, but this event will only fuel her hatred for her enemies and drive her to be more ruthless in her plots.

Most other princes of Glantri are shocked at this event and review their own security arrangements.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs at the Cosmopolitan Theatre at the time, they may pick up clues of an assassination plot and they may be the ones to stop the assassin. Otherwise, they may be questioned by the constabulary as witnesses or even suspects.

Thaumont 7, AC 1017: An Ambitious Proposal.

Location: City-State of Kastelios, Serpent Coast. DV

Description: During a lively debate concerning the impact of increased trade on Kastelian society, the question of the desirability of increased contact with the nations of Brun is raised. Traditionalists decry the recent opening of Kastelios to the lands north of the Sea of Dread, saying that they will only use their larger size and deeper pockets to overpower the city-state and reduce it to a mere appendage. Thus, they say, it would be far better for the people of Kastelios that no deeper ties be sought at this time. Their opponents vociferously deny this, saying that contact with the southeastern nations of Brun will only improve the lot of the average Kastelian—already new markets have been found for Kastelian goods and the accord with Thyatis provides additional revenue for the city-state’s coffers, while leaving it independent.

One young member of the assembly, named Adonai Stephanos, advances an idea that, he thinks, might bridge the philosophical gap in the assembly. He proposes that an outpost of sorts be founded on one of the smaller islands of the Thanegioth Archipelago. If this were done, not only would Kastelian traders have a rest stop on the way to Brun; the potential for foreigners to have undue influence over Kastelios would be lessened, as they would be presented with a place to do business which is much closer to their homes. Adonai is gratified to see that his frank arguments win over many of the conservatives and when the proposal is put to a vote, it passes handily. (*See Va. 12, Va. 14; Th. 25, Fl. 13.*)

What This Means: The debate in the assembly is symptomatic of a larger division within Kastelian society—between those who favor increased contacts with the nations of Brun and those who do not. Each side has vested interests, but, for now, the segment of society favoring openness is ascendant; most people see the benefits of increased trade and for those brave souls seeking adventure, southeastern Brun is now a potential place where young people can “find themselves.” Despite this, the more conservative elements of society are still influential and many have elected

representatives to the assembly to protect their own interests. Adonai is aware of this and thus he had to structure his argument to obtain as wide a base of support as possible—even though he thinks fears of being swamped by the nations of Brun to be unfounded.

Adonai has other motives for establishing such a way-station, but these are not apparent at the moment...

What the PCs Can Do: Unless they are serving members of the assembly, it is unlikely that the PCs will have any input into the final decision, though they may be approached to help out later on, as the way-station becomes established. Alternatively, if one of the PCs was elected instead of Adonai, then another member of the assembly could advance the proposal for a way-station—being coached by Adonai, who has since found someone he can influence.

Second Week

Thaumont 8, AC 1017: The Forces of Conservatism Form Their Ranks.

Location: City of Andaire, Kingdom of Alphas'ar, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: Council Member Zallaras from Vertiloch makes himself the speaker for the foes of the canal plan. In a very emotional speech he fights valiantly against this “abomination, which is doomed to spoil our beloved Alphatia.” He assures that there are many members on his side—indeed some of the members side with Zallaras immediately. Council Member Jolinar from Haven even calls it a de-beautification of the empire. Instead he makes a counterproposal that the empire should support a campaign of magically altering the land, with artists from Haven leading at the edge, in a vast campaign of beautification. As the members of the Grand Council are used to similar demands by the Havenites, most simply smile, murmur “Havies!” and proceed. (*See Th. 3, Th. 4; Th. 27, Ya. 3.*)

What This Means: It was only a question of time until the resistance would start. Soltunnun is not really surprised and he still hopes for a lucky final. The beautification of the whole empire, as Jolinar has proposed, will not come now. The members who are not from Haven might enjoy the beautification of this kingdom when visiting for a weekend trip but they do not want to see it everywhere.

What the PCs Can Do: An interesting question now is how many members of the Grand Council are on the side of Zallaras. Some contrived interviews or the right pair of ears at the right place might help now. Campaigns for rallying support rage on and the various sides may hire the PCs to help them in their dealings—working for a powerful council member can be both rewarding and dangerous—so the PCs may have not only to spy and bribe, but maybe also convince, entertain, or be sent on quests or errands for the most powerful wizards and clerics of the empire.

Thaumont 8, AC 1017: Initial Investigations.

Location: City of Glantri, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: The Glantrian Constabulary announces the initial findings on the assassination attempt on Princess Dolores Hillsbury of Fenswick during a show at the Cosmopolitan Theatre. The assassin was a Flaemish actor, Baldewijn de Woens, who was playing the part of Prince Volospin Aendyr, the former ruler of the Principality of Blackhill and the alleged father of Princess Dolores Hillsbury. The assassin's motives were unclear, but the constabulary surmises that Baldewijn de Woens was a Flaemish radical, who hated all Alphatians and wanted to destroy the Aendyr line, through his portrayal in the opera as a traitor to Glantri, notably Prince Volospin's descendants, which includes Princess Dolores. (*See Th. 6; Th. 9, Th. 14.*)

What This Means: Princess Dolores and the other Glantrian nobles, will be far from satisfied with the results of the initial

investigation by the constabulary. Some nobles will try to discreetly investigate the matter, if only to ensure that they themselves are not implicated or in danger of any other assassination attempts. A general air of paranoia and distrust pervades among the Glantrians.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs may be hired by Princess Dolores or some prince of Glantri to conduct their own investigation of the matter. Similarly, as Glantrian plots go, the PCs may be hired to foil the investigation by the constabulary or by another group.

Thaumont 8, AC 1017: King James Visits the Parliament.

Location: City of Leominster, Bishopric of Leominster, Kingdom of Bellayne. SC

Description: King James arrives in state at the parliament building not to answer the measure but to bid the House of Lords to cease all the disputing about the Militia Bill and to demand once again more money for the army. (*See Va. 15, Th. 4; Th. 19, Fl. 1.*)

What This Means: James is trying his hand at diplomacy. The lords are definitely the most royalist of the two houses of the parliament and so James is attempting to put pressure where it will be most well received. In the event, the lords take a dim view of the king's snub in not answering the measure as requested by the parliament.

Thaumont 8, AC 1017: Ruling in Underocean Case.

Location: City of Ionace, Ionace Island, Nayce. AS

Description: After deliberating for three hours, the judges in the Allanas vs. Underocean case rule in favor of Allanas. The court orders Baron Torin to appear before it to face criminal charges. The decision is met with favor among a large number of Naycese nobility, while it is met with anger in Underocean.

Anti-Alphatian riots break out in New Smaar, claiming the lives of three Aquan immigrants and causing untold property

damage. King Juliast officially protests the decision and vows to take the matter to the Nayce Council. (*See Va. 10, Va. 19; Th. 11, Th. 19.*)

Thaumont 9, AC 1017: The Mystery Deepens.

Location: City of Glantri, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: The body of Baldewijn de Woens, the prime suspect for the assassination attempt on Princess Dolores Hillsbury of Fenswick, is found floating in the canals around the Cosmopolitan Theatre. This proves that he was not the one who was *disintegrated* by Archduke John Beaumarys-Moorkroft, after the failed attempt on Princess Dolores's life. The constabulary recants the pronouncements of the previous day and proceeds to further investigation. (*See Th. 6, Th. 8; Th. 14, Kl. 17.*)

What This Means: Even as Princess Dolores's newest ally, Signor Antonio di Tarento, Count of Glenargyll and secret leader of the Unseen Hand, assures her that his own assassins were not involved in the attempt, the princess is nonetheless aware that her would-be assassin could be practically anyone.

Thaumont 9, AC 1017: Trade Wars!

Location: Northern Sea of Dread. OW

Description: In reaction to last year's assassination of Lucius Linton and Minrothad's joining with Thyatis, the pirates of the Five Shires step up their activities this year. They raid the trading ships of Minrothad as well as Thyatis, claiming to be operating to avenge their Western Defense League allies. The governments of the league, including the Shires, claim no knowledge of these activities.

In response, the Privateer's Guild of Minrothad and the Thyatian pirates of Terentias and Hattias redouble their own efforts. They begin to cooperate together in raiding the ships of Darokin and the Shires. Merchant ships of all stripes increase their defenses. Thyatian traders make

arrangements when they can to gain the services of Minrothaddan merchant-prince characters when travelling through dangerous waters. (See *Th. 19, Kl. 22.*)

What This Means: The seas of the Sea of Dread continue to get exciting. The pirates of both sides aren't all that choosy when it comes right down to it, either—so any ship can expect to be attacked. The only scruples they normally adhere to are not attacking ships of their own nation or its close allies. Everything else is fair game.

Many of these attacks, though, are not really independent piratical actions—many of these pirates are sponsored and encouraged by mercantile interests of both sides. House Linton covertly backed and funded many of the hin pirates and the guilds of Minrothad and merchant families of Thyatis will do the same with their privateers. Thus, this is more the escalation of trade conflicts than pure piracy. But what else is new?

What the PCs Can Do: Characters can join in the action in many ways—either as pirates, or hired as security by traders, or even drawn into the fray while travelling as passengers.

Thaumont 9, AC 1017: Tyrnae Falls.

Location: City-State of Tyrnae, Meghala Kimata Plains. DV

Description: Mivosian forces, after conducting an intense, brief siege, manage to breach Tyrnae's walls in a number of locations and the heavily-armored warriors of that city-state commence slaughtering of anyone who stands in their way, while pikemen from Syropolis, Parthenaeum, Deletria and other places are force-marched against the defenders. The Tyrnaean soldiers fight bravely, but they are no match for the more disciplined and better-armed Mivosians. The Heldannic infantry, stationed in the central market, are able to bring low more than their share of enemies, but even they soon begin to succumb to increasing numbers of Mivosian archers, who take up positions on conquered portions of the city wall.

The one area where the defenders appear to be holding out, the ceremonial gardens surrounding the palace, is guarded by the elite soldiers of Tyrnae, as well as the Heldannic battle-priests—the latter of whom drive off some of the invaders with judicious applications of *insect plague*, *creeping doom* and *barrier* spells. Even these efforts, however, are not enough; in one terrible moment, over half of the priests are killed in a withering barrage of *fireballs*, while the remainder, wounded from the assault but still able to fight, fall to the blades of the Mivosians, who surged into the gardens following the magical attack.

With the last effective resistance to the Mivosians eliminated, the remainder of the city-state falls in short order, but not before several hundred residents manage to flee in the chaos of looting which is already beginning and head northeast. (See *Va. 28, Th. 4; Th. 17, Th. 26.*)

What This Means: Once word of the defeat reaches Wolfgang Stimmel, he will become very upset about this, the first true loss in the campaign against Mivosia. Not a single Heldannic soldier survived the assault and their Tyrnaean allies also suffered heavy casualties. Though the Mivosians suffered some losses, they will likely be replaced once some of the locals are conscripted, though the loss of roughly 30 Mivosian elite soldiers will not be so easily compensated.

What the PCs Can Do: If they were with the Heldannic forces, the PCs will have enough trouble saving their own lives, let alone escaping the city-state.

Thaumont 10, AC 1017: Adath Flies West.

Location: City of Rethnaris, Empire of Selhomarr. HW

Description: Having spent the better part of four days helping to locate survivors and repairing the *Wayseeker*, which turned out to be in worse shape than expected, Adath prepares to take to the skies. The Alphatians received many gifts from the people of Rethnaris, as well as the personal thanks of Prince Jurannir, ruler of this province.

Today, before they board their ship, all present are told by Jurannir that the *Wayseeker* and its crew are always welcome in Rethnaris. (*See Th. 4, Th. 6; Th. 11, Ya. 17.*)

Thaumont 10, AC 1017: Stampede!

Location: Town of Lothar, Continent of Iciria. HW

Description: After over a cycle of relative calm in the outpost of Lothar, the peace is shattered by a low rumbling noise, almost undetectable at first, but which grows steadily in volume as the moments pass. Within minutes, no one in the walled village is able to ignore what they hear—the unmistakable sound of many animals running! Losing no time, some of the guards rush to the observation towers, in order to determine the source of the disturbance.

From the dense foliage along the northern perimeter emerge dozens of herbivorous dinosaurs, large and small, which trample everything in their path. Fortunately, the beasts skirt Lothar's walls (instead of charging through them) and soon disappear into the hilly forests lying south of the village, their noises gradually receding into silence. (*See Va. 2; Fl. 14, Fl. 21.*)

What This Means: The dinosaurs (primarily brontosaurus, but a few hadrosaurs—such as duck-billed dinosaurs—are present in the herd) were spooked somehow from their normal grazing lands farther to the north. What disturbed them could have been an earthquake, a volcanic eruption, or perhaps Milenian activity; the choice is up to the DM. The dinosaurs will remain in the area for several days, before migrating elsewhere in search of food (the plants growing around Lothar are not their favorite types).

What the PCs Can Do: Investigate the cause of the stampede, which may lead to days of adventuring in the wilderness.

Thaumont 11, AC 1017: Wanted—Dead or Alive!

Location: *Baronía de Narvaez*. SC

Description: *Barón* Hugo of Narvaez makes it known that the government of Narvaez will pay the individual responsible for the capture or confirmed death of the man in black, responsible for the destruction of the *La Oro Sol*, a Narvaezan galleon, the sum of 20,000 *oros* in gold. Patriotic Narvaezans and bounty hunters are soon as thick as fleas in Narvaez and Gargoña—but to no avail, the man in black is nowhere to be found. (*See Th. 2, Th. 4; Fl. 2, Fl. 3.*)

What This Means: 20,000 *oros* is a lot of money for the Narvaezan government. However, it is not as much as the cost of a brand new galleon and Hugo does not want the past performance repeated. Hugo half believes that the man in black will not be caught by bounty hunters and opportunists anyway, but at the very least it will help tighten security in Narvaez with minimal effort.

Thaumont 11, AC 1017: Torenal Site Defense Negotiations Complete.

Location: City of Ionace, Ionace Island, Nayce. AS

Description: Amidst the chaos over the Allanas vs. Underocean ruling, negotiations between Aquas and Underocean over the defense of the Torenal Site are finished. Underocean agrees to match the Aquan troop commitment, but Aquas will have to supply the Underoceaner forces once they reach Torenal. In return, Aquas will contribute resources to the rebuilding of Underocean after the last few years' troubles—if they can build domes they can help Underocean. (*See Th. 2, Th. 8; Ya. 5, Ya. 17.*)

Thaumont 11, AC 1017: Bounty in Celedyl.

Location: Barony of Celedyl, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: The Erendyl immigrants from Wendar arrive in the Barony of Celedyl. The elven outcasts have come to settle in alongside their cousins in the fledgling barony. Baron Qenildor Erewan

warmly greets them and invites their leader Brendian to dine with him and discuss the future of their two peoples. (*See Va. 10, Va. 24.*)

What This Means: The Ellerovyn clan broke off from the Erendyl clan over 300 years ago and now it seems as if they may have come full circle. Both groups have suffered much hardship in the centuries since their separation and have finally ended up in a position where they can help one another and perhaps allow the clan to return to its full strength. Brendian brought the remnants of her clan to Celedyl, rather than remain in Erewan, so as not to come into conflict with Carlotina. The younger Qenildor is more interested in running his barony and countering the threat of the humanoids than in ruling a clan, so he and Brendian can complement one another. Additionally, the increased population and support he gets from the new members of his realm will help him greatly in his efforts. As soon as the trade route through Celedyl to Darokin is complete, Qenildor's new realm will be well on its way to prosperity.

Thaumont 11, AC 1017: *Wayseeker* Reaches Sea of Rax.

Location: Sea of Rax, west of Selhomarrian coast. HW

Description: The western coasts of Selhomarr recede into the distance and nothing is visible down below except the calm waves of the Sea of Rax. Knowing that they are on the final leg of their expedition, many of the crewmembers begin to look forward to going home. (*See Th. 6, Th. 10; Ya. 17.*)

Thaumont 12, AC 1017: *Agricultural Manual* Distributed.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: A primer on advanced farming techniques is published and distributed to agricultural communities in the Thyatian mainland. Scholars at the imperial academy in the City of Thyatis and

members of the imperial hospitaliers jointly wrote it. It contains information on the best of known agricultural techniques throughout Mystara. New rotation systems, crop alternating and the like are encouraged. Simultaneously, the imperial hospitaliers announce a new initiative—they will work to coordinate and expand the magical *blessing* of fields and research spells (similar to the spell *fertilize*) aimed at improving agricultural bounty throughout Thyatis. *Plant growth* and even *animal growth* will also be used where appropriate, at least on a limited scale.

What This Means: Many farmers will be reluctant to take advice from people they see as ivory-tower academics who don't know the difference between a plow and a scythe. This is partly overcome by the fact that the agricultural manual is distributed first to parish priests in each village. Many of these serve agriculture-oriented Immortals and in any case the locals are used to taking advice from their local cleric. Improved methods, along with the expanded use of spells to improve yields (and preserve crops from spoilage) will spread throughout Thyatis. This measure is aimed at preventing future famines. This event demonstrates that the Order of the Imperial Hospitaliers also continues to increase in size and influence.

This was spurred by the fact that it is increasingly difficult to recruit colonists. Most residents of Thyatis do not wish to leave for an overseas colony—they are content in Thyatis, especially now that the worst of the Era of Crisis appears to be over. Though some of the recently-freed slaves may do so eventually, once their period of indenture is over, there will still be a large number of people in the heartland of Thyatis. Therefore, increasing productivity at home has become another means of solving the problem. Colonization will still continue, of course.

What the PCs Can Do: Green Acres is the place to be—Farm livin' is the life for me. Keep Thyatis, just gimme that country sky.

Thaumont 12, AC 1017: Trouble on the Wesel.

Location: Northeast of City of Landfall, Territory of Heldland, Heldannic Empire. NW

Description: News spreads quickly of a series of particularly brutal raids on newly-established homesteads in the forests northeast of Landfall, along the Wesel River. Though the actual fatalities are not excessive, the aftermath of these attacks—burnt homes, slaughtered livestock and the charred bodies of those who could not escape—serve as ample fodder for rumors and tall tales. As a result, over 200 settlers flee for the comparative safety of Landfall today and alert the authorities. (*See Th. 26.*)

What This Means: The recent attacks were carried out by a local tribe of orcs, who are trying to drive away the humans who have been encroaching steadily upon their habitat. They hope that, if enough homesteads are destroyed, the Wesel River valley will be left alone. As settlement continues across Heldland, similar responses by nearby humanoid tribes can be expected.

What the PCs Can Do: This is a perfect opportunity for up-and-coming local adventurers to make a name for themselves, or for those on the road to undertake a little side trek. The orcs are reasonably well armed and armored and have a well-defended stronghold deep in the forests to the west of the Wesel River—they should be challenging opponents for low- to mid-level parties, but not impossible to defeat. If the adventurers are successful in clearing out the orcs, the lands around the Wesel River will be resettled quickly and the PCs themselves will earn the gratitude of the locals.

Thaumont 12, AC 1017: Truly the Master of the Desert Nomads.

Location: The Sanctified Lands and Monzag *Banat*, Hulean Empire. WB

Description: The nomads wandering in the Dark Wood have been regularly visited by Hulean priests, who brought food and supplies and gradually taught them the dogma of Bozdogan. Today, the priests tell

the nomads that the Master has generously allowed them to settle the bountiful lands to the north, in Monzag. The only thing the nomads have to do is to drive out or enslave the rebels who are currently occupying those lands. After some deliberation, most of the nomads agree to take this land. (*See Nu. 1, Nu. 26; Sv. 1.*)

What This Means: The nomads will provide yet another reinforcement to the Antasynian offensive in Monzag. Those of them who leave Hule will go back home, bearing word of the Master's generosity and kindness.

Thaumont 13, AC 1017: Twaelar Swarm Mora.

Location: Village of Mora, Isle of Dread, Thanegioth Archipelago, Sea of Dread. OW

Description: In the middle of the night swarms of Twaelar Merrow creep onto the shore near the village of Mora, where the Thyatians set up a base for their operations against the Twaelar last year. They are using special air breathing magics and means of moving to help them operate on land. Several guards give the alarm, but the defenders are slow in reacting. Soon the Twaelar have overrun much of the base and scattered the surviving defenders, who flee into the island. The Twaelar then begin destroying as much of the facility as possible.

By dawn the defenders have regrouped some and have been reinforced with troops and warriors from the other villages. They counter-attack to retake the town. The Twaelar put up only slight resistance, skirmishing as they withdraw back into the sea. Much of Mora is in shambles and efforts are begun to rebuild it. (*See Va. 25; Ya. 16, Fy. 10.*)

What This Means: Just as the Thyatians decided the best way to defeat the Twaelar would be to strike at their undersea bases, the Twaelar have decided the best way to win the war would be to strike at the landlubber's bases. To do this they had to develop means of fighting on land, high-priced enchantments for the most part. The

war is becoming increasingly costly and bloody, but the Twaelar now hope they are close to final victory.

The Twaelar achieved their objective, which wasn't to conquer and hold the village but simply to do as much damage as possible to the Thyatians based there. Then they withdrew as planned. It will be some weeks before Mora is rebuilt.

What the PCs Can Do: If the characters happen to be in the area on the Isle of Dread, they can help repulse the Twaelar.

Thaumont 13, AC 1017: March of Shame.

Location: City of Helskir, Dominion of Helskir, Heldannic Empire, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: The cityfolk of Helskir are commanded by town criers early this morning to assemble along the main street of the city by 10 o'clock. Hours later, as the milling crowds gather nervously, wondering what the Heldannic administration wishes of them, they are surprised to see the south gates open and, amid martial music, a long column files into the city. The lead soldiers, bearing the banners of Anna's regiment, call out the cadence as over 1,000 Heldannic soldiers march up the street towards the harbor. Behind them, bound in chains and plodding dejectedly, row upon row of captured Heldunian soldiers—over 800 in all—to the shocked expressions of the cityfolk. Once the captured troops are marched into the large market square, the town criers read out the proclamation of Anna von Hendriks.

“To the people of Helskir: the triumphant Knights of Vanya have met and crushed, resistance to our rule of Two-Forks Ridge 11 days past. These men before you fought well, but failed; thus they were spared for their bravery. Do not repeat their mistake, lest you join them in bondage. These prisoners will be treated well, so long as the people of this city do not oppose, or otherwise impede, the rulership that has been granted to them in right of Her Most Gracious Lady. That is all.”

With that, the prisoners are marched southwards once more and outside of the city proper. (*See Va. 20, Th. 2; Th. 15, Th. 15.*)

What This Means: Anna decided that a show of strength would be useful in order to drive the point home to her subjects that resistance is useless, but also that loyalty would not go unrewarded. Those families who have one or more relatives captured in battle will likely think twice before opposing Heldannic rule openly.

Thaumont 14, AC 1017: Griffon vs. Griffon.

Location: City of Mirros, Kingdom of Karameikos. OW

Description: A heated debate between members of the Order of the Griffon in Mirros turns violent, as pro-Oderbry members duke it out with pro-Halaran members. The violence is contained and does not spread outside the order's quarters, but word nevertheless makes it to the street. Several members defect to join Oderbry's terrorist squad. (*See Va. 19, Th. 2; Fl. 6, Ya. 23.*)

What This Means: Not everyone immediately joined Oderbry's faction, but the tensions between Traladarans and Thyatians has begun to heat their blood. Simple disputes over religious issues can get very heated, as happened here. Oderbry has now gained several more followers to his cause and the rumors of infighting within the church will only strengthen the tension in the streets of Mirros.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are clever enough, the PCs could use this confrontation as an opportunity to infiltrate Oderbry's faction and draw him out of hiding. Perhaps they even staged this themselves, allowing agents of Oderbry's who hear of the incident to compel them to join the cause?

Thaumont 14, AC 1017: A Mystery Left Unsolved.

Location: City of Glantri, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: One week after the discovery of the body of Baldewijn de Woens, the prime suspect for the assassination attempt on Princess Dolores Hillsbury at the Cosmopolitan Theatre, the constabulary announces the findings that Baldewijn de Woens was murdered by strangulation. (*See Th. 8, Th. 9; Kl. 17, Am. 1.*)

What This Means: The Glantrian Constabulary has exhausted all its means, both magical and mundane, in solving the assassination attempt on Princess Dolores Hillsbury and has come up with very little. The constabulary considers this the end of the case, but Princess Dolores is only beginning to plot her vengeance against her enemies, perceived or otherwise.

Thaumont 14, AC 1017: Dig This Crazy Beach, Must Be Low Tide.

Location: City of Bluenose, Kingdom of Arogansa, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: The majority of the city's business owners meet to discuss the future of the tourist trade. With the sinking, Bluenose and other coastal resort communities lost their primary attractions. Their respective businesses are failing and many fear total financial ruin unless the tourists can be drawn back in. Though numerous approaches are offered none are accepted.

One business owner, Jhadix, requests to be heard. A mediocre merchant who was known to dabble in everything from courtesans to decorative chamber pots, few expect his opinions to be of any worth. However, most see no resolution in any of their fellows' ideas nor do they think that anything he says will hurt. Plus, a few see the potential to vent their frustrations upon him as he offers his presumed "ludicrous and amateurish ideas."

Jhadix inquires as to what Bluenose was known for. A few mutter that the beaches and oceans drew in the crowds. With that, Jhadix smiles and asserts a few little notes to think about. First, though the tourists came to Bluenose for the beaches he sorely doubts

that they spent all of their free time on them. They had to eat. They had to sleep. Life's necessities aside, the real financial draw came from the various entertainments that the tourists always turned to when the beaches had worn out their appeal or night's veil had fallen.

As if on cue, Jhadix notes that a few of the assembled businessmen see where he is going. Before anyone can interrupt him, he states that they only need to refocus their attention onto these entertainments. They have to draw the tourists in with their entertainments. Jhadix proposes that they organize and promote a Bluenose Festival where tourists will be pampered and live to the extremes of the aristocratic lifestyle; do things that mainstream society would frown upon.

Several business owners suggest that they also cater to the mundane classes as that opens up even more potential for revenue. Jhadix disagrees, citing that that would undermine the carefree and elitist attitude that should and has prevailed in Bluenose. He adds that the aristocrats are the ones to target as they have the funds and the power to offer the most to the kingdom. Bluenose should be the place where Alphatia's elite go to have fun.

After a brief discussion, the business owners agree that Jhadix's plan should be adopted. They decide to use the week of Kaldmont 15 to stage their little extravaganza under the guise of celebrating Closing Day. To them this seems very appropriate and financially lucrative as it opens up a bevy of new and young mages to celebrate their graduation. With that the business owners depart to prepare their establishments. Many are already contemplating enhancements to their businesses to increase their marketability. (*See Am. 2, Am. 23.*)

What the PCs Can Do: PCs may find themselves involved in this venture on many fronts. They may be hired to acquire exotic items and creatures for various entertainments. They may find themselves hired by tourists to act as armed escorts. The

business owners wishing to bolster security for the festivities may also hire them. Likewise the business owners may hire the PCs to participate in their attractions by recounting adventures and heroic deeds. Or aristocratic PCs may go to Bluenose to partake in the festivities. Either way, with all of the mages running about and being encouraged to live on the wild side, there is bound to be a good deal of trouble to address.

Thaumont 14, AC 1017: The Rivers Shall Run Red, but the Fires Burn Forevermore.

Location: North of Dominion of Vanya's Rest, Aryptian Savannah, Heldannic Empire. DV

Description: Heldannic outriders come across a small camp of Meghaddaran hunters, sheltering in a narrow river valley, while scouting the savannah north of Vanya's Rest. Not wishing to lose time in alerting their companions marching behind them, the knights fall upon the Meghaddara and manage to take them by surprise. The skirmish is quick, but brutal; many hunters are peppered with crossbow bolts where they sit, while those who do manage to ready weapons are ridden down. In the end, most of the Meghaddara lie dead, save for a handful, disarmed and bound, who are to be interrogated.

From the subsequent interrogation, the knights learn of the existence of a small Meghaddaran village, not far north of their current location, which lies at the joining of two rivers. After dispatching the prisoners, the knights march swiftly northwards, where they stage a raid, with the cavalry riding from the northwest and the foot soldiers marching from the south. Meghaddaran scouts soon become aware of the Heldannic infantry and alert the village militia in order to stage an effective counterattack. Soon, the village's defenders become embroiled in a nasty melee, in which, although they fight ferociously and are well armed (with short thrusting spears and throwing axes), they are unable to withstand the concerted Heldannic

assault. Soon, the Meghaddara stage an organized retreat, falling back to more defensible positions, where they can hurl spears at their enemies and where they can lure their opponents into such traps as concealed pits and snares.

With the Heldannic assault becoming bogged down around the outskirts of the village and with the invaders beginning to suffer casualties of their own, it soon appears as though the Meghaddara will win the day, but then disaster strikes. Alert scouts watching the defenders' flanks and rear raise an alarm—horsemen approach! The outcome is as bloody as it is predictable; preoccupied with holding off the soldiers attacking from the south, the Meghaddara are too few to hold back the Heldannic cavalry, which, though small in number, manages to inflict a heavy toll. By the end of the day, the village has been razed and those Meghaddara who could not escape, or did not surrender, are killed. (*See Th. 3; Fl. 9, Fl. 17.*)

What This Means: This sort of encounter is likely to be repeated several times over the coming weeks, as Heldannic forces try to secure a broad swath of territory surrounding Vanya's Rest, both to provide a buffer zone for their colony, as well as colonize those regions deemed suitable for agriculture. Heinz Kronenburg has given each detachment's commander broad authority to do whatever is necessary to pacify the lands in question; as long as Heldannic control is extended successfully, all else is secondary. Some detachments will accomplish their missions through obtaining the surrender of those Meghaddara living in the territories, but many, seeing the plains people as more of an obstacle than anything else, will try to destroy them utterly. Those Meghaddara who surrender, or are captured, will be sent to Vanya's Rest, where they will be imprisoned until their fate is decided.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are with the Heldannic Knights, they may, depending on their own alignments and moral codes, try to persuade their commanders to spare as many prisoners as possible, or otherwise try to prevent

senseless slaughter. If they do so, they will be remembered by the Meghaddara—even if the PCs do not succeed. Alternatively, Meghaddaran PCs, or those allied with them, could try to slow down, or even reverse, the Heldannic advance. They could do so by ambushing scouts, warning villagers so that they can prepare better defenses or flee the area, or by using their skills (if they are of higher level) to lead effective counterattacks.

Third Week

Thaumont 15, AC 1017: Bad News from Freiburg.

Location: City of Helskir, Dominion of Helskir, Heldannic Empire, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: While pondering the latest updates to the strategic situation in the northern Isle of Dawn, *Ordensgeneral* Anna von Hendriks is approached by a messenger, bearing a note from the leadership in Freiburg. Dismissing the messenger and her advisors, Anna reads the encrypted note silently. Shocked at its contents, she reads them again, to be sure that what she sees is what is actually written. After several moments of stunned silence, Anna steels her nerve and summons her advisors, telling them that there is a great deal of work to do; no further assistance is forthcoming from the Heldannic Territories. (*See Th. 2, Th. 13; Th. 15, Th. 16.*)

What This Means: Information concerning resistance activities, including Thyatian forces based in northern Westrourke, has been making its way to Anna for several days now. Although no serious opposition has been faced since the battle at Two-Forks Ridge, the Heldannic leadership in Helskir is well aware of the fact that they would be at a numerical and logistical disadvantage should full-scale war erupt in the northern Isle of Dawn. As a result, a secret message was sent to Freiburg, asking for more reinforcements in order to ensure that Helskir is not lost.

Unfortunately for her, the response (which bears Wulf von Klagendorf's seal) cites security concerns in northern Heldland and in the region surrounding Vanya's Rest in Davania, as having highest priority at the moment. As such, no reinforcements will be made available for the time being. Being no fool, Anna realizes that she will be forced to utilize what she has now to best effect.

Thaumont 15, AC 1017: Ties Severed with Heldann.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Emperor Eusebius makes an announcement, to the effect that, in response to the unprovoked aggressive acts conducted by the Heldannic Knights in the imperial territory of Heldun, all Thyatian diplomatic and economic ties with the Heldannic Territories will be severed immediately and all diplomatic staff will be recalled. (*See Th. 13, Th. 15; Th. 16, Th. 17.*)

What This Means: This is a political move on the part of Eusebius to distance himself from the current regime governing the Heldannic Territories, with which his empire has been allied in the past. Also, the recent Heldannic victory at Two-Forks Ridge, in which Thyatian troops—albeit reformatory cohorts—had been defeated, required a response. Thus, Eusebius is seen by his opponents to be doing something, while seizing the moral high ground in the process.

Not insignificant in this proclamation is that fact that all Thyatian funding that originally went towards the Heldannic Church of Vanya will instead be redirected towards its Thyatian counterpart and much of this money will be used to rebuild its affiliated fighting orders.

Thaumont 15, AC 1017: Elves Find Sanctuary.

Location: Enoreth Shrine, Forest of Geffron, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: The elves reach Enoreth Shrine deep in the western part of Geffron

and they decide to settle here because of the place's friendly aura and magical defenses against the forces of evil. They proceed to build fortifications both on the trees surrounding the glade and below ground. (See *Tb. 6; Fe. 10, Fe. 18.*)

What This Means: The elven crusaders have chosen a new site from which to launch their forays against the Shadow Army patrolling Geffron. Their goal is to weaken the Shadow Lord's control over the forest and to wear out his troops, while the undead army of Sylarion is left to deal with the Denagothians garrisoning Drax Tallen. The elves also intend to investigate on the tunnels found beneath the Great Forest of Geffron and to use them to their advantage.

Thaumont 16, AC 1017: A Daring Robbery.

Location: City of Corisa, Milenian Empire. HW

Description: There is a large degree of excitement amongst the estates of the city as the city guard can be seen hustling through the streets around the home of Halcion, a minor government administrator. It quickly becomes apparent that Halcion's estate has been burgled, while he and his wife were away at a party. The thief sneaked by most of the house's slaves and servants. One of them stumbled into a room he was in and was incapacitated and tied up, but he has recollection of what the robber looked like. Found missing are several examples of jewelry, some miscellaneous currency and an ornamental sword. The only clue found is a strange message scrawled upon the top of a chest, which had held the jewelry. The message reads "another daring exploit of The Fox." Halcion's wife, Dyonesis, is particularly upset at the intrusion even though the items taken are seen as minor. (See *Nu. 3; Fl. 4, Kl. 5.*)

What This Means: The robbery is a cover for the investigation into the Matera conspiracy. The robber is an agent hired by General Tythus. The estate gained his attention as Dyonesis had been often seen conversing with Sephone and other

suspected conspirators. Dyonesis has every right to be upset as several additional items are missing, items she did not inform the guard of. These items are paraphernalia associated with the Order of Matera, items not typical of your standard midwife, which is doubly odd, as she is not a known midwife. However, the most important item taken is Dyonesis's personal journal, which does have some sensitive writings on the order. The brash message having "The Fox" taking credit for the robbery is a farce; there is no thief known as The Fox.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs may find themselves involved in the intrusion. Likewise, they may find themselves hired to track down "The Fox" to gain some revenge and peace of mind for his beloved Dyonesis. This plot could draw the PCs into the investigation. Perhaps one of the PCs is accused of being The Fox.

Thaumont 16, AC 1017: An Offer Is Made.

Location: City of Helskir, Dominion of Helskir, Heldannic Empire, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: Early this morning, the Heldunian prisoners of war are gathered outside the southern gate of Helskir, under the watchful eye of their captors. As they mill about with uncertainty, *Ordensgeneral* Anna von Hendriks arises atop the parapet and addresses them. She offers the prisoners a choice: they may regain their freedom if they choose to fight honorably for the Heldannic Order in the weeks and months ahead, perhaps even gaining land in Heldann if they prove exceptionally loyal; or they may remain in bondage and be put to work building new fortifications and repairing existing ones. She gives them one hour to decide.

Once the appointed time arrives, knights are dispersed throughout the crowd, segregating those who have opted to serve the knights from those who have not. The men and women who decided to serve the knights are marched into Helskir, while the

remainder are guided back to their camps. (See *Tb. 15*, *Tb. 15*; *Tb. 17*, *Tb. 20*.)

What This Means: Anna recognizes that, in the absence of any reinforcements, she needs to bolster her own forces in the near future. She knows that she is taking a big risk by providing arms to some of her enemies, but she and her advisors felt that offering freedom might be sufficient to sway the more pragmatic individuals to the Heldannic cause. Whether or not the Heldannic Order will actually provide those Helskirans who fight honorably and loyally with land is a moot point; the chance that it might happen may be enough to sway those who remain indecisive.

Thaumont 16, AC 1017: Flames in Qeodhar.

Location: Village of Ephanir, Kingdom of Qeodhar, Nayce. AS

Description: The village of Ephanir, which is located in a hilly region of southeastern Qeodhar, is encircled by an Antalian force of roughly 200 men. Its leader, an imposing woman named Olvi, orders the inhabitants to leave the village and head westwards, for the village was to be claimed by the Antalian people of Qeodhar as part of their rightful heritage. Many of the 120 inhabitants, some of whom are retired soldiers and adventurers, loudly refuse to do so, saying they would sooner die than abandon their homes. With a muttered, “So be it,” Olvi orders her warriors to attack the village.

Expecting the villagers to scatter under the assault, the Antalians are surprised to see groups of disciplined fighters among the defenders, who use their knowledge to guide their less-experienced comrades. Many raiders fall under skillfully wielded swords and axes and peasants armed with pitchforks and long poles manage to blunt the edge of the Antalian spike. Hurriedly, Olvi orders her men to regroup and concentrate their efforts on outlying defenders. She also orders her few archers to focus their fire on those enemies who appear to be veteran fighters, though this latter strategy falls far

of its mark—many peasants are killed instead.

Despite the best efforts of the defenders, however, the odds are against them. Not only are they outnumbered; the Antalians have surrounded Ephanir and before long the surviving villagers are forced to retreat to the village hall, while pillars of flame erupt from outlying buildings already being looted by the Antalians. This last attempt to hold off the attackers lasts but one hour, before Olvi’s raiders storm the building, slaughtering the inhabitants. Once the day is done, Ephanir is firmly in Antalian hands, but the cost was heavy—30 dead and 20 injured. (See *Va. 15*, *Va. 27*; *Ya. 4*, *Fy. 9*.)

What This Means: Several villages have been conquered in much the same manner as Olmshaven, with hardly a casualty to report. Unfortunately for the Antalians, this earlier fortune was purely luck. Now, they are pressing inland, towards the more densely populated regions of Qeodhar. Here, they will find the populace to be more resolute. Also, word of their campaign has already reached Norlan, who has seen to it that larger settlements will be well garrisoned and that troops are well trained.

In staging her attack in this manner, Olvi has also shown that, in many ways, the Antalians are no better in their tactics than the enemies they loathe so much.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are traveling with Olvi’s group, they might try to find a way to spare some of the populace. This would be difficult, as many of the attackers are thirsting for revenge. If they are siding with Norlan and happen to be in the area, they can try to alter the outcome of the battle somewhat. They will likely not be able to save the village, but they might be able to hold off the Antalians long enough to allow some villagers to escape.

Thaumont 17, AC 1017: Bolstered Defenses for Helskir.

Location: City of Helskir, Dominion of Helskir, Heldannic Empire, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: Early today, a large group of prisoners of war are put to work outside Helskir's walls, digging trenches and hauling stone from nearby quarries, all under the supervision of watchful Heldannic Knights. (See *Th. 15, Th. 16; Th. 17, Th. 20.*)

What This Means: Though a few prisoners (primarily mercenaries) have been re-hired by the knights to make up partially for their own losses, the bulk of the remainder are being put to work—by building a new series of fortifications outside Helskir's city walls. An outer wall will be constructed at a distance of 200 feet from the current walls and beyond that will be a series of stake-filled trenches. The empty space between these two walls will serve initially as a killing field for those invaders who manage to breach the outer defenses, though even now some senior knights are proposing that the land might be set aside for colonists in the future. Clearly, the knights plan to stay in Helskir for a long time.

Thaumont 17, AC 1017: The Enemy at the Door.

Location: Town of Polakatsikes, Dominion of Polakatsikes, Heldannic Empire, Meghala Kimata Plains. DV

Description: The long-dreaded day finally arrives; the Mivosian army closes in on Polakatsikes and soon is catapulted into confusion when advance scouts fall victim to an assortment of traps surrounding the town's walls! As the Mivosians come to grips with this unexpected development, their forces are literally knocked off their feet with well-placed applications of the *earthquake* spell. Suffering from the compounded effects of these unpleasant surprises, the Mivosians closest to the walls are cut down by withering crossbow fire, while the remainder, fearing a sortie by the defenders, quickly withdraw to ponder their next move. (See *Th. 4, Th. 9; Th. 26, Fl. 2.*)

What This Means: The long-awaited arrival of the Mivosians has finally come to pass and Wolfgang Stemmel's expectations have already been exceeded. The assorted

traps took the invaders completely by surprise and the *earthquakes* sowed such chaos that his crossbowmen were able to fire away with relative impunity. Nevertheless, Wolfgang is aware that, with a much-reduced garrison (due to the fall of Tyrnae), his forces cannot afford to take undue risks; they will have to either somehow dissuade the Mivosians from continuing their campaign, or find ways to exploit their weaknesses.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are with the Heldannic forces, the PCs may play a pivotal role here if they have either fought the Mivosians before, or if they have helped break a siege before. Wolfgang will certainly appreciate any good advice the PCs have to give and if they have a workable plan (that is, one that would not endanger too many of his soldiers' lives), he will be more than willing to provide them with whatever resources he has at his disposal. If they are with the Mivosians, the PCs may be given the task of trying to find a way inside Polakatsikes.

Thaumont 17, AC 1017: Raid on Trollheim.

Location: Hamlet of Hornford, Trollheim Hills, Kingdom of Vestland. OW

Description: Bortak raiders from Ethengar descend upon the fortified hamlet of Hornford. The Vestlanders put up a fierce struggle, but are forced to retreat into the hills. When they return to their village a few days later, it has been nearly razed to the ground and pillaged. The settlers face a serious setback.

What This Means: Hornford is one of the newest settlements to arise from the reinstatement of the Homesteading Acts by the king of Vestland. They have been doing well in their attempt to carve out a place in the Trollheim Hills, able to fend off even goblinoid raiders until now. The more organized Ethengar horsemen have proven too much for them, however. The Bortak nomads will go home with ample booty for the winter.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs have dominions in the Trollheim areas, they may be the ones under attack. Otherwise, they may be hired by Vestlandic lords to help protect their wilderness domains from Ethengar raids.

Thaumont 17, AC 1017: Thyatian Expedition Docks in Jaibul.

Location: City of Jaibul, *Mumlyket* of Jaibul. OW

Description: The joint Minrothaddan-Thyatian western trade mission docks in Jaibul to fill their holds with provisions before continuing on. Thyatian envoys have a brief meeting with representatives of the black rajah, but nothing significant is announced. (*See Va. 25; Fl. 1, Fl. 8.*)

What This Means: This is a normal event, but does have some hidden future consequences. Jaibul is heavily involved in the slave trade and Thyatis remains one of the few areas where they can sell slaves openly. The Thyatians see Darokin gaining increasing influence in the Sind region and are looking for contacts in the area in order to maintain a balance of power in the region (namely, a balance of Thyatian power). Nothing was formalized with Jaibul at this time and Jaibul remains aligned with Hule, but surreptitious negotiations will continue over the following months and Thyatis is an important market for Jaibul, one they cannot afford to lose.

What the PCs Can Do: If the characters are part of the exploratory flotilla, the DM can throw an adventure or two at them while in Jaibul. The ships are in town for two or three days, plenty long enough for characters to get into trouble.

Thaumont 17, AC 1017: The Loss of The Daeren Cattera.

Location: City of Blueside, Kingdom of Lagrius, Continent of Bellissaria, Nayce. AS

Description: For the renowned merchant Dreximar, the day brings a bit of bad news: a merchant vessel, the Daeren Cattera has been long overdue and wreckage has been

found out off the Notrion Coast. Dreximar has a sizable investment in the cargo the ship was carrying and is openly upset at the financial loss. Dreximar blames the loss on the undead and in a very public display vows to do whatever he can to insure that similar losses are not repeated. He even goes as far as to make a public donation to the families of those sailors that lost live in Blueside.

What This Means: Dreximar did indeed have a rather sizable investment in the cargo aboard the Daeren Cattera, however it won't bankrupt him. His real loss is in prestige in the eyes of the Blueside populace. Whether it is magic, mercantilism, or yachting he is very self-conscious about his prominence within Blueside and how such matters build up his social standing. Hence, his rather showy demonstration and donations. As a sailing enthusiast and a merchant, he does have some sympathies for those lost. Likewise the captain and owner of the Daeren Cattera, Fregdist, was a friend and long-standing business associate. However, Dreximar is also aware that such dangers are to be expected in such pursuits; he himself has had his brushes with mortality. He does believe that the undead were involved and probably will take action or lobby heavily for Naycese assistance.

The truth surrounding the loss of the Daeren Cattera is not what it appears to be. The vessel's sinking is more a product of human greed than undead attack. Fregdist was a businessman, whose fortune rested upon his ability to ferry cargo. The Daeren Cattera was not a large craft, therefore its owner had to run it wisely to remain competitive and make a profit. Though he had hired out his craft to Dreximar, he had also taken on some added cargo. The vessel was too heavily laden and floundered in the surf as it tried to navigate into the mouth of the Lagrius River for its final leg into Lake Lagrius. That the craft made it that far is a testament to the abilities of the captain and crew.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs may become hired, either by Dreximar or family members of those lost, to investigate the matter. They may even be hired to try to

salvage the cargo and discover what really transpired. For those that worked for Dreximar in AC 1016 their usefulness will already be known to him.

Thaumont 17, AC 1017: Teng Lin-Dieu Starts Investigations.

Location: City of Beitung, *Exarchate* of Ochalea, Thyatian Empire. SD

Description: Teng Lin-Dieu always considered himself as much Thyatian as Ochalean. Thus, over the years, as he looked back on things, he became increasingly puzzled by his decision to secede from Thyatis during the Great War. He thought at first that it might have been at the encouragement of Koryis, his patron Immortal and an arbiter of peaceful ways. However, upon *communion* with Koryis, he learned this was not the case. During a discussion with Nurokidu Nuar, he learned that the king of the Pearl Islands was puzzled, too. Nuar's own *communions* with Korotiku revealed that his patron had no particular wishes in the matter of the secession. Both rulers were at a loss over what had happened and the difficulty to interpret the will of their Immortals.

Teng Lin-Dieu is interested in uncovering the truth, not only for the sake of understanding, but also to insure that he has control over his country. He thus charges his officials with a deeper investigation into the matter. Things seem to have started with what in retrospect seems to be a small but vocal and highly visible number of agitators who exercised influence all out of proportion of their actual numbers. The Ochalean investigators' first suspect that they were instigated by Alphatian agents and they want to make sure that the nation is free of Alphatian infiltrators.

At the same time, due to Ochalea's natural interest in theological matters, Teng Lin-Dieu decides to send a deputation to meet with the followers of Gareth, in Sind. Teng Lin-Dieu is not considering converting, but he is very intrigued by the teachings of that Immortal and wants to keep Ochalea at the cutting edge of the study of Immortals, as it

traditionally has been. The team he sends is under orders to meet with the followers of Gareth, learn their teachings and hopefully to return to Ochalea with one of their clerics. (*See Kl. 17.*)

What This Means: The Ochaleans are wary of the possibility that Alphatian agents were partially responsible for the independence unrest and want to make sure their country isn't under the influence of Alphatian infiltrators. However, as the investigation proceeds, they will discover that the Alphatian Empire was not directly involved and things happened for very different reasons than they first believed.

The deputation will also help Ochalea stay in the forefront of the study of theological matters, but also will coincidentally and unintentionally come into play with the investigation of the agitators.

What the PCs Can Do: Characters might be sent as part of the deputation to travel to Sind, or they might be hired to guard its members. They might also be among those investigating the agitation that led to the Ochalea and the Pearl Islands declarations of independence, which may lead them to uncover some of the deepest secrets of the Great War and into the plots of the Immortals.

Thaumont 17, AC 1017: Undying Secret.

Location: Idris Tower, Forest of Lothenar, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: Dove is pleased to receive word that his release is due in the next few weeks and that he will resume traveling through Denagoth to write his essays on behalf of the high priestess. When the rat-messenger of Vespene reaches him and he tells him the news, Vespene (always in grim mood) decides to reveal another secret to the archaeologist. He tells him not to trust the high priestess's word, because she is not what she appears to be. When Dove presses him hard with questions, Vespene only adds that he has gathered evidence that the high priestess is not a living being anymore and that she is far more powerful than what she

lets the others think. Dove then asks him what is the link that binds the Shadow Lord (also a powerful necromancer) to her, but Vespen is unable to respond and the communication abruptly ends. (*See Nu. 10, Va. 14; Th. 28, Fl. 15.*)

What This Means: Vespen's information concerning the high priestess's real nature is unsettling for Dove, especially because he has never suspected the woman being anything but human (he met her twice in the last year and she always seemed perfectly normal at first sight). If this is true, then maybe the Shadow Lord is not the tip of the iceberg and the archaeologist suspects there are far more secrets he must discover before grasping the whole truth about the real situation in Denagoth.

Thaumont 19, AC 1017: Trade Frictions Escalate

Location: Customs Frontiers throughout the Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: In reaction to the increase of piratical attacks against its merchants and the suspicions revolving around House al-Azrad, the Thyatian government starts holding up trade caravans and ships of Western Defense League nations entering Thyatian ports and borders. The imperial customs officials inspect every crate and mule, rather than spot-checking them and even turn down the usual "gifts" that used to smooth things along (bribes). League merchants, especially Darokinian ones, find themselves at the end of the line for inspections, as Thyatian and Minrothaddan traders are given priority, as well as not being hassled nearly as much. Inspectors who turn up violations of Thyatian trade laws and regulations are imposing unusually severe punishments and fines on the league merchants. The Western Defense League merchants find it hard to complain, because the Thyatian officials aren't breaking any laws—they are just enforcing them so strictly that it is imposing a severe burden on the traders. Since in trade time is money, even the delays are costly. Some customs officials do, with more grudging resistance

than usual, accept the bribes, but they demand more than usual and do not offer as much in exchange, making it less effectual an option than it would normally be.

Karameikan merchants seem to be the only league traders who don't face this problem—or at least not to the same degree. Their customs inspections are slightly longer than they used to be, but not inordinately so. And they don't face unusually stiff penalties if caught in violation.

In Tel Akbir, House al-Azrad's properties are actually seized in a forfeiture decision, much as those of some Thyatian rebels who lost properties in the aftermath of the Crown War. The merchants found to be involved in the conspiracy, including Akir al-Sudif, are ostentatiously pardoned for any acts of espionage and sedition they committed, but expelled from Thyatis and told never to return. Eusebius claims this is a magnanimous and merciful decision, but the Darokinians protest the confiscation. The Thyatians hold out the possibility that the confiscated properties might be returned, depending on the ultimate outcome of their investigation. (*See Th. 9; Fl. 7, Kl. 22.*)

What This Means: In Darokin the saying is "he who has the gold makes the rules." In Thyatis the saying is "he who makes the rules wins the gold." The Thyatians are manipulating the rules to gain the upper hand. The Western Defense League nations will respond in kind to this sort of interference, as trade frictions continue to spiral out of control. The better treatment of tradesmen from Karameikos is part of Eusebius's other current scheme, intended to help improve relations with that nation and, if possible, weaken its ties to the Western Defense League and Nayce. Fellow league members will be suspicious as to why the Karameikans are being treated better. This aspect probably will not work very well, though, because the league nations are pretty tight-knit and any misunderstandings or confusions will eventually be worked through discussing the matter among themselves.

The imperial government has put this policy in the strongest possible terms in its orders to its officials and it is implemented with great efficiency. Most of the worst corrupt officials have been eliminated in previous purges, while others have seen what happened to those and thus have mended their ways. Thus the affected merchants have trouble even bribing the officials to smooth things over. Patriotic and civic-spirited ones participate in the zeal strike with gusto and enthusiasm and that example discourages others from accepting bribes. Nor do the zealous ones allow their fellows to get away with bribery in this instance without turning them in. A number of customs officers discovered accepting bribes are very publicly fired at this time and tried on charges of corruption for emphasis, discouraging others from succumbing to temptation without an unusually high bribe being offered.

What the PCs Can Do: Characters who conduct trade (or anything resembling it) and who are tied to either side of the conflict will find themselves facing an unusual level of resistance and discriminatory practices when trading with the other side in the conflict.

Thaumont 19, AC 1017: Secret Parliamentary Council Formed.

Location: City of Norchester, Earldom of Penwick, Kingdom of Bellayne. SC

Description: Blythe-Jackson privately believes that an armed confrontation between parliament and king is likely and so invites some key figures to a secret meeting in Norchester. The worthies he invites include Arthur Sullivan, leader of the Company of the Sun, Sir Mewsbury, representative of the various mercantile interests throughout the kingdom, Lord Mortimer the Defiant, ruler of Norchester and two members of the Commons, Sir Edward Hampden (a vocal dwarven member from Norchester) and Richard Croft (a devout worshipper of Belbion who strongly believes that the parliament should be given more power). (*See Th. 4, Th. 8; Fl. 1,*

Fl. 2.)

What This Means: Blythe-Jackson decided last year that the parliament could do a much better job of governing Bellayne than King James (especially given that he currently leads the Commons). Though he cannot admit to this in public, he has searched for potential supporters in the last few months. At today's meeting he discusses damage limitation should the king resort to the use of force once more. The real purpose is to attempt to divine how supportive everybody is of his ideas.

What the PCs Can Do: Characters may be members of the inner circle of any one of the luminaries who join the council, in which case they will be important go-betweens and agents. Once King James hears of this, characters loyal to him might be tasked with infiltrating the council and digging up information on its intentions.

Thaumont 19, AC 1017: Nayce Council Meets on Underocean Matter.

Location: City of Ionace, Ionace Island, Nayce. AS

Description: The Nayce Council convenes over the Allanas vs. Underocean decision. The meeting is closed, though this does not prevent supporters and opponents of the ruling from demonstrating. Strangely orderly, the proceedings run smoothly and a vote on the matter is held today. A strange alliance between the more progressive and more hard-line representatives is shown, as the hard-liners fear that the ruling will lead to unprecedented interference in their own kingdoms' internal matters.

In the end, the council narrowly votes to overturn the ruling. In a related matter, the families of the immigrants killed in the New Smaar riots file their own claims against Underocean. (*See Va. 19, Th. 8; Ya. 14.*)

Thaumont 20, AC 1017: The Restoration Begins.

Location: City of Tarthis, Empire of Nithia. HW

Description: *Pharaoh* Ramose of Nithia makes a proclamation, to the effect that those soldiers who served Senkha during her rulership last cycle and who have been sentenced to work in the mines, will have their sentences reduced if they agree to participate in restoration projects around the empire. This proclamation is to take effect immediately and all cases shall be considered by the bureaucracy. (*See Fl. 18, Fy. 4.*)

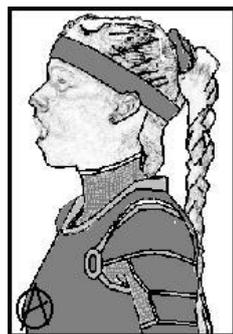
What This Means: Although he has been restored to the throne of Nithia, Ramose knows that his hold on the reins of power is by no means assured. Those soldiers who served Senkha may not have done so willingly—they could have been ordered to do so by their superiors, or perhaps family members were held hostage—and they might become embittered against his rule if they see themselves as being unjustly sentenced. At the same time, the Nithian people and tradition, demand that justice be done.

The proclamation is a compromise; the former soldiers still perform penal servitude, but instead they will be repairing roads and buildings damaged by the civil war (rather than toiling in mines) and their sentences will be shorter. Thus, Ramose will show himself to be a merciful ruler (yet one who can act decisively) and he can eliminate potential hotbeds of resistance.

Thaumont 20, AC 1017: Sjöfjord Conquered.

Location: Village of Sjöfjord, Kingdom of Heldun, Thyatian Empire and Nayce, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: As part of their ongoing offensive in Heldun, the 1st Vanya's Loyal Heldannic Expeditionary Force regiment occupies the village of Sjöfjord. Faced with fighting almost 500 armed soldiers, the village's militia of 60 men



decides to surrender and preserve their own lives. (*See Th. 16, Th. 17; Fl. 2, Fl. 17.*)

Thaumont 20, AC 1017: Pirates!

Location: Northern Marches of the Great Bay. NW

Description: With the coming of thaw, the coastal ports of Draken, Latela and Panteria are surprised by the unexpected attacks of sea-raiders bearing the Qeodharan and Ostlander insignias. These raids go on sporadically along the northern coast of the Great Bay, extending also to Kameloth's waters and the navy of the targeted dominions cannot prevent them. The lords of the northern marches decide to sign a military agreement to create a coast guard with the sole duty to patrol their coastlines and discourage the raiders' plundering. (*See Kl. 10, Fe. 9.*)

What This Means: After the end of the Norwold War in Eirmont of AC 1016, a few ships once serving the Qeodharan Baron decided to remain in Norwold and act as free pirates. They settled in the shunned isles in the Strait of Todstein and have waited patiently in those foggy waters for the spring to come and the Great Bay to become navigable once again. They are responsible for the raids on Latela and Draken and have no intention to stop this lucrative, albeit risky, business. The Heldanners of Nordenhafen have also taken back to their old pastimes, encouraged by Baron Bardeen and led by the Ostlanders that came last year with the pirate wizard Oberack (now dead after the confrontation with Count Shuren of Kameloth in Sviftmont of AC 1016). They are preying on Panteria, Latela and Kameloth as well and have agreed to an unwritten pact of friendship with the Qeodharan pirates, to avoid clashing with one another over the same waters. Baron Bardeen plans on going on with these raids as long as possible and doesn't care about King Ericall discovering his treachery.

What the PCs Can Do: If they live in Norwold, they can go pirate-hunting, discovering their nests and retrieving the small treasures plundered so far.

Thaumont 21, AC 1017: Report Returned... Revised and Approved.

Location: City of Andaire, Kingdom of Alphas'ar, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: The Alphatian Grand Council returns to Eriadna the plan to reorganize and demobilize portions of the Alphatian armed forces. The empress studies its content, noting the council's alterations and comments. The council has followed her recommendations that the imperial units are to be demobilized to more manageable numbers and that integrated troops be returned to their respective kingdoms. The kingdoms can then decide which troops they want to retain and which ones they want to demobilize to either civilian life or militias.

After meeting with her advisors, Eriadna approves the reformation. She has multiple copies made and distributed throughout Alphatia, to the individual kingdoms and the individual divisional commands. The reformation is met with some protest, however it is accepted and the officers begin the logistics of carrying out the measure. (*See Va. 24; Fe. 8, Fy. 1.*)

What This Means: With the council's support, Eriadna issues the proclamation outlying the designs of the new armed forces. The imperial units are none too happy at their forces being affected, however it is the empress's ruling and does have the sanctioning of the Grand Council. Surprisingly, most troops welcome the reorganization. Due to Eriadna's military reorganization and integration of AC 1010, most have been away from their native kingdoms for years. Many wish to go home, either to return to civilian life or to defend their own native lands.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs that were mobilized earlier now have the opportunity to return to civilian life, or to integrate the military of their kingdoms, or to apply for continued imperial service. Either option will lead to a new life and to new opportunities.

Fourth Week

Thaumont 22, AC 1017: Ghastly Peace in Wendar.

Location: Kingdom of Wendar. OW

Description: Wendarians awaken to find the first signs of the coming thaw outside their homes. They also realize that the whole winter passed without incident and thank Bensarian and his wise decisions for the newfound peace. The Genalleth elves, who know far better what price had to be paid for this peace, pray for the souls of their Alfheim brethren deported to Denagoth and ask their Immortal patrons, the Korrigans, to enlighten Bensarian before he makes a decision every Wendarian will then regret. (*See Nu. 2; Ya. 27, Fe. 18.*)

What This Means: Since Swiftmont AC 1016, after the last free Alfheimers fled Wendar in fear and the unlucky Alfheimers held in the prison camps were deported to Denagoth to please the request of the Denagothian ambassador, Wendar hasn't been troubled by internal riots anymore. This is obviously due to the absence of the Alfheim Avengers and to the abrupt end imposed by the cultists of Idris to their human followers' terrorist acts. Bensarian obviously gets the credit for this result in the eyes of the human population and Denagoth doesn't look so fearsome anymore, now that it has established cordial diplomatic relations with Wendar. The only people who have noticed the bloody price paid by Wendar for this yet dubious peace are the elves, who have seen firsthand the humiliations and the grief the Alfheimers had to undergo. They are starting to doubt Bensarian's actions (even though he has always been considered a wise man and a friend of elvenkind) and fearing for their own future.

Thaumont 22, AC 1017: Stalemate in Baratkand.

Location: Border of *Mumlykets* of Sindrastan and Baratkand, Kingdom of Sind. OW

Description: Emboldened by last year's victories, the armies of Chandra ul Nervi and his allied forces attempt to push northwest through the desert, to the *Mumlyket* of Baratkand. At the border, they are met by a large Hulean army. The two forces battle for hours, suffering many casualties but neither emerging clearly victorious. Finally the forces break off combat, establishing fortified camps some distance from each other. (*See Ya. 19, Am. 17.*)

What This Means: Although the Master is planning to withdraw his armies from Sind, he isn't going to make it easy for his enemies. His armies are still quite potent and will hold off those of Sind at the borders of Baratkand for the time being.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs can help whichever side they are on.

Thaumont 23, AC 1017: Debate about Reform of the Senate Begins.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Finally, after long days of proposals and debates about the nobility/dominion ruler ratification, as described on Vaternont 12, Domitius Aenobarbus, among the most brilliant senators of *gens Zendrolian* (the emperor's faction), presents a bill in the senate embodying those proposals. This causes a stir of fierce debate over the following weeks. The debate is long and it seems like every senator has something to say about it. (*See Va. 12, Va. 21; Fl. 11, Fl. 12.*)

What This Means: Domitius Aenobarbus has proposed much more than he wanted, as this would result in the achievement of his true objective.

Thaumont 24, AC 1017: Strike on the Traldar.

Location: Shipping lanes west of Town of Dossalonos, Traldar Kingdoms. HW

Description: Captain R. Morgan, commanding the barquentine *Lucky Lass*, launches an attack on a pair of Traldar

galleys. The galleys are lightly armed and one is heavily laden. Both ships turn to fight. Morgan's artillery (catapults and ballistae) damages the lighter ship from long range; then using his superior seamanship, he closes with the galley and sideswipes it, breaking the oars. Rather than boarding, he sails on, avoiding the other galley's attempt to ram and then letting more artillery fly. The second galley heads for safety, but the *Lucky Lass* keeps it within range of bombardment. Eventually Morgan grapples the vessel and his pirates swarm aboard, singing and jeering, with Morgan swilling from a flask of rum the whole time. The galley promptly surrenders and the other one soon follows suit. Morgan's men loot the ships and then set the first galley ablaze before sailing off. Morgan charts a course back to his homeport of Floresque. (*See Va. 17, Va. 23; Th. 25, Fl. 7.*)

What This Means: This is a typical Merry Pirate raid at sea, although challenging two Traldar galleys is bolder than most. But then again, Morgan's ego is certainly bigger than most. The barq is faster, more maneuverable and better armed than the Traldar ships and Morgan knows it. He is wise to soften them up at long range and then board when their morale is down, as the Traldar are stubborn combatants. The pirates make off with the coins and jewelry from both ships, plus a substantial amount of wine and olive oil, to be sold later on. Setting fire to one of the ships forces the other to rescue the stranded seamen or help fight the blaze, thus hindering pursuit.

What the PCs Can Do: Participate in the raid! Fire artillery, use missile fire, or board the galleys to melee with the Traldar. PCs who perform exceptional actions may be given choice of any special treasures found, above their normal share. If they are Traldar, PCs can turn the pirates away, or at least make it a good fight.

Thaumont 25, AC 1017: Next Stop, Thanegioth!

Location: City-State of Kastelios, Serpent Coast. DV

Description: A small collection of sailing ships departs northwards, laden with provisions and tools and crewed by sturdy Kastelians as well as a smattering of hired foreigners. Gazing over the bow of the lead ship, Adonai Stephanos takes in the exhilarating sea air and ponders what the future may bring. (*See Va. 14, Th. 7; Fl. 13, Fl. 26.*)

What This Means: Adonai Stephanos was not only able to secure support for his venture; he was able to obtain substantial amounts of funding for the construction of his way-station. Now that he has the official support of the assembly to continue his project, nothing seems to stand in his way.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are skilled in eliminating various threats to civilization (as most adventurers can claim to be), the PCs might be hired by Adonai to accompany the crew of these ships, for the purposes of dealing with any monsters encountered. If Adonai did not win the by-election, he could still be leading this venture, under the sponsorship of another member of the assembly.

Thaumont 25, AC 1017: Concerns of National Security.

Location: Various Alphatian nations, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: The secret is out—Stonewall is preparing for war! Over the last few weeks, enough rumors have circulated about the mobilization of forces in Stonewall that some nations have made this conclusion. The question is, who will they go to war with? Many rulers all over Alphatia dispatch their own spies to find out what's going on. (*See Th. 2, Th. 4; Fl. 4, Fl. 9.*)

What This Means: This isn't really a surprise for Stonewall—it's impossible to keep the mobilization of so many troops a secret for very long and they did not really expect to anyway. Still, keeping it secret for as long as possible could only give Stonewall an edge, so that's what they've done so far. Now, however, they'd probably be better off letting their neighbors know about their

intentions, so that they won't feel so threatened that they'll mount their own counterattack.

What the PCs Can Do: Lots of stealth and spying are possible here. Most nations will send their own spies to find out what Stonewall is up to, as will Eriadna and the PCs can certainly be such spies. If the PCs are with Stonewall, they should try to uncover spies sent by other nations or supply them with false intelligence. Ironically, Arkan itself is unlikely to send spies because they have few such people and their nation is rather poor in magic after almost their entire aristocracy was left behind in the outer world. Besides, they feel rather secure, Stonewall being so far away. This means that if the PCs really do find out what Stonewall is up to, they could make a lot of profit by telling King Qinn of Arkan and then selling him the evidence to support their claim.

Thaumont 25, AC 1017: Articles Are Amended.

Location: City of Baraga, Merry Pirate Seas. HW

Description: Redbeard Kray has recruited new crewmen to fill his openings. He uses this opportunity to amend the articles of the Butchery, which are then signed by all crewmen, old and new alike. (*See Va. 23, Th. 24; Fl. 7, Fl. 17.*)

What This Means: Redbeard is tailoring the laws of his ship more to his liking. The modified articles come close to giving Redbeard absolute control of the ship.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are members of Redbeard's crew, they can use this opportunity to leave, if they wish. They will face pressure to sign the amendments and will make enemies of Kray and his men if they refuse, but the choice is theirs.

Thaumont 26, AC 1017: The Goblins Ride Tonight.

Location: Village of Nordberg, Territory of Heldland, Heldannic Empire. NW

Description: Outlying homesteads and small groups of travelers in this area have been facing increasingly fierce attacks on the

part of the local goblin tribes during the past few weeks, but today marks an especially bold move on the part of the humanoid. In the predawn gloom, no less than 40 goblins, riding dire wolves, streak out of the surrounding forest and descend upon the village of Nordberg.

The goblins manage to riddle the sentries manning the village's guard tower with arrows before they can raise a cry of alarm, while other attackers approaching the settlement on foot open the gates silently. Within minutes, many shops along the main street are looted, their readily portable goods taken and any humans rising against them brought low as quickly as possible. The commotion attracts the attention of the local garrison, nonetheless and within the hour patrols of Heldannic footmen are chasing the fleeing goblins through the streets, while bowmen snipe at the raiders from the rooftops. The bulk of the goblin raiding party, its greed sated, flees into the forest once more. (*See Th. 12.*)

What This Means: As the Heldannic colonization efforts continue, the indigenous humanoid tribes find themselves increasingly hemmed in, unable to access their traditional hunting grounds as farms and villages spring up everywhere. While some tribes simply retreat further inland, others decide to strike back, either trying to drive out the humans, or making a new living for themselves as raiders. Such activities will no doubt continue for the foreseeable future. This attack, though doing relatively little damage, makes the locals feel very insecure and deprives them of much of their wealth, such that it is.

What the PCs Can Do: Unless they are in possession of fast mounts, it is unlikely the PCs will be able to catch the fleeing goblins, though they might be able to capture and/or kill some of them while the looting is still going on. The local authorities would certainly like to know where the goblins are based and may pay the PCs handsomely if they agree to perform such a task.

Thaumont 26, AC 1017: League Meets.

Location: City of Darokin, Republic of Darokin. OW

Description: Representatives of the Western Defense League nations—Darokin, Karameikos, the Five Shires and Vestland—meet to discuss the “Thyatian problem.” Thyatis has been gobbling up land in the Old



World region—first annexing the Minrothad Guilds, then gaining land in Karameikos, as well as their conflicts with Ylaruam. In the end, it is decided merely that they shall be more observant to the acts of the empire and step up the defenses in their own countries. Darokin and Vestland agree to joint military exercises in each other's respective nation. A representative from Rockhome states that the dwarven nation will assist any military acts of defense by invasion, but that Rockhome wants no other ties with the Western Defense League. (*See Th. 5; Fl. 10, Kl. 15.*)

What This Means: There is concern that Thyatis is attempting to expand its territory across the Old World. Unfortunately, they are not doing so militarily and the league was formed as a means to counter military threats, so the representatives are baffled about their next move.

Thaumont 26, AC 1017: A Welcome Sight!

Location: Town of Polakatsikes, Dominion of Polakatsikes, Heldannic Empire, Meghala Kimata Plains. DV

Description: The Mivosian siege of Polakatsikes has been underway for over a week, with little progress made on either side. Shortly after establishing themselves around the town, the Mivosians soon learned, the hard way, that the Heldannic Knights have a few small artillery pieces stationed within Polakatsikes's walls and that

their crossbowmen are good marksmen. For their own part, the defenders soon discovered the Mivosians to be hard to dislodge from their positions. For the most part, the siege is quiet, as each side tries to size up its opponent, with the Mivosians trying to starve the Heldannic forces into submission.

A low rumble disturbs what promised to be yet another day of waiting, as, much to their amazement, the Mivosians see a black dot flying over the eastern horizon, which slowly grows in size. Soon, it becomes apparent that whatever it is, it cannot be good; the besieged Heldannic forces are now cheering, for they see it too. Confusion and unease soon becomes fear, as the object flying towards them appears to be nothing less than a giant bird, bearing great sails on its back! Never having seen such a thing before, some Mivosian observers lose heart. The great bird becomes larger as it approaches, until it flies almost directly above Polakatsikes, greeted with the cheers of the defenders.

The Mivosians' amazement soon turns into alarm, as a great wave of energy blasts from the bird's back, sweeping down towards the besieging army along the eastern wall. The energy streaks towards the largest catapult placed in that area and instantly crumbles it to dust! While the Mivosians are still startled, a volley of ballista bolts rakes through the men gathered around the now-destroyed weapon, killing many of them. Then, in a graceful arc, the bird wheels through the air, swoops over the wall and descends into the town. Seizing the opportunity, Heldannic crossbowmen fire several volleys at the Mivosians, killing a number of them before they can stage an effective counterattack. (*See Th. 9, Th. 17; Fl. 2, Fl. 7.*)

What This Means: The promised aid for governor Wolfgang Stommel has finally arrived, in the form of a light Heldannic *warbird* from Vanya's Rest. The vessel is carrying 100 fresh soldiers, as well as crossbow and ballista bolts, basic medical supplies, weapons and preserved rations. In its initial approach, the *warbird's* captain

decided to fire the *blight belcher* at the besieging forces, as well as launch a volley of ballista bolts, in order to stir things up a little for the enemy. This is the first of a number of convoys to Polakatsikes, as Wolfgang has been promised 200 men to reinforce his garrison and there simply was not enough room to bring them all in one trip. As it is, many of the *warbird's* regular contents had to be removed to accommodate all of the soldiers.

Before the *warbird* leaves later today, the most critically injured soldiers will be placed in the vessel's infirmary and any vital correspondence will be entrusted with the captain for delivery to Vanya's Rest.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs who are critically injured might be loaded onto the *warbird*; this might be their proverbial ticket out of this war zone, at least for a while. Alternatively, PCs whom the DM wishes to introduce to the area might be among the reinforcements.

Thaumont 26, AC 1017: Under Siege.

Location: Sentinel Fortress, Eastern Province of Verdan, Republic of Esterhold, Nayce. SK

Description: The united forces of the free Jennites and the rebel Jennites attack the northernmost stronghold of the Alphatians, Sentinel Fortress and besiege it. The attack takes the Alphatians completely by surprise, as they haven't heard of any Jennite attacks on the other forts. As the soldiers of the fort begin to realize the number of hostile Jennites, they soon begin to prepare for an evacuation. (*See Va. 7, Va. 11; Fl. 14, Ya. 17.*)

What This Means: The Alphatians haven't heard of other attacks because there were none. Talin convinced the allied Jennites that if they could stage an attack against Sentinel Fortress, the northernmost fort, then they could cut off the two forts to the south, Bastion of Nicodemus and Vigil Keep, as well as their supply lines to the capital, Faraway. In doing so, the allied Jennites could effectively cut Verdan in half

and then starve the two southern forts until they surrender, or so Talin hopes.

What the PCs Can Do: Fight, of course! They can either participate in the actual battles, or they can rely on stealth and try to cause trouble inside the fort if they're with the Jennites. If the PCs are with the Alphatians, they'll likely be sent on a mission to inform Faraway and the other forts of the attack, which would require them to find their way through the enemy lines—a task well-suited for most PCs.

Thaumont 27, AC 1017: *Torpin* Under Fire.

Location: Seashield Dome, Kingdom of Aquas, Naycese. AS

Description: Summoned to appear before visiting Naycese officials, Xerathis, Tredrignon and Dlanor are questioned about the status of the *Torpin*. The *Torpin* project managers review the vessel's planned abilities and tell them of the progress. The officials express their discontent at the time needed and the high cost. Xerathis, Tredrignon and Dlanor are dismissed to return to the project work site. Within a few days, the officials will go to the site to see the *Torpin* for themselves. (See *Ya. 9, Ya. 23.*)

What This Means: The meeting is a prelude to a fact-finding mission on the *Torpin*. What sounded like a good idea has now begun to be rethought. Costs, construction time and the need for more practical *submersibles* have been the topic of conversation in Ionace and the council is becoming impatient with the *Torpin* project. The Naycese officials have come to Seashield to meet with the project leaders and establish a visitation to see the vessel firsthand.

Thaumont 27, AC 1017: More Assistance Is Promised.

Location: City of Andaire, Kingdom of Alphas'ar, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: A member of the Grand Council reports about a study comparing the

economic situation now and that expected after the construction of strategically planned canals. The loss of the oceans has reduced the cargo capacity of the economical non-magical ships and the experiences from the last years have shown that magical transports—either by *skyships* or by *teleportation*—are limited by their sheer costs. The conclusions from this report strongly favor the construction of canals to replace the lost ocean trading capacity. Other members denounce the integrity of this report. Zallaras does not speak this day but he is seen grinning ominously. (See *Tb. 4, Tb. 8; Ya. 3, Kl. 15.*)

What This Means: The report is actually correct but in the council nobody trusts a report he has not composed himself. Besides, few are aware of—or care to learn about—the grim reality of the empire's situation.

What the PCs Can Do: Of course, everybody wants to know if the report is true or false. The PCs may also have been employed to gather information that lead to this report, or to others like it.

Thaumont 28, AC 1017: Bleak Sun.

Location: Idris Tower, Forest of Lothenar, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: Taken before the High Priestess of Idris, Dove is given permission to resume his trip inside Denagoth, with the task to describe the wonders of this kingdom for his almanac. The high priestess coldly explains he has been held in the dungeons to protect him from the dangers of winter and that he will now be free to roam her land escorted by her trusted servants, who will watch over him. After he has been given a backpack full of provisions, parchment and quills, Dove exits the darkened halls of Idris Tower and is able to gaze once again at the sky. He has the task to travel through the bleak Dead Forest of Lothenar and its environs, accompanied by half a dozen soldiers led by a menacing, silent warlord clad in blue armor. (See *Va. 14, Tb. 17; Fl. 15, Fl. 20.*)

What This Means: The high priestess has decided it is time for Dove to return to the outside world and resume his writings, both to avoid attracting unwanted attention from the *Mystaran Almanac* should one of their reporters vanish in her lands and to provide the southern nations with a powerful but

reassuring description of her kingdom through unofficial means (the almanac). What she doesn't know is that Dove is now a potential threat to her shady plans, because he knows far too much thanks to the confidences he received from the enigmatic wizard Vesper.

Topic of the Month: Battle of Two-Forks Ridge Warmachine

	<i>Heldunian Forces</i>	<i>Heldannic Forces</i>
Regiments	1 st Heldunian Self-Defense Forces 500/108 2 nd Heldunian Self-Defense Forces 500/108	1 st Vanya's Loyal Heldannic Expeditionary Force regiment 500/173
Bonus	Outnumber: +30, Liege: +10	Higher: +20
Casualties	50%/50%	10%
Regiments	1 st Heldun Volunteers 650/108 Heldun Irregulars 842/78	2 nd Vanya's Loyal Heldannic Expeditionary Force regiment 500/173
Bonus	Outnumber: +45, Liege: +10	Higher: +20, Troop Class: +10
Casualties	60%/70% (rout)	25%
Regiments	Harald's Hard Axes 312/92 1 st Reformatory Cohort 500/64 2 nd Reformatory Cohort 500/64	3 rd Vanya's Loyal Heldannic Expeditionary Force regiment 500/173
Bonus	50%/70% (rout)/70% (rout)	15%
Casualties	Outnumber: +30	Higher: +20, Troop Class: +10
Regiments	Alphatian Irregulars 1,034/91	4 th Vanya's Loyal Heldannic Expeditionary Force regiment 500/173
Bonus	30% (rout)	0%
Casualties	Outnumber: +30	Higher: +20, Troop Class: +10
Total Troops	4,838	2,000
Total Casualties	2,645 (54.7%)	250 (12.5%)

Of the Heldunian casualties, half are dead, the other half captured by the knights. Of the knights' casualties, half are slain, the other half wounded (recover via healing magic). The knights replace their losses (slain) by filling out their ranks with local recruits and, in many cases, with soldiers captured in the battle (the mercenaries and, especially, members of the penal cohorts).

Events: Flaurmont

First Week

Flaurmont 1, AC 1017: The Wind and the Lion.

Location: Southeastern Barren Plain, near the Burning Waste. OW

Description: The joint Minrothaddan-Thyatian flotilla, skirting the coast of the Great Waste, spots some Urduk nomads riding along the shore. They decide to take a chance and make contact, sending a shore party to talk with the Urduks. Friendly relations are established via the good offices of the Minrothaddan negotiators and both parties make camp for the night. They share food and news with the Urduks, who say they were riding east to take service with the Master's forces against Sind. The Thyatian admiral gives them gifts and gold and asks them to enter imperial service instead and travel to Jaibul. The Urduks say they will consider this and make their decision when they near Jaibul. (*See Va. 25, Th. 17; Fl. 8, Ya. 13.*)

What This Means: The Thyatians are happy to make friends in the region, who can serve as proxies in their machinations. For now they want to keep Hule from gaining enough strength for a counter-attack in Sind, while keeping their own options open while everything is in flux. The Thyatian admiral will send word to the imperial admiralty in the city of Thyatis and their envoys in Jaibul. They will try to enlist the nomads as mercenaries and auxiliaries.

What the PCs Can Do: Encounters with monsters of the Barren Plain or even representatives of Hosadus are possible. Helping the Urduks against some threat will help encourage their friendship.

Flaurmont 1, AC 1017: Threat from Below.

Location: Emirates of Ylaruam. OW

Description: In a series of interconnected cave complexes beneath Ylaruam, a new

monarch takes his throne. Shamaash, a balor, declares himself the lord of this underground domain, which he names Stygia. His fiendish servants patrol the caverns, taking slaves and enforcing his will upon any denizens that dwell nearby.

What This Means: Barimoor was a powerful wizard who created a vast realm beneath the sands of Ylaruam. During the Week Without Magic, he was presumed destroyed and his underground kingdom fell into chaos. In the years since, surviving minions of Barimoor's have claimed dominion over the realm, but none have been strong enough to hold claim to more than a portion of the complex. Agents of Shamaash brought word to him of this domain recently and he left his haunts in the Emirate of Nithia to come here. He hopes to form a powerful nation of evil beneath the sands of Ylaruam.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are active adventurers in Ylaruam (particularly the demon-infested northern emirate of Nithia), they will hear rumors of a hidden nest of demonkind somewhere in the deserts of Ylaruam. This is the chance for DMs to set up an epic campaign—as the characters grow in power and prestige, they will become ever more aware of the existence of Stygia and eventually learn its location. Then, they can travel to Shamaash's lair and engage in some deadly action against a horrid pit of demonic evil.

Flaurmont 1, 1017: King Refuses to Sign Militia Bill.

Location: City of Leominster, Bishopric of Leominster, Kingdom of Bellayne. SC

Description: Thanks to strong backing from the nobles of Kittings and Penwick, the Militia Bill makes it through the House of Lords and is presented to King James to give the bill royal assent and make it law—which James in the event refuses to do. Later in the day the king leaves the parliament building and is jeered at by a crowd of young street urchins hurling rotten fruit. The king's honor guard draw swords to disperse the youngsters, but things rapidly

get out of hand and several of the urchins are injured and one is killed.

The next day a somewhat hysterical parliament condemns the king for his actions and demands once more that he sign the Militia Bill. Hampden even accuses the king of tyranny for his actions. (*See Th. 8, Th. 19; Fl. 2, Fl. 9.*)

What This Means: A bad day for King James, the incident with the street urchins has damaged his reputation just when he needed public support the most. Public opinion in Leominster swings sharply against the monarch in the days that follow.

Flaurmont 2, AC 1017: Leominster in Chaos.

Location: City of Leominster, Bishopric of Leominster, Kingdom of Bellayne. SC

Description: Allegedly in fear of their lives, the two architects of the Militia Bill go into hiding in Leominster. That morning, in an act dangerously reminiscent of last year, the king and his soldiers storm into the parliament and demand the arrest of Hampden and Blythe-Jackson. Once again though he is thwarted as they have already escaped. Making matters worse, a company of the Sun Herald writes a somewhat embellished story in which the heroism of the two members of the parliament in escaping the king's wrath is elevated to epic proportions. The story is all over the city and beyond, by the end of the day.

The next day Leominster is in ferment. Rumors are flying that royalist troops are about to descend upon the city and, in effect, promote martial law. The gates of Leominster are closed and a multitude of citizens turn out bearing arms. The parliament issues a proclamation declaring all those who assist in perpetrating acts of tyranny to be public enemies and before too long fighting breaks out in the city center between supporters of the two sides. The king is forced to retire to Theeds via ship for his own safety. The parliament assumes control of the Leominster constabulary in addition to the Royal Leominster Regiment and after some sporadic fighting manages to

regain order over the next few days. After the fighting ends, seven days after it started, Hampden and Blythe-Jackson return to the parliament, amidst a huge cheering crowd, to receive a hero's welcome. (*See Th. 19, Fl. 1; Fl. 9, Fl. 24.*)

What This Means: Hampden and Blythe-Jackson did what they could to cause trouble, with the help of the Company of the Sun. Thanks to their swift thinking (made possible by their undercover council) it seems likely that the parliament has captured the hearts and minds of the people of Leominster.

The Royal Party has seen massive defections in the Commons and is now very much in the minority. Benjamin Treeby sends a private letter to the king in Theeds, resolving to remain within the parliament and act as the voice of the monarch in the Commons.

What the PCs Can Do: Characters could participate in the fighting on either side or attempt to restore calm, or at least protect innocent citizens from getting caught in the crossfire.

Flaurmont 2, AC 1017: Insurrection in Almarrón.

Location: *Estado de* Almarrón. SC

Description: An enormous armed uprising seems to spontaneously take place in Almarrón today. Heavily armed militias aided by Torreóner and Slagovian mercenaries appear from nowhere to seize strongpoints around Ciudad Tejillas and across Almarrón. *Barón* Maximiliano's meager forces in the city are taken by surprise and captured. *Barón* Maximiliano himself is almost captured in the fighting, but for the intervention by a lone black masked man who wields his rapier with unsurpassed skill. This mystery man succeeded in getting Maximiliano out of his capital, thus thwarting Esteban's plans for a quick, sudden victory, before melting away as swiftly as he came. (*See Th. 2, Th. 4; Fl. 3, Fl. 16.*)

What This Means: *Don* Esteban, the former ruler of Almarrón, is responsible for

the uprising. Using funds he was given by a shadowy messenger last year he has managed to heavily arm his followers and employ foreign mercenaries and magic-users to aid in his insurrection. With *Don Maximiliano* and most of *Almarrón's* army in *Gargoña* fighting *Narvaez*, he saw his chance to regain his former dominion.

The man in black is an enigma—no one seems to know who he is, or where he came from, but *Don Maximiliano* is not complaining, as he begins his campaign to oust the counter revolutionaries of *Don Esteban*.

Flaurmont 2, AC 1017: It's Not Nice to Fool with Mother Nature.

Location: Newly-Settled Areas, Thyatian Mainland, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: For the most part things have proceeded with remarkable smoothness in the areas of the Thyatian mainland where settlement is being expanded. But in some of the wilder and more remote areas, the new residents are running up against unexpected difficulties. Strange events happen, almost seemingly by coincidence but too often for it to be bad luck. From time to time sinister accidents occur, usually ruining equipment but sometimes causing injury or death. Imperial officials have received reports from frightened farmers claiming strange, gnarled, dirty figures wearing robes and carrying twisted staves have tried to frighten them off with dire warnings, spooking many. At first the government passed this off as hysteria induced by being in unfamiliar surroundings, but now they're beginning to see a pattern emerge. (*See Fl. 13.*)

What This Means: Though large stretches of Thyatis (mainly the so-called Imperial Territories) were sparsely inhabited and not under regular authority, they were not completely uninhabited. Most were wilderness areas and in addition to some of the normal dangers, rustic back-to-nature types, mountain men, followers of nature-oriented Immortals and even some powerful druids live in these regions. They are now

reacting to the increase of settlement in the area. Most are peaceful and just want to keep what they see as their wilderness from being despoiled, but some are both anti-social and hostile.

What the PCs Can Do: The characters might have ties to either side—or both; they might be contacted by the imperial government and asked to investigate, or by the naturalists and asked to mediate some sort of solution. There might be some conflict between extremists on both sides, where perhaps only force will suffice. A solution agreeable to all might consist of limiting future settlement and development and setting aside much of the region as nature preserves or even imperial parklands, limit mines to dwarven techniques (even if not operated by dwarves), etc. This will prove contentious, though: neither the imperial government nor the new settlers want to abandon the settlements that have already been created, but the naturalists are afraid that all of Thyatis's wilderness will disappear and be despoiled. Both the government and the settlers would be more willing to agree to limit growth if the druids would help in increasing the bounty of agriculture in the areas already under cultivation. Characters can help secure such compromises, or they can solve the problem in the usual manner—by the sword and spell.

Flaurmont 2, AC 1017: An Unwelcome Sight.

Location: City-State of Ilioloosti, Meghala Kimata Plains. DV

Description: Word arrives from the guards stationed at the fortifications demarcating Ilioloosti's eastern frontier concerning the arrival of a number of ragged individuals, who apparently are seeking shelter. The officer in charge of the main gates of the city-state ponders the matter for a few moments and then orders the bearer of the message to head back with all due haste, to order the guards to allow the people to pass.

Hours later, a straggling line of men, women and children, their faces worn with the stresses of a long, arduous journey, plod up to the main gates and request entrance into Ilioloosti. In demanding to know their precise number, origins and business, the gate guards soon learn that these people have fled their homes in the eastern Meghala Kimata Plains, in the face of Mivosian aggression and merely seek a new home where they may rebuild their lives in peace. Shocked at the refugees' story, the guards allow them to enter and pass word to the authorities of what is going on. (*See Tb. 17, Th. 26; Fl. 7, Fl. 21.*)

What This Means: Some of the people driven forth by the Mivosians at the beginning of the year have managed to cross the Meghala Kimata Plains and are now beginning to arrive in the western city-states, seeking shelter. Some of them, being relatively small, refuse the refugees entry and tell them to head for such places as Ilioloosti and Kastelios. These are only the first of the migrants; more are likely to come as the Mivosian campaign continues.

The Ilioloostian authorities, no friends of the Mivosians, will nonetheless be surprised to hear about the naked displays of aggression being demonstrated by their opponents and will likely begin thinking about possible strategies to deal with possible military expansion in regions closer to themselves. In the meantime, as far as Ilioloosti is concerned, so long as the Mivosians are paying attention to the Heldannic Knights (who are still a mysterious, obscure force in the far east) and nowhere else, so much the better.

Flaurmont 2, AC 1017: A Dreaded Assassination.

Location: Makekei Territory, Neathar Lands. HW

Description: A party of Hatfei hunters come across a grisly sight: the bound corpses of three individuals. Closer examination reveals that the three include Duma, who had killed the Makekei tribesman at the gathering. The other two are fellow hunters,

accompanying Duma in the search of game. It appears that the three had been tied up and then killed by spear thrusts into the abdomen, a long and agonizing death. It is also correctly surmised that the slaying was in retribution for the killing at the gathering. Normally the matter would have been accepted as an eye for an eye, but for the inclusion of the other two, the slayings occurring in Hatfei lands and the manner used to slay them; tensions rise to a fevered pitch. (*See Va. 4, Va. 22; Ya. 6, Fe. 6.*)

What This Means: The engineer of the murder is Swerg of Makekei, who along with his sons and several kinsmen initiated the murder of Duma and his companions. It will not be long before the perpetrators are discovered speaking about and even boasting of their form of "justice." For their part the Makekei are horrified at the murders and are growing tired of the growing hostilities. The perpetrators are virtually ostracized by their own people.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs allied to the Hatfei may find themselves tasked with uncovering who is behind the murders. Makekei involvement is without a doubt, however several Hatfei elders will wish to punish the guilty without going to all-out war.

Flaurmont 2, AC 1017: Another Victory in Heldun.

Location: Village of Dawnhaven, Kingdom of Heldun, Thyatian Empire and Nayce, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: The coastal village of Dawnhaven is approached by the 3rd Vanya's Loyal Heldannic Expeditionary Force regiment. A small group of knights march from the main host and demand to speak with the village leadership to discuss terms of surrender. The villagers, though numbering only 250 souls, opt instead to refuse to submit to Heldannic authority. Hearing this, the knights attack with ferociousness.

Bracing themselves to fight a pitched battle with infantrymen, the villagers are unpleasantly surprised to find themselves

ridden down by heavy cavalry and pelted by heavy crossbow fire. Before they can fully reorganize themselves in the wake of the cavalry charge, the defenders are swarmed by Heldannic foot soldiers. Within the hour, the village is under Heldannic control. (*See Th. 17, Th. 20; Fl. 17, Fl. 21.*)

What This Means: The more recent conquests are part of a larger plan to assume control over the bulk of Helskiran territory and to crush potential centers of resistance to Heldannic rule. Even so, the advances are not nearly as grand as those envisioned late last year, mainly due to the fact that the Heldannic position in Heldun appears to be increasingly jeopardized; forces must be conserved as much as possible.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are on the side of Heldun, the PCs could try to assist any freedom fighters who might be operating in the region. Otherwise, they might be aiding the knights in their efforts to hunt down rebels.

Flaurmont 2, AC 1017: A Deal With the Demon.

Location: Kingdom of Huyule, Hulean Empire. WB

Description: As the demon Joramurrak is exploring the Hulean countryside and pondering his options, he suddenly sees a simple human man in white robes appear before him. Joramurrak gleefully calls upon his powers to wipe the fool out, only to see them utterly fail to cause even a scratch. The man smiles and says, “You are powerful, Joramurrak, but your powers are wasted here. I am Hosadus, prophet of divine Bozdogan and I can tell you how to use your powers to create chaos unheard of.” Cautiously, Joramurrak listens on. Hosadus continues, “There is a large land to the west, called Zuyevo. It is a land of great unity, where the rule of law has taken hold and the people support their rulers. I know how you hate such perfect societies and I feel your yearning to bring chaos and death to them. Go there and fulfill your every desire; unleash your wildest dreams!” Intrigued by the tale of this lawful realm, Joramurrak

thinks for a moment and then nods in agreement. (*See Sp. 11.*)

What This Means: This deal has dark consequences for Zuyevo. Joramurrak will use his powers to unleash hordes of monsters and other disasters in the Zuyevean countryside. Since much of Zuyevo outside the major cities is thinly-settled wilderness, it will be some time before the authorities realize that a large-scale slaughter is taking place. Even when they do, response will be hindered by the Zuyevean corruption and inefficiency.

Flaurmont 2, AC 1017: Imperial Skothar Expedition Reaches Beitung.

Location: City of Beitung, *Exarchate* of Ochalea, Thyatian Empire. SD

Description: The joint Minrothaddan-Thyatian expedition intending to sail to Skothar reaches Beitung. The ships dock in the harbor to re-provision, while the crews are given shore leave. Teng Lin-Dieu holds a banquet at which the expedition’s officers and the most prominent members of the Ochalean court attend. Several Ochaleans are taken aboard the ships for the remainder of the journey, as well as some of the exotic products of Ochalea. Before continuing on, the expedition members are paraded through the city while crowds of Ochaleans look on. (*See Va. 25; Fl. 16, Ya. 5.*)

What This Means: This is a normal event on the itinerary of the expedition to Skothar. But it is also meant as a means of showing the imperial banner in the *exarchate* to further cement its renewed ties to Thyatis. The Ochaleans brought aboard with the expedition are to help sell the cargoes that were added.

What the PCs Can Do: The DM can invent whatever encounters are desired, but an encounter with seafaring orcs or sea monsters on the early leg of the journey might keep the characters on their toes.

Flaurmont 3, AC 1017: Another Piece of the Puzzle.

Location: Southern *Baronía de Gargoña*. SC

Description: Realizing that *Don Esteban* can easily cut his army's line of supply, *Don Maximiliano* immediately breaks off his assault on Narvaezan positions around Ciudad Real and force marches his troops back to Ciudad Tejillas to put down the insurrection. (*See Th. 4, Fl. 2; Fl. 16, Ya. 2.*)

What This Means: This is a godsend for Narvaez. *Barón Hugo's* forces were being hard-pressed by the Almarróñan and Saragóner forces but now with the Almarróñan army gone, Narvaezan forces can be concentrated on the numerically inferior forces of Saragón who are currently occupying west Gargoña. So, this is bad news for Saragón.

Flaurmont 4, AC 1017: The Fox Strikes Again.

Location: City of Corisa, Milenian Empire. HW

Description: At the estate of Dionios, a voice is heard screaming for help. As the guard is summoned and enter the estate to investigate, they find the interior ravaged. Following the cries of help, they find the estate's slaves bound and mostly gagged in a closet. The voice crying for help is a slave that had managed to remove her gag. The guard frees the slaves from their bonds and begins questioning them. A messenger is sent to inform Dionios that his estate has been burgled and suggesting he return home to see if anything is missing. However, since he is in Tyrnus, it will take several days for him to be informed and to return.

Since Dionios is away, the investigators press the slaves to look through the estate to see if they spot any items missing. According to the slaves, the only items missing are a few jeweled trinkets and a strongbox believed to contain gold and jewels. The slaves do remark that Dionios and Sephone may have taken some of these missing items to Tyrnus. One thing that they are sure was still in the estate was a locked chest that

Sephone kept in the basement. That chest is still present, however its lock has been forced and its contents are gone. None of the slaves know what was in the chest.

Outside the back of the building the guard finds the body of a man, dressed in a dark thief's costume, who apparently fell to his death from the rooftop when making his getaway. He has a bag containing many items from the estate—jewelry and other valuables and what looks like a diary and some papers. When the investigators read them, they are astonished. The papers seem to implicate many of the empire's highest officials and some of their wives in a vast conspiracy to overthrow the emperor and put General Tythus on the throne. The papers don't implicate Tythus himself, but seem to involve others scheming on his behalf without his knowledge, including senators such as Tythus. The papers indicate a plot to frame the Cult of Matera (an order some members of the conspiracy seem to belong to) in order to cause an internal scandal and disorder. The goal of this would then be to implicate the emperor's wife as one of the members of this conspiracy, in order to discredit and humiliate Adronius and force him to resign. Supposedly, according to indications in messages apparently sent to Dionios, the plot is very far along and the emperor himself has come to suspect the Order of Matera of conspiring against the empire due to misinformation carefully fed to him by the conspirators over the years. The guard officers immediately recognize the import of this information and it is given to high-ranking imperial officials.

It becomes quickly apparent that this robbery has a lot of coincidental details to the Halcion Estate robbery. The slaves report not seeing their attackers or even realizing that there were intruders in the estate until it was too late. Investigators do find another key detail: a note left bragging about the deed and signed "The Fox." (*See Nu. 3, Th. 16; Kl. 5, Kl. 12.*)

What This Means: Once again, an agent working for General Tythus has used the contrived burglar, "The Fox," to further his investigations. With the two at Krameos's

estate in Tyrnus, the agent had a free hand in entering the estate and searching it. He grabbed a few items to reinforce the perception of a robbery. He also managed to find and make away with the chest's contents. But the Cult of Matera has not been inactive. Their agents were not unaware of all the snooping into their activities. After the robbery of Halcion's estate on Thaumont 16, they have put in motion a carefully-conceived counter-plot. They figured the investigations would continue and had learned that Krameos is in charge of the matter. With Dionios and Sephone at Krameos's estate in Tyrnus, the Materans guessed that Krameos would have his agent break into their estate while they were gone. Therefore, they replaced the original documents with other ones, to create the impression of another sort of conspiracy entirely. The agent took those and then made his escape to the rooftop, where several Materans were waiting. They killed him with a *slay living* spell (the reverse of *raise dead*, a recent addition to their repertoire) and then pushed his body off the roof to make it look as if he fell.

The false documents created by the Order of Matera have been very carefully crafted and forged. They have also been careful, through their network of agents, to replace other documents in the abodes of officials implicated in their falsified conspiracy for the imperial investigators to find. Several of the order's members, including Sephone, are sacrificing themselves in order to carry out this deception. The documents they have placed implicate Krameos in falsifying information and evidence over the last several years, thus casting suspicion on what he has presented the emperor and what will be found in his house. Indeed, a servant in Krameos's estate who happens to be under the beguilement of an order member will plant items discretely to make it look like he's been having the evidence forged.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs may be hired to investigate this new information implicating Krameos and others in a conspiracy to overthrow the emperor.

Flaurmont 4, AC 1017: Shifting Alliances.

Location: Principality of Boldavia, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: An overland caravan, staffed by the servants and entourage of Prince Morphail Gorevitch-Wozslany, sets out from the Tower of Igorov. As it passes through the villages and hamlets of rural Boldavia, many among the peasantry flock to try and get a glimpse of the enigmatic prince, who is said to be traveling with the caravan. Though he remains hidden within the depths of his personal coach, his entourage is not as elusive. They freely relate the purpose of their journey—the prince is traveling to the distant Principality of Aalban, there to meet with *Prinz* Jaggar von Drachenfels to discuss wizardly business. (See Kl. 11.)

What This Means: Morphail feels that Dolores Hillsbury is gaining too much power in the political arena and is becoming increasingly erratic and unpredictable. As a result, he has chosen to make new diplomatic overtures to check her influence. He needn't actually meet with Jaggar personally, nor journey overland to do it, but by doing so he is making a deliberate show to the other nobles of his changing allegiances. It is a particularly glaring slight to Princess Dolores.

What the PCs Can Do: Dolores might hire the PCs to attack Morphail's diplomatic envoy as it travels overland. Such a mission would be a suicide run and both Dolores and Morphail are well aware that any such attacks would be fruitless. She would only be doing so to annoy him.

Flaurmont 4, AC 1017: Stonewall Immigrants in Haven.

Location: Near the Town of Warzazath, Kingdom of Haven, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: A number of new settlers are found near the town of Warzazath in Haven. Once the authorities realize that these are from Stonewall, they become very concerned because in the light of Stonewall's

preparations for war, they fear that these settlers could be an indication that Haven could be the target of Stonewall's war effort. An officer is dispatched to Dovor to inform Queen Kryndylya of this immediately. Meanwhile the settlers are taken into custody for the time being while the authorities look into the truth of their suspicious behavior. (*See Th. 4, Th. 25; Fl. 9, Fl. 17.*)

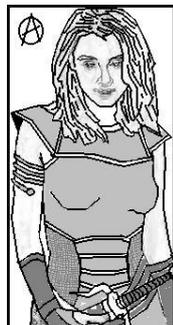
What This Means: These settlers are little more than refugees who fled the impending famine that seems to threaten Stonewall and they left the nation before Stonewall even began its preparations for war. Unfortunately the authorities in Haven will see their presence here as a security risk due to their fear of Stonewall's expansion and the dislike that have for the Stonewall people due to their differing philosophies. These fears will grow too, because these settlers are only the first immigrants to arrive from Stonewall and as more arrive, the fear of an invasion from Stonewall will rise in Haven.

What the PCs Can Do: It is unlikely that the PCs will be with the immigrants, but if they are, they will be under suspicion too. Otherwise they might be hired by the authorities in Warzazath as investigators to find out what the immigrants are really doing in Haven, possibly even go to Stonewall to confirm their stories.

Flaurmont 5, AC 1017: Adventurers Wanted!

Location: City of Darokin, Republic of Darokin. OW

Description: A call goes out to all interested adventurers—the republic is looking for people to assist in the clearing of the ruins of Ardelphia. Anyone participating will not have to pay taxes on any loot secured from the ruins.



What This Means: A trade route between the Barony of Celedyl and Ft. Fletcher was recently completed and Darokin hopes to

extend this route from Ft. Fletcher to Corunglain. Ardelphia sits on the proposed road between Ft. Fletcher and Ft. Runnels. As it has long been a haven for goblinoids and bandits, this would pose a danger to merchant traffic along the road. The republic wishes to clean out the bastion of evil once and for all.

What the PCs Can Do: Bash some goblin heads! Clearing the ruins could be an entire campaign in itself. Who knows what might lurk beneath the ruined city of Ardelphia?

Flaurmont 6, AC 1017: Madness Spreads.

Location: City of Kelvin, Kingdom of Karameikos. OW

Description: A minor riot ensues in the streets of Kelvin as a group of Thyatians are assaulted by a several Traladaran youths. As one of the Thyatians is a member of the



Order of the Griffon and strongly pro-Oderbry, he draws his weapon and returns the assault with force. The guard breaks up the riot and all the participants are arrested. The cleric of the order is soon released, however, by Baron Desmond Kelvin (himself a member of the order). There is a public outcry at the perceived bias. (*See Th. 2, Th. 14; Ya. 23, Ya. 26.*)

What This Means: The growing anger and resentment over the terrorist acts of Oderbry's faction—still operating in hiding—and the “heresies” of the Lost Valley have spread beyond Mirros and are beginning to reach other regions of the nation.

Flaurmont 7, AC 1017: Mivosians Here to Stay, It Seems.

Location: Town of Polakatsikes, Dominion of Polakatsikes, Heldannic Empire, Meghala Kimata Plains. DV

Description: Much to the disappointment of the Heldannic forces, a large number of the conscripts serving the Mivosians can be seen turning over the soil and carrying out what appear to be tasks associated with sowing fields, safely outside of crossbow range and under the careful watch of Mivosian soldiers. Seeing the spectacle, Wolfgang Stemmel orders his immediate subordinates to remind the garrison that Polakatsikes is well-stocked with provisions and can withstand a siege for many months yet. (*See Th. 26, Fl. 2; Fl. 21, Ya. 2.*)

What This Means: The Mivosians now realize that the siege of Polakatsikes is going to take a lot longer than expected, long enough that they will have to supplement their rations with locally-grown produce if they are to sustain themselves. Since spring is already underway, the Mivosian commander has decided to order the conscripts to plant some fast-growing staple crops in the fields surrounding Polakatsikes. In the meantime, times will be lean for the Mivosians, as their own supplies, supplemented through the pillage of the various city-states on the way to Polakatsikes, are beginning to run low. Fortunately for his forces, hunting has been quite good, so none of them are starving.

Wolfgang is aware that he must do everything he can to keep his soldiers' spirits up and in the following days he will order his officers to find ways to either ridicule the Mivosians, or show that, despite the siege, the Heldannic Order's might in this region of Davania will not be so easily overcome. He is also very conscious of the need to bolster the spirits of the local populace; if they see no hope in resisting the Mivosians, they might betray the Heldannic forces to their enemies.

What the PCs Can Do: Covert missions against the Mivosians would be encouraged at this time, with a special focus on sabotaging siege equipment.

Flaurmont 7, AC 1017: Darokin Responds to Trade Frictions.

Location: City of Darokin, Republic of Darokin. OW

Description: The Darokin Council convenes, discussing the recent trade frictions with Thyatis. Corwyn Linton, Eshram al-Azrad and



Elissa Pennydown vocally protest and demand an official condemnation of Thyatian practices and the seizure of Al-Azrad's properties. Elissa Pennydown in particular makes an impassioned speech about the "well-known honesty of Darokinian merchants and Thyatian greed and envy." Greenleaf Vickers, the corrupt agent of the Master of Hule, remains publicly silent, though he gives quiet support to the anti-Thyatian faction. Finally the council decides to hold off an official condemnation, but the individual houses are allowed to issue unofficial protests (and several, including the three mentioned above, do so). The Thyatian ambassador in Darokin relays Eusebius's reply that Thyatis is not acting unlawfully. (*See Th. 9, Th. 19; Fl. 23, Fe. 1.*)

What This Means: Linton and Al-Azrad are making noise because their interests have been directly hurt by the recent Thyatian/Minrothaddan activities. Elissa Pennydown trades mostly inside Darokin and is speaking out for other reasons. She is fanatically loyal to Darokin, to the point of being extremely nationalist and considering other nations as indebted to Darokin for defending the world from Hule. Although she hates the Master of Hule as much as anyone, her nationalism is playing directly into his hand, as it helps him and his agents drive a wedge between Darokin and other nations, primarily Thyatis.

Flaurmont 7, AC 1017: Thyatians in Trikelios.

Location: City of Trikelios, Kingdom of Trikelios, Nayce, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: A group of Thyatian merchants from the nearby Barony of Albarocca make their way into the city of Trikelios. It is a rather surprising sight, as the Albaroccans were thought driven off, as they haven't been seen in years. The merchants explain that they had been having troubles with monsters atop the escarpment, but that their problems are now past. They conduct their trade as usual and a couple of the Thyatians remain in the city after the rest depart. (*See Fy. 19.*)

What This Means: The "Thyatian merchants" are actually werespider servitors of the arachnid settlements atop the plateau. The araneas did destroy Albarocca's human settlers in 1014. Since then, the araneas have had their werespider underlings replace the humans and settle into the barony. This is the latest in their scheme to penetrate the growing human societies on the Isle of Dawn. The werespiders who remain in Trikelios will attempt to settle and breed and expand their influence.

Flaurmont 7, AC 1017: Duel in Floresque.

Location: Town of Floresque, Merry Pirate Seas. HW

Description: Tirenos the Bold, a pirate-king of Traldar descent, ridicules Captain Morgan for pilfering two "helpless" Traldar merchant ships. Morgan, having been celebrating his take with an excess of rum, takes the insults to heart. King or no king, he boldly challenges Tirenos to a duel. Morgan wishes to fight him right then and there, but his crew is able to restrain him. The duel is set for the next sleep. Tirenos arrives with a full bronze breastplate and wields a short sword. Morgan dons only leather and fights with a cutlass. A large crowd gathers to witness the duel, which is to be fought until there is an obvious winner. Tirenos and Morgan exchange blows, with Morgan's deftness and

swordsmanship being the equalizer versus Tirenos's heavy armor. The fight is a draw, until Morgan skillfully disarms Tirenos and levels his blade to his throat. Morgan does not strike the final blow, but he is declared the victor. (*See Tb. 24, Tb. 25; Fl. 17, Fe. 6.*)

What This Means: Tirenos and Robert Morgan have been rivals for some time and there is no love lost between them. The red-haired Tirenos is a wealthy pirate-king and a cleric of Halav. But he is also the leader of a group called the Traldar Heritage Society. This group believes in Traldar superiority, preservation of Traldar customs and they wish to see Traldar sovereignty extended throughout the Merry Pirate Seas, as it was two millennia in the past. Tirenos was angry with Morgan for targeting Traldar ships. The defeat of Tirenos is a boost to Morgan's status, as well as his already large ego. Tirenos will attempt to exact revenge upon Morgan in some other way.

What the PCs Can Do: Followers of either pirate may become involved in scuffles and brawls or even lesser duels. PCs who are members of either Morgan's crew or the Traldar Heritage Society will become enemies of the other side.

Second Week

Flaurmont 8, AC 1017: Old Rivalries Die Hard.

Location: Town of Poys, Kingdom of Randel, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: Inhabitants of Poys, are shocked to see a group of Bettelyn cavalry ride nearly unopposed into the town and ride through its streets. They have slipped through the hills near the Grey Mountains to reach Poys. The rapidly moving horsemen wreak havoc among the garrison troops and the civilians. It is only when the horsemen dismount to try to grab some booty from the various shops, that they meet any real opposition.

As armed civilians join the garrison, the

Bettelyn raiders begin to withdraw. With their surprise gone, the Bettelyn riders have to run a gauntlet to leave the town, but cut down several people as they ride by. Their casualties are pretty light considering they had raided one of Randel's interior communities, which had traditionally been considered immune to border raids. They only manage to make off with but a few items, however the shock of the attack and the ill-preparedness of the garrison forces are severe psychological blows to Randel.

This is made worse by the garrison's inability to pursue the raiders; they have too few mounted troops or cavalry. Using magic, news of the raid is sent to the Randel Line forts to prepare them for possible action. Likewise these units lack the mounts to enable the patrols to intercept the fleeing raiders and the raiders easily slip back over the border.

The Randel military requests permission to carry out a raid, in response to the Bettelyn attack. Queen Junna, who would rather use peaceful diplomacy to address the raid and possibly prevent future ones, flatly denies the request. The military is obviously furious at this lack of support against the despised Bettelyn. Any military officers and soldiers who had any respect for Junna have completely lost their faith in her. (*See Th. 5; Kl. 21, Fe. 1.*)

What the PCs Can Do: Bettelyn PCs may be part of the raid, maybe even organizing the daring attack on this interior community. Randel PCs, on the other hand, may help defend the city, possibly reducing the resulting outrage in their kingdom.

Flaurmont 8, AC 1017: Pressure Sales Tactics.

Location: Town of Tyjaret, Northern neck of the Serpent Peninsula. SC

Description: The exploratory flotilla sails into the harbor of the town of Tyjaret, only to find it rife with battle. Nomad raiders breached the small town's defenses and are riding through its streets, wreaking havoc and destruction. The admiral orders imperial marines ashore, hoping to take advantage of

the situation. They join the townsfolk in repelling the raiders. After a long day's fighting the streets are cleared and the breaches in the town's walls are sealed over.

The next morning the imperial envoys meet with the town's leaders and propose a more permanent protective arrangement, beneficial to both sides. They offer a strong trading partnership and say that Thyatis is willing to improve the overland route between Tyjaret and Kladanovic, constructing a Thyatian-style road to create a portage similar to that at the neck of the Isle of Dawn. They will also help improve the town's defenses against attack. In exchange, Tyjaret just has to make what the Thyatians portray as a simple deal, becoming a protectorate of Thyatis and giving imperial merchants priority over other traders.

The Tyjareti are somewhat grateful to the Thyatians for helping them repel the nomad attack. These attacks have increased in size and frequency lately, becoming a danger to the town's existence. But they do not want to lose their independence. However, the Thyatian expedition's members outnumber the town militia and they know they cannot resist if the Thyatians decide to conquer the town outright. They decide to negotiate and get the best deal they can. (*See Th. 17, Fl. 1; Ya. 13, Kl. 8.*)

What This Means: Ultimately, the Thyatians agree to allow Tyjaret to continue to govern itself as it has in the past, with a Thyatian envoy to represent imperial political and trading interests and a Thyatian legate to help coordinate the defense of the town. They agree to allow the Thyatians to do road construction, defense improvements, dredging the harbor and building better fortifications and in exchange give basing rights to imperial ships and trading factors. They also agree to let the Thyatians send colonists, knowing that though this might shift the balance of power in town it will provide more people to help defend it, too. The Tyjareti also keep the ability to conduct trade with other countries, too. In the long run, this deal will benefit the people of Tyjaret as much as it will benefit the Thyatians. With a trail road and with the

area being so dangerous, most traders tended to sail south, to Yavdlom, around the peninsula and avoid the town. The new development will increase the area's attractiveness to traders and encourage more to stop here.

Several ships of the flotilla stay behind in Tyjaret, beginning construction on improved defenses and port facilities and surveying the route for the road, while the rest sail onwards. Imperial (Thyatian and Minrothaddan) influence will increase over the following months as imperial traders and Thyatian settlers move into the town.

What the PCs Can Do: Help fight off the nomad attack, then negotiate with the townspeople. PCs might stay behind to help plan the construction of the road and clear the region of raiders.

Flaurmont 9, AC 1017: Prepare for War?

Location: City of Leominster, Bishopric of Leominster, Kingdom of Bellayne. SC

Description: King James, from Theeds, sends a message to the parliament, saying he is willing to conciliate “but, by Pax Bellanica Herself, we are blameless if conciliation is not reached.” Meanwhile, the parliament votes to mobilize the Leominster reserves.

The parliament replies to the king, asking that, as a measure of good faith, it can nominate a candidate to command the Tower of Leominster—the kingdom's most infamous jail. (*See Fl. 1, Fl. 2; Fl. 24, Ya. 6.*)

What This Means: With a clear majority in the parliament, Blythe-Jackson is readying for a clash of arms. He knows that the king will likely not agree to the parliament's request—but the king's refusal to agree will just help rally support for his cause among the moderates.

What the PCs Can Do: Characters known for their diplomatic skills might become involved in the negotiations. Other characters could be tasked with spying on the other side, to ensure that their side has an edge in the coming conflict.

Flaurmont 9, AC 1017: Nobility Titles in Minrothad?

Location: City of Minrothad, *Exarchate* of Minrothad, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: With the blessing of the emperor, Demetius Vannopolus, the *Exarch* of Minrothad, grants out titles of nobility to the most prominent guilders and leaders in Minrothad. This is explained as a measure intended to provide the prominent Minrothaddan personages with status within the imperial peerage. At first the guild masters are dubious about the prospect of Thyatian titles. But Demetius points out that, as nobles, each title recipient will be able to appoint imperial senators in accordance with Thyatian law and custom. This is an idea they like.

Oran Meditor is appointed Count of Seahome; Uldard Forster is made Count of Verdun; Kimber Nimblefingers is made Baron of Malfton; Thor Stronghold is made Baron of Stronghold; and Hildric Vendor is made Baron of North Isle. Trader's Island (or Minroth Island as it is increasingly known), Blackrock Island and Fire Island remain centrally administered. All the new fiefdoms continue to pay taxes as before. (*See Va. 16; Sv. 6, Sv. 27.*)

What This Means: Promoted as a means to establish precedence within the Thyatian system, this will also tend to enhance natural divisions within the guilds. Gradually, almost imperceptibly, each of the dominion lords and guild masters will find themselves less and less tied to each other and more and more reporting to and tied to, the *exarch* and the rest of the Thyatian imperial government. The guilds will continue to fulfill their roles in the local society and economy, thus most people will notice little if any change. But the organization and functioning of government begins to change.

The internal divisions of Minrothad are further heightened due to the fact that several of the newly-minted nobles dislike some of the others. Now they have more explicit power-bases and so are less

answerable to the Council of Guilders or the ruling guild master.

What the PCs Can Do: This will fan the embers of intrigue within Minrothad, leading to numerous secret plots, any and all of which can involve the PCs.

Flaurmont 9, AC 1017: Haven Prepares Defenses.

Location: City of Dovor, Kingdom of Haven, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: In an informal audience Queen Kryndylya is informed of the growing numbers of immigrants from Stonewall in her nation. Her advisors tell her that this could be the first step in a planned invasion and that they had better do something about it. After discussing the matter for a few hours, Queen Kryndylya orders the forces of Haven to be mobilized to stop a possible invasion by Stonewall forces. (*See Th. 25, Fl. 4; Fl. 17, Ya. 1.*)

What This Means: Fear and paranoia have taken Haven in a firm grip it seems. There is no invasion coming from Stonewall, but the differences between the two nations are so great that the rulers of Haven will suspect Stonewall of just about anything. Haven will indeed begin to marshal its forces, but their efforts will be quite inefficient and eventually stop once they really do become convinced that they were not the target of Stonewall's war effort, at which time the Haven authorities will also grudgingly release the immigrants from Stonewall. This does indicate, though, that if Haven had indeed been Stonewall's target, they would have been in serious trouble, because their efforts at mobilizing their armies leave much to be desired.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs with a sense of justice can protest the harsh treatment of the imprisoned immigrants, but they would risk being imprisoned themselves—they had better not be commoners if they do so, though! If the PCs have been sent to discover what the immigrants are doing in Haven this can be quite amusing as they continue in vain to convince the queen and

her advisors that no invasion is coming from Stonewall. Then again, if the PCs are on Stonewall's side, they could be sent to find out what all the trouble is about and discover some very interesting facts about Haven's poor attempts at organizing its defense.

Flaurmont 9, AC 1017: Walls of Stone for the Bastion of Vanya's Might.

Location: Region surrounding Dominion of Vanya's Rest, Aryptian Savannah, Heldannic Empire. DV

Description: Throughout the newly-occupied buffer zone surrounding Vanya's Rest, land is cleared and surveyed, pending the construction of a number of towers and other fortifications. Some of the Meghaddaran prisoners captured in the recent territorial expansion are put to work clearing away shrubs and trees and digging the foundations for the new structures. (*See Th. 3, Th. 14; Fl. 17, Ya. 12.*)

What This Means: Heinz Kronenburg had planned, before the buffer zone had even been dreamt of, to build a series of defensive towers and small fortresses, in order to better protect Vanya's Rest from attack. The annexation of the new territories, however, provides him with an added bonus, in that now there can be no opposition to his plans within the upper echelons of the Heldannic Order (if any could be said to exist at the moment), since the lands secured are more fertile than those already owned and they will make the dominion stronger.

What the PCs Can Do: Heldannic PCs, or those allied to the order, could survey the areas where fortifications are to be built, as existing monsters will have to be cleared out and pockets of Meghaddaran resistance might still exist.

Flaurmont 10, AC 1017: A Diplomatic Touch.

Location: City of Mirros, Kingdom of Karameikos. OW

Description: Agents of the Darokin Diplomatic Corps arrive in Mirros today. They have come at the suggestion of Estella Whitehall, the Darokinian Ambassador to Karameikos. Their intention is to try and help soothe tensions between the churches of Traladara and Karameikos and, through them, the Karameikan peoples. They make plans to meet with Patriarchs Aleksyev Nikelnevich and Sherlane Halaran, leaders of the respective churches. (*See Th. 26; Kl. 15, Fy. 4.*)

What This Means: The DDC is becoming a bit more proactive in the face of what is viewed as Thyatian expansionism. They are sending their best diplomats to see if they can help to soothe the ruffled feathers of the Thyatian and Traladaran populace of Karameikos. Theirs is a difficult task, but every little bit helps.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are agents of the DDC, they've got their work cut out for them. They may have to get involved in the hunt for Oderbry and his faction, if they really want to solve the problem.

Flaurmont 11, AC 1017: Douzbakjian Fights Back.

Location: Kingdom of Douzbakjian, Midlands. WB

Description: In the face of the invasion by Zuyevo, the leaders of Douzbakjian have rallied around a new ruler, Kiligi Alp Arslan, putting their forces at his disposal to fight off the invasion and prevent the region from being conquered. Bands of Douzbakjian warriors skirmish with Zuyevan troops, but are forced to fall back as Zuyevo's army is too strong for them. The defenders of Douzbakjian burn the grasslands in their wake, leaving little forage for Zuyevo's army, however and slowing their advance. (*See Th. 1; Ya. 1, Fe. 6.*)

What This Means: The army of Zuyevo is just too strong for Douzbakjian to defeat at this time. The new ruler of Douzbakjian is still beginning to restore his forces. In the meantime, raiders and skirmishers have instructions to slow the Zuyevan advance and wear down their army.

Kiligi Alp Arslan is the *Bey* of Zarkend, a sizable town in southwestern Douzbakjian. He distinguished himself in fighting against Sendaryan nomads and incursions from Hule and Douzbakjian's neighbors and already had the fealty of several other *bey*s. When Zuyevo invaded, the other *bey*s rallied behind him, trusting his military ability.

Flaurmont 11, AC 1017: Adoption Fever.

Location: Throughout Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Civil service officials and do-gooders begin promoting adoption of orphans to various Thyatian families. This actually results in a surge in adoptions, alleviating the burden of many overcrowded orphanages throughout Thyatis. (*See Am. 24.*)

What This Means: Almost every major Thyatian city has had an orphanage for some time, run by various orders (such as the one in Thyatis City operated by the Order of the Grey Lady) and funded partly by private donations, funds provided by the various orders themselves and subsidies made by the empire, all supervised by an official known as the *orphanotrophus* (orphan-feeder in a dialect of old Thyatian, showing just how old this practice is). This is part of the empire's public charity apparatus, similar to the daily bread dole. But the casualties of the Great War, followed by the Thothian mummy rot, caused a large increase in the number of orphans throughout the empire, overburdening the orphanages. Simultaneously, however, many families lost children to these same factors. The orphanages hope to relieve the situation, giving those victimized by the loss of parents or children a new chance at happiness, but also saving the fiscal treasury some money.

One of the secret and less noble uses the orphanages are put to is that the imperial government sometimes uses them as a recruiting pool. They select some of the older children who seem to show potential and aptitude and recruit them into the imperial intelligence services as agents,

where they are trained as spies and covert operatives. Though selected children aren't conscripted against their will, officials hold such an influence over the impressionable children that it is usually easy to convince them to volunteer. None of the children put up for adoption fall into this category (they are, for the most part, too young), but the practice is noteworthy none the less.

What the PCs Can Do: Some of these things might be dubious and involve con-jobs of various kinds, which could cause the injured party to hire the PCs to investigate. Also, time in an imperial orphanage might serve as a background for characters at the player's discretion.

Flaurmont 11, AC 1017: The Golden Khan.

Location: Camp of Bargha, Ethengar *Khanates*. OW

Description: After many months of searching, the wizard Akmad ibn Yussef has finally located the body of Moglai *Khan*. All of the wizard's divinations and investigations seem to indicate that the body is being stored in the Great School of Magic, in Glantri City, for unknown reasons. Akmad immediately sets out for Bortak territory, to find Moglai's eldest daughter, Bakai. (*See Ya. 14, Ya. 20.*)

What This Means: After Moglai's death during the war with Glantri in AC 1015, his body was abandoned during the Ethengar retreat. It was presumed destroyed, but Bakai needed to know for certain. She came to see Akmad, one of Moglai's advisors and oldest friends and asked if he could attempt to locate it. Presumably, some enterprising Glantrian wizard kept the body, in hopes of doing research on it.

Flaurmont 11, AC 1017: Senatorial Reforms Passed.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Last month Domitius Aenobarbus, among the most brilliant senators of *gens Zendrolian* (the emperor's

faction), proposed several institutional reforms in the imperial senate and the nomination of dominion rulers. The most important of these is a provision that requires the approval of the emperor and senate before a dominion's successor, following the death or other replacement of a current ruler, can ascend to the position. The recent troubles in Tel Akbir are used as an argument on behalf of this provision. Thanks to the effort of the aristocratic faction, Domitius must change it slightly in order to pass it, however—it will apply to mainland Thyatian dominions, not overseas colonies. However, another loophole exists: the emperor does not need senatorial ratification of rulers he appoints as per the descriptions of the nobility in the *Player's Guide to Thyatis*. He can still appoint those of his own accord. And the senate can still appoint new barons itself, as well. The central government thus increases its sway in the heartlands of Thyatis and the distinction between those areas and the colonial extents is enhanced.

The proposal is finally voted on the 2nd of Flaurmont. However, another heated debate begins regarding a reform of the senate, proposed again by Domitius. The major modification in the voting system is that the city of Thyatis will elect 40 senators alone, when last year Eusebius proposed it have 28. The debate is long and it seems like every senator has something to say about it. Thyatis City is more favorable than ever to the emperor at this point and it will likely mean more senators supporting Eusebius when, as some begin to suspect, he will call new elections very soon. But refusing to pass the reform will surely cause disturbances, because it would seem a move against the capital's citizens, as Domitius presents the bill as a proper consideration of the city's population, which is much greater than that of all other dominions of the empire.

After a long and exhausting debate, on the 11th of Flaurmont the senators agree to vote the approval of 28 senators in Thyatis City, but not 40.

Also, the proposal to give Thyatian citizenship to the wererats is tabled for the time being, as the senate seems deadlocked or even against the proposal and Eusebius's supporters want to avoid it being voted down while they lack the votes to pass it. (See *Va. 21, Th. 23; Fl. 12, Fl. 27.*)

What This Means: Domitius Aenobarbus has reached his goal. He proposed much more than he wanted, as this would result in the achievement of his true objective. Although most clever senators of other factions know this, they cannot do anything or fall again under the consequences explained above. However, several non-Zendrolian senators vote for the proposal whole-heartedly, as they think that the city of Thyatis deserves to be better represented in the senate.

Flaurmont 11, AC 1017: "It's Alive...?"

Location: Marquisate of Satolas, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: While engrossed in studies of the *Radiance*, Don Fernando de Casanegra, *Marqués de Satolas*, feels a strange presence he has never sensed before. There is a vague sense of identity, almost a beckoning, as if someone or something were trying to communicate. Intrigued, he probes further, but the presence slips away from him. He muses over the encounter and determines to find out more. (See *Nu. 1; Ei. 5.*)

What This Means: Ever since his first experience with a series of dreams following the last conclave of the Brotherhood of the *Radiance*, de Casanegra has been trying to pinpoint the source of their disturbance. His suspicions that the *Radiance* itself is somehow involved seem to be true with this recent turn of events. All of the brotherhood has noted a change in the *Radiance* itself ever since the war with Alphatia and Don Fernando wonders if it may be achieving sentience. Either that, or perhaps the presence he senses is their long-lost leader Rad, missing since the aforementioned war.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are members of the Brotherhood of the *Radiance*, they too may experience a brush

with this presence and set out to do their own investigations. If not, it is unlikely they will know of this event.

Flaurmont 12, AC 1017: Senatorial Elections Announced.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: A deputation from the Big City of the Wererats gains audience with the emperor. They claim that they were promised Thyatian citizenship in exchange for their help in recovering the crown during the war. Since then, they have waited patiently, but have heard nothing and fear they have been forgotten. Eusebius also brings this matter before the imperial senate, where this controversial measure is hotly debated. Many abhor the idea of giving Thyatian citizenship to "infected creatures" and "monsters who live in sewage." Others feel having the affiliation and loyalty of the wererats would be beneficial to The City and the empire, but they seem to be in the minority. The issue is tabled and a deputation from the wererats is invited to speak before the senate in one month's time, after which a vote on the matter will be held.

Then Eusebius announces that in six week's time a senatorial election will be held throughout the empire. Eusebius's announcement does not surprise many senators, because it will allow the changes made under the reforms to be put into effect. The votes will actually be cast on Soladain, Yarthmont 28. (See *Th. 23, Fl. 11; Fl. 27, Ya. 27.*)

What This Means: It will be difficult for the wererats to receive their promised reward. If they do not, they will likely strike back at those who spurn them as best they can. Eusebius knows this and wants little trouble from them. He also is aware of how useful their help was in defeating the rebels and that bringing them into the empire would bring many benefits. They disgust him, personally, but this is business of state. Other Thyatians react more viscerally. While Eusebius is very popular right now,

following his recent successes, this proposal is not popular.

It is the very wave of popularity Eusebius is experiencing now that prods him to call a senatorial election at this time. The imperial senate is composed of members selected by a variety of means. Some hold their position due to the prominence of their aristocratic families, others are appointed by various dominion rulers and still others are elected by the citizens of Thyatis. This was also the reason Leana Scaurus had proposed to give the dominions to relatives of the previous rebel rulers, during the long senate debate of Vaternont 23 to yesterday. She knows that, by calling an election now, Eusebius hopes to gain secure control over the imperial senate for many years to come. Most likely, the senators that will be appointed by those he places in control of various dominions later this year will be favorable to him. And, by calling an election now, he knows that the people will likely vote for senators who support Eusebius. Well-oiled political machines grind into action throughout the empire. People are promised jobs, sinecures and other benefits in exchange for their support.

What the PCs Can Do: Player characters can run for office themselves. But they can also be hired as political consultants and operatives by other candidates. Thyatian politicians are as sneaky and conniving as any in the world. Dirty tricks will abound in this campaign. The characters will be asked to help protect their candidates from smear campaigns... and to find (or plant) evidence that will cast a bad light on their opponents' reputations.

Flaurmont 13, AC 1017: The Calm—Broken!

Location: City of Hapta, Empire of Nithia. HW

Description: After over a month without any gruesome murders, another series of insidious happenings strikes Hapta. Over a three-day period, three young people—two Nithians and a Tanagoro—disappear from one of the poorer sections of the town.

Despite considerable efforts on the part of their families and the city guard, there is no trace of the missing persons. As word spreads of the disappearances, some residents of Hapta begin to wonder if the unnamed murderer might still be active. (*See Va. 2, Va. 18; Fl. 23, Fl. 24.*)

Flaurmont 13, AC 1017: Neapolis Founded.

Location: Barony of Neapolis, Colony of Davania Inferior, Hinterlands, Thyatian Empire. DV

Description: The new settlement of Neapolis is founded on the eastern shore of the River Torion, in Davania Inferior, where its waters flow into the Sea of Dread. The village's founder and ruler, is Demetrios Chianossos, a former mercenary who swore fealty to Thyatis following the Crown War. (*See Fe. 8.*)

What This Means: As a means of rewarding those who served the empire well during the trying times of the Crown War, Emperor Eusebius has agreed that small dominions would be made available to those commanders who wished them. Demetrios is such a man; originally a Kastelian mercenary captain, he and his archers performed well during the defense of Thyatis City and he eagerly accepted the chance to carve out a dominion of his own. As with other fledgling rulers, he has three years to survey and develop his lands (a grant of 250 square miles), after which his dominion must contribute 1,000 *lucins* annually to the imperial treasury—otherwise he must forfeit his lands and title.

What the PCs Can Do: Demetrios, having only his new wife and retainers as company, will need help surveying the land (primary light forest, with rocky beaches) and demarcating his borders. He will also need help clearing out any humanoids or hostile Leopard Clan Hinterlanders who might be present, as well as procuring supplies.

Flaurmont 13, AC 1017: Arrival at the Islands.

Location: Thanegioth Archipelago, Sea of Dread. OW

Description: The ships under the command of Adonai Stephanos drop anchor at one of the westernmost islands of the Thanegioth Archipelago, after a happily uneventful voyage. Not wishing to lose any time, Adonai sends scouting parties ashore to assess the land and locate any immediate dangers. (*See Th. 7, Th. 25; Fl. 26, Fe. 3.*)

What This Means: If Adonai wants his venture to be successful, he must ensure that nothing exists on this island which could cause harm to his potential operations here, or the people whom he is employing.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs accompanied Adonai on this journey, then presumably they are here to aid in the surveying efforts, as well as in any attempts to eliminate any hostile plant of animal life.

Flaurmont 13, AC 1017: Mass Murder in the Hills.

Location: Trevanion Hills, Duchy of Retebius, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: A *bandon* of Thyatian troops patrolling the hills north of the Trevanion River find a terrifying scene: nearly 50 men, plus one woman and two children, are dead, horribly slaughtered. Mostly of them are soldiers of the personal guard of Callastian Jowdynites, but the woman is his daughter Eirene and her children are the grandchildren of Callastian. Callastian's body is not found.

The first inclination will be to blame the massacre on druids and naturalists. (*See Fl. 2; Fl. 17, Fl. 24.*)

What This Means: This is actually not a part of the struggle between the nature lovers and the settlers, though it will inflame matters on both sides in that dispute. But further investigation of the bodies will lead to the conclusion that they were killed by something far more sinister. This is actually continued spillover of Thanatos's influence in Thyatis.

What the PCs Can Do: Characters could get tangled in the flow of these events in all sorts of ways, but the usual method will be as imperial investigators tasked with uncovering what occurred and bringing the killers to justice. Due to the social and political prominence of many of the victims, this will be a high-profile case, the progress of which will be supervised by the emperor's closest advisors.

DMs can add more danger to this event by creating a monster encounter appropriate for the PCs level—the bodies of those slain could suddenly animate (by hidden act of the fiend). Or several lesser fiends could pop in via *teleportation*. These could be of almost any variety, *gated* earlier by the pit fiend for the purpose of causing further fear and confusion among the Thyatians.

Flaurmont 13, AC 1017: Grunalfs Settle.

Location: Kingdom of Nordalfheim, Final Range. NW

Description: After a long trek along the coasts of Norwold, the Grunalf elves arrive in the Kingdom of Nordalfheim (in the former Barony of Ironwood), where they are immediately received by King Blackblade. The elf lord listens to their tragic tale and allows them to settle inside his territory for an indefinite period of time. He provides them with new homes and some food, then leaves them, promising he will think about the elven situation in lower Norwold. The Alfheimers, content enough to be rejoined with their elven brethren and to finally have found a safe haven, do not press the ruler any more on this topic. (*See Nu. 1, Th. 1.*)

What This Means: King Blackblade is more than happy to welcome new settlers in his new kingdom, especially fellow dislodged kinsmen like the Grunalfs. After the deaths caused by the Red Fog during the last months of AC 1016, his dominion needed some fresh blood to replenish the population and this is just what he was looking for. Lord Blackblade is sincerely interested in the welfare of the elves of lower Norwold (Wendar and Denagoth), but he realizes he has no political power and no

military strength to use in this venture, especially since his kingdom lies far away from the troubled areas. For this reason he will simply report on the state of affairs in Wendar to King Ericall and to the other clanmasters of Nordalfheim, but he knows this won't bring anything significant to the elves' cause.

Flaurmont 13, AC 1017: Synn Dreams of Canolbarth.

Location: Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: The night dragon Synn receives a disturbing dream about a dark forest of blighted oak trees, teeming with twisted monsters and baleful magic. Upon consulting her nagpa advisor, Crwaarg, Synn learns that her vision was of the Canolbarth Forest, home of the shadow elves of Aengmor. From her own shadowelf minions, Synn also learns the significance of this date: it is the first day of the month of Crystals on the shadowelf calendar. Synn promptly sends her shadowelf spies, led by Crwaarg, on a survey mission to Aengmor. (*See Ya. 16, Kl. 2.*)

What This Mean: Synn realizes the precarious state of her persona as Princess Dolores Hillsbury in Glantri, what with the return of her alleged father, Volospin Aendyr, the alliance of her political enemies and the recent attempt on her life. Synn also fears that this is a sign of disfavor of the lords of the Sphere of Entropy and has been seeking some sign or guidance from Them for quite some time. This nightmare is just what she has been waiting for.

It was the Immortal Atzanteotl, corrupter of the shadow elves and once the corrupter of Synn into the Entropic creature that she is, who had pointed her to Canolbarth Forest. Atzanteotl plans to use Synn for creating havoc in Aengmor and is not particularly concerned with her own troubles in Glantri.

This is the beginning of the plot of the arcade game D&D: *Shadow Over Mystara* sequel to the D&D: *Tower of Doom* game, which took place in AC 1015. The rest of

the plot will unfold throughout the rest of the almanac.

Flaurmont 14, AC 1017: No News Is Not Good News.

Location: Town of Lothar, Continent of Iciria. HW

Description: Uart-neter Semsu convenes a general meeting of all the outpost's inhabitants today, concerning the absence of any news from Nithia. Many of the Nithian soldiers posted here have begun to grow homesick, wanting to see their families once more, while the outpost commanders are becoming uneasy over the total collapse of communications—which was infrequent at best in the first place and was ended once the civil war began.

Some of the Antalians residing here speak up, saying that perhaps the lack of any word means that the Nithian Empire has fallen and that the people of Lothar should strike out on their own in order to survive. The tiny contingent of Heldannic Knights voice their agreement. Relying on the solidarity of his fellow Nithians, Uart-neter Semsu overrules their suggestion and orders his commanders to make plans to send scouts back to Nithia to determine what is going on. (*See Va. 2, Th.10; Fl. 21, Ya. 4.*)

What This Means: Although the Antalians cooperated with the Nithians out of necessity and convenience, the lack of any contact with the Nithian Empire for such a long time has made many begin to wonder whether or not their allegiance to their hosts is still of benefit. Some of the resident Heldannic Knights, particularly Friedrich von Dreiburg (the senior knight), have noticed this and have already begun persuading some of the more impressionable Antalians that everyone's interests might better be solved through independence from Nithia.

Flaurmont 14, AC 1017: Hospice Opens in Seagirt.

Location: City of Seagirt, *Exarchate* of the Pearl Islands, Thyatian Empire. SD

Description: A large guest hospice opens in Seagirt, not far from the imperial naval base at the *Ama Ubi Kea* (Harbor of Pearls). Built mainly as a recreation facility for Thyatian soldiers and their families while on leave, it is a large complex built on one of the most beautiful and pristine beaches in Seagirt. In addition to guest rooms it has a tavern, several meeting and banquet halls, indoor and outdoor pools, exercise facilities and even chambers to practice with weapons. There's an outdoor banquet area as well. (*See Fl. 16.*)

What This Means: Thyatian military personnel have had a rough time of it over the last decade. This is a measure to improve their morale. About a week later, another hospice opens up just down the beach. The new hospice is built to accommodate merchants and wealthy travelers. Vacationers will eventually begin to make the trip here, via mundane or magical means.

These measures will help develop the Pearl Islands' economy but will also prove controversial among some of the native citizens of the Pearl Islands. However, for now at least these things are limited to the region of Seagirt itself, so the impact on the rest of the islands is not significant to affect how most Pearl Islanders live.

What the PCs Can Do: Characters can work as security in the hospices, conduct clandestine meetings here, or simply vacation... until their enemies track them down and spoil their recreation.

Flaurmont 14, AC 1017: Forts Besieged.

Location: Bastion of Nicodemus and Vigil Keep, Eastern Province of Verdan, Republic of Esterhold, Nayce. SK

Description: The two other forts on the Jennite border, the central Bastion of Nicodemus and the far southern Vigil Keep, are also besieged by the united armies of rebel Jennites and free Jennites. There is no real battle, though, because the Jennites just surround the forts and wait to starve the Alphatians, while the Alphatians barricade themselves inside the forts. As the Alphatian soldiers discover just how overwhelming the

opposition is, they begin to plan their retreat. (*See Va. 11, Th. 26; Ya. 17, Ya. 21.*)

What This Means: The Alphatian defenders are still largely unaware that no reinforcements will come from the north. The scouts they've sent north to warn the other forts or Faraway will all be intercepted and killed by the Jennites, who have already cut the forts off from the capital. It is also a sad truth that without the strict orders by harsh rulers like Xanthus or Nicodemus, most of the Alphatians are not particularly willing to fight. A few try to organize some resistance, but their superiors countermand their orders, saying that they must hold out until reinforcements arrive or until they begin their evacuation—they cannot waste lives and equipment on futile attempts to resist!

What the PCs Can Do: PCs with the Alphatians should certainly try to find a way out of this, or they might not survive the siege! However, they will discover that they won't receive much help from their reluctant allies. Jennite PCs can try to aid the siege and perhaps help bring the forts down in a short time. Either way, the forts are essentially doomed—they won't be able to withstand the Jennite siege for long without reinforcements or new food or supplies, not to mention the failing morale of the Alphatians, who dislike the new laws of equality they are fighting for and still don't think an Alphatian life should be sacrificed for all the Jennites' lives.

Third Week

Flaurmont 15, AC 1017: Conversion.

Location: Forest of Lothenar, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: Christopher Dove and his escort are surprised by an ambush while traveling in the Malor Swamp. The party is attacked by a single fierce warrior with flowing blond hair, dark complexion and steely gray eyes wearing a chain mail and wielding a two-handed sword in a single hand. The most incredible feature is that the

stranger is riding a huge gold dragon, who assists his rider in the fight. The blond warrior immediately picks off the armored warlord, while the dragon is left taking care of the remaining six soldiers, who cower in front of the mighty beast's blows and try to escape his wrath. Surprisingly, nobody pays attention to Christopher Dove, who hides well beneath a mangrove's thick roots, half-immersed in the swamp's waters. The blue-armored warlord is unable to resist the blond warrior's assaults, but when victory seems at hand for the attackers, he suddenly unleashes a fiery breath upon his enemy. The blond warrior, however, seems unimpressed by the dragon knight's power and goes on charging, while his draconic ally has already finished off the puny soldiers and sits nearby waiting for the end of the duel. The blue-armored dragon knight finally collapses in front of the blond warrior, admitting his defeat, but instead of killing him, the warrior touches his enemy's forehead with the palm of his hand, radiating a strange golden aura on the dragon knight. Some moments after, he leaves the knight, still frozen in place and approaches his dragon ally.

Before flying away, however, he yells down towards Dove's hideout: "You are now free to leave this accursed land, mortal! However, if you still want to discover the darkest secret of Denagoth, you are to look for the Nameless Tower in the eastern forest. Whatever your decision will be, this brave knight will accompany you to your destiny!" Still amazed by the events, Dove stares at the dragon knight, who merely gazes back at him with a soft smile on his lips. Dove emerges from his hideout and approaches the knight, who gently kneels and astounds him by saying: "My name is Khel. I am to protect you at the cost of my own life. This is my new duty, as Henadin instructed me. Now, master, where shall I guide you?" Dove's lips part and two simple words reach the knight's ears: Nameless Tower. (*See Th. 17, Th. 28; Fl. 20, Ya. 12.*)

What This Means: The legendary Denagothian hero, Henadin, appeared out of thin air to engage the Dragon Knight in a

mighty duel and free Dove from his captors. The blond warrior was indeed Henadin, since he is now a Titan in the service of Diamond, the Sun Dragon. He has been instructed by the draconic Immortal to free Dove and to reveal to him where he might find the answers to many questions pertaining the true nature of Denagoth's lord. Diamond hoped the archaeologist's curiosity would have pushed him along the path to the Nameless Tower and it guessed right. Henadin also purified the Dragon Knight's tainted soul, turning him into a good being serving Diamond, to make sure Dove could reach the hidden tower more easily and bypass its guardians. What lies within the walls of this mysterious building none but the Immortals know.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are with Christopher Dove, or if the party has taken his place in the campaign, they might want to enter the fray. Then, it is up to them to decide if they want to follow the lead given them by Henadin; if they refuse Dove proceeds with only the dragon knight as an escort anyway.

Flaurmont 15, AC 1017: More Evidence... Maybe.

Location: Tanagoro Plains. HW

Description: A runner wearing the badge of the Kitma Tribe arrives in Shazula's camp. The runner informs Shazula that his people have discovered the presence of a foreign female war party within Kimta' lands. His people have been engaging them sporadically since their discovery. So close to Shazeke lands, the Kimta's Chief Xalmak has sent a runner to inform Shazula that there might be others in the area.

Suddenly reminded of Izala's prophecy, Shazula is shocked that perhaps the old crone did have some insight on future events. He orders a war party to be sent to intercept the female warriors. He places his cousin, Dazuzu in command. He tells his cousin to take prisoners, especially if one is seen with dark colored skin. He also tells him to try to find out as much about the female warriors as he can. (*See Nu. 22; Ya. 9,*

Ya. 10.)

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs may be sent by Shazula in lieu of his cousin, or as assistants to him, to capture the female warriors.

Flaurmont 15, AC 1017: Imperial Davania Expedition Reaches Raven Scarp.

Location: City of Raven Scarp, *Exarchate* of Davania Superior, Hinterlands, Thyatian Empire. DV

Description: After a relatively uneventful voyage from the city of Thyatis and a couple of weeks' rest in Beitung, the Thyatian expedition to Davania reaches the city of Raven Scarp, both to pick up additional supplies, drop off messages and other sundry and to consult with the locals in order to determine the best routes to pursue their mission.

While in the city, the expedition members hear of the ongoing conflict in Thratia against the Hinterlanders led by Siobhan and resolve not to venture too deeply into the interior while they are here. In the meantime, Thyatian and Minrothaddan merchants make arrangements with the port authorities to acquire land for the construction of new warehouses. The expedition also picks up a Thyatian scholar, by the name of Marcus Cassius Aurestius, who will share his knowledge of this region of Davania to aid them in their expedition. (See *Va. 25; Fy. 18, Am. 9.*)

What This Means: Of the three imperial expeditions launched in Vattermont of this year, the group voyaging to Davania had the easiest task until now, in that the immediate destination (the Hinterlands) was already well-known and under Thyatian control. Due to the instability of the region at the moment, however, the remainder of the voyage will be undefined. The expedition's leader, Julius Ambrosius, will decide to stay in the Hinterlands' territorial waters for the next few months, until (he hopes) the situation calms down.

Once arrangements for the new warehouses have been made, Julius will have

his expedition sail to Fiorenza and Cittanova, both to perform minor errands and to acclimatize his crew with sailing in the occasionally treacherous coastal waters of Davania.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs could be part of the expedition, or could try to join it once it reaches Raven Scarp.

Flaurmont 15, AC 1017: No Help in Sight.

Location: Olgarian *Levja*, the Converted Lands, Hulean Empire. WB

Description: The Olgarian rebels wait in vain for supplies and weapons from Zuyevo, which were expected to arrive today. When the aid fails to arrive, the Olgarians are left wondering what happened. Did Zuyevo decide to abandon them to their fate or has Hule somehow prevented the Zuyevean aid from arriving? (See *Nu. 23, Va. 10; Fy. 16, Sv. 1.*)

What This Means: The aid to Olgar was indeed sent from Zuyevo. However, it never arrived. Minister of State Vasily Stolbov and other corrupt officials have sold it and pocketed the profit. The Zuyevean *Tsar* is informed by his officials that the aid reached Olgar as planned and so suspects nothing. Also, the rebels are having a hard time because it turns out that the vast majority of Olgarians are loyal to Hule, as a result of Hosadus's successful subordination and conversion efforts. Thus, they have a hard time sustaining the revolt and gaining recruits and begin to get dispirited.

What the PCs Can Do: Olgarian PCs can attempt to investigate the disappearance, perhaps discovering clues to the Zuyevean corruption and Hulean intrigue.

Flaurmont 16, AC 1017: Esteban Under Siege.

Location: Town of Ciudad Tejillas, *Estado de Almarrón*. SC

Description: After a minor victory over *Don Esteban's* force last week, *Barón Maximiliano* has pushed his opponent back into Ciudad Tejillas. With *Don Esteban* in

control of the city, *Barón Maximiliano* settles in for a siege. (See *Fl. 2, Fl. 3; Ya. 2, Ya. 14.*)

What This Means: The longer *Don Esteban* holds *Barón Maximiliano* outside the gates of Ciudad Tejillas, the better his chance of success in toppling him. The shadowy messenger who visits *Don Esteban* periodically from his mysterious benefactor has told him that help will soon arrive to relieve the siege and place *Don Esteban* back in his rightful place on the throne of Almarrón.

Flaurmont 16, AC 1017: Imperial Skothar Expedition Enjoys Seagirt.

Location: City of Seagirt, *Exarchate* of the Pearl Islands, Thyatian Empire. SD

Description: The joint imperial expedition to Skothar sails into the Harbor of Pearls and the expedition members are given some rest and relaxation time. They become the first major group of guests to stay at the newly-opened resort. Once again the fleet's commander and officers meet with the *Exarch*, Nurokidu Nuar and his chief advisors. Several cargoes of the exotic products of the Pearl Islands are taken aboard ship, as well as some Nuari members of the expedition. (See *Fl. 2, Fl. 14; Ya. 5, Kl. 27.*)

What This Means: This is a normal event on the itinerary of the expedition to Skothar, very similar to the one that occurred in Beitung. Tours and feasts are arranged for the members of the expedition, who enjoy themselves as this is the last friendly port of call before sailing east. After a week in port, the expedition continues on.

What the PCs Can Do: The characters might have a run in with practitioners of strange island magic while exploring the islands.

Flaurmont 17, AC 1017: Meghaddaran Clans Gather.

Location: Near the *Torala-dûn*, Meghaddaran Territories, Aryptian Savannah. DV

Description: In a large valley, lying north

of Vanya's Rest, several Meghaddaran clans gather at what they refer to as the *torala-dûn* (meeting stone) and there the clan chiefs discuss the latest attacks conducted by the Heldannic Knights, as well as the plight of those Meghaddaran clansmen captured during that period. They feel that their own warriors are too few to stand long against a prolonged Heldannic invasion and they also lack the magical prowess demonstrated by their enemy's clerics. Some of the oldest chiefs recall a time, as told by their grandfathers, of great eagles flying low over the savannah, from which many knights could emerge, but which could themselves spit great balls of energy which inflicted great harm upon all whom they touched. Thinking upon this, many chiefs begin to despair, thinking that there may come a time when all of the Aryptian Savannah will be ruled by the Heldannic plow.

Then one elderly chief, by the name of Tarodad, recounts a tale of the warrior skills of the great cat-men of the northwest, of whom he had heard during his travels many years ago. He suggests that some runners be sent thence, to petition these cat-men, if they indeed exist, to aid the Meghaddara in their drive to preserve their independence. (See *Th. 14, Fl. 9; Ya. 12, Kl. 20.*)

What This Means: The Meghaddara are split into numerous clans, varying in size and strength and spread over a large portion of the Aryptian Savannah. As such, they are not overly unified; before the Heldannic invasion [*AC 935. Ed.*], small-scale warfare was common amongst the clans. Now, some clans are becoming aware of the need for greater cooperation—hence this meeting. Most Meghaddaran clans have legends of the cat-men (*rakasta*), who had already been established on the savannah when the humans first arrived here. They were portrayed in these legends as being very powerful and honorable. Owing to the desperate circumstances in which the local Meghaddaran tribes now find themselves, even ancient legends are beginning to offer hope.

What the PCs Can Do: Meghaddaran PCs could be part of the scouting party, in

which case any number of wilderness encounters (friendly and hostile) are possible.

Flaurmont 17, AC 1017: Heldun Forces Mustering.

Location: City of Dunadale, Kingdom of Heldun, Thyatian Empire and Nayce, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: Outside the city of Dunadale, a host of soldiers has been growing slowly over the past few weeks. Today, Queen Asteriela visits the assembled men and women and urges them to train hard and not to lose their resolve. She also tells all present that she is requesting permission from the Thyatian and Naycese governments to temporarily increase the allowable troop counts for Heldun, in order to deal with the invaders more effectively. Though some soldiers take heart by her appearance, others appear indifferent. (*See Th. 20, Fl. 2; Fl. 21, Fl. 27.*)

What This Means: Since the Heldannic invasion in late 1016, Heldun has been in disarray. Not only was the military reduced in size commensurate with the treaty that created this nation; the successful conquest of Helskir took everyone completely by surprise. Morale sank even further when local units were routed at the Battle of Two-Forks Ridge and when news reached the populace of the losses of Sjöfjord and Dawnhaven. Despite these setbacks, Asteriela has remained true to her adopted nation and continued with the necessary reorganization of her armies. The fact that allowable troop numbers will soon be reached and that permission will be required in order to exceed those limits, does not help matters, though.

What the PCs Can Do: Those in the service of Asteriela could find themselves dispatched to Thyatis City or Ionace in order to obtain an audience with either of those governments, for the purpose of gaining permission to increase troop counts. Otherwise, player characters could find their services in demand for training the growing Heldunian army.

Flaurmont 17, AC 1017: Raid on Tenpocatliotl.

Location: City of Tenpocatliotl, Azcan Empire. HW

Description: Redbeard Kray sails the Butchery through the reefs of the Gulf of Aztlan to conduct a raid on Azcan lands. Kray probes the city's defenses, then lands about a march away. The pirates strike a small mining camp and raze it. They suffer some casualties at the hands of the hardened Azcan warriors, but the payoff is worth it; they make off with a prize of newly-mined Azcan gold and head back out to sea before more Azcans arrive. (*See Th. 25, Fl. 7; Fe. 6, Fy. 15.*)

What This Means: This is a good target for the pirates to hit, as the Azcans here are more concerned with the Schattentalfen and gold is plentiful. Redbeard has led another lucrative raid, which will earn his crew's respect and gratitude and will add to his growing reputation throughout the seas.

Flaurmont 17, AC 1017: Gold Mines "Opened."

Location: Bylot Hills. WB

Description: The Zuyevan *Tsar* receives word that new mines have been opened in Bylot Hills and will soon begin production. (*See Nu. 1, Va. 13.*)

What This Means: The *tsar* has been misinformed, there are no Zuyevan gold mines in Bylot Hills yet. Although the *tsar* has ordered them opened, the resources sent to do so were appropriated by corrupt officials. However Minister of State Vasily Stolbov assures the *tsar* that everything is proceeding well.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs could somehow discover that there are no gold mines and try to report it to the Zuyevan government. They will have a hard time doing it since many government officials are corrupt and actually reaching the *tsar* may be nearly impossible.

Flaurmont 17, AC 1017: Stonewall Informs Limn.

Location: City of Trollhattan, Kingdom of Limn, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: Rogart, a historian and advisor and Amagast, a cleric of Razud, have been sent to Limn to discuss Stonewall's invasion plans with King Drushiye and Queen Mellora. Amagast may be the aristocrat, but Rogart is clearly the more experienced of the two, as he does most of the talking. They explain Stonewall's intentions to invade Arkan and request that their forces may travel through Limn on their way to Arkan. An agreement is eventually reached and Rogart and Amagast go back to Draco to inform King Koblan. (*See Fl. 4, Fl. 9; Ya. 1, Ya. 9.*)

What This Means: Stonewall will need to pass through several nations to get to Arkan—Limn is just the first one and as they need their forces ready for battle, they cannot afford to make additional enemies along the way and they have compensated Limn for allowing them passage. Limn itself would rather let Stonewall go on with their invasion, as being in the way could just mean that Stonewall decided to attack Limn instead and Limn does not want such a large army right on their border. In fact, Rogart was quite skilled at hinting between the lines that if they did not grant their forces passage, then the situation could become so desperate due to the lack of food, that the leaders of Stonewall might not be able to control them. While King Drushiye and Queen Mellora do not appreciate that kind of veiled threat, they can scarcely afford to call Rogart's bluff on the matter. Then again, Limn also is also densely populated in a small area (though nowhere nearly as much as Stonewall), so they could face a food-shortage problem themselves; Rogart knew this and has promised them a portion of the livestock Stonewall will claim during its conquest, which helped in reaching an agreement.

Flaurmont 17, AC 1017: Possession Is Nine Tenths of the Law.

Location: Trevanion Hills, Duchy of Retebius, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: A dark robed figure enters slowly, with a halting pace, a dark cavern on the mountains of eastern Buhrohur.

He wears a short gray beard and has an exceedingly cold look in the eyes. No trembling is in his hands, although his face shows an old age and in front of him stands a skeletal figure dressed in purple and white tunics and with a golden scepter in its hand. The old man says: "I gave you what you wanted. Now give ME what I want." The figure suddenly transforms, as if its body were being ripped apart from the inside. When the transformation is done, a large, terrible fiend (a pit fiend) stands in place of the robed figure. The skeletal figure cackles loudly, joined in hearty laughter by the fiend. The skeletal figure fades away, leaving the fiend alone in the cave... to plot. (*See Fl. 13; Fl. 24, Kl. 24.*)

What This Means: The dark, robed figure was what was left of Callastian Jowdynites. This once noble and decent man was possessed by the dark spirit of a pit fiend during the height of the Crown War, in secret by the initiative of a follower of Thanatos. When the last battle was lost, the fiend took firm control over Callastian's actions. He then led Callastian's family and retainers into the hills north of the Trevanion and eventually slaughtered them.

The skeletal figure is a powerful and wizard and priest of Thanatos—an ancient Nithian lich. This lich has been a key tool in Thanatos's plans for many centuries—from the fall of Nithia through His influence over the Hattians. The lich's lair is actually in the bowels of Hattias, deep under the city of Hattias. The fiend has been tasked by the lich and Thanatos to cause havoc in Thyatis. Actually, though, this was a ruse on the part of Thanatos—meant to cause further upheaval in Thyatis, but aiming at an ultimate conclusion of convincing the Thyatians that the cause of strange events

surrounding Hattias (to wit, Thanatos's activities through the ages) is at an end.

The pit fiend is actually trapped as well—he is not the most willing servitor (especially since the lich is Neutral Evil and neither he nor Thanatos are a part of the pit fiend's hierarchy). He will do what he can within the limits of his orders to undermine and betray the lich. Thanatos is counting on that, actually, as part of his own scheme. The lich has been useful for a long time—but all things come to an end. That is the way of Entropy.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs will be unable to interfere with this event, but powerful characters, especially those involved in the investigations of the death of Jowdynites's family and retainers and the duke's disappearance, will likely be drawn into later events. Suitably and expanded with additional adventures and materiel, the events of this thread would be suitable for the first part of the Trial for those seeking Immortality on the Path of the Epic Hero.

Flaurmont 18, AC 1017: Activity in Menkara.

Location: City of Menkara, Empire of Nithia. HW

Description: The regular hubbub of the bustling traffic passing through Menkara is disturbed by the presence of many workmen, busily blocking off sections of the main street near the port. Within the cordoned-off area, flagstones are uprooted as what is obviously a construction project begins. (*See Th. 20; Fy. 4.*)

Flaurmont 19, AC 1017: Panic Across the Plains.

Location: Across the northeastern Meghala Kimata Plains. DV

Description: In the wake of the Mivosian campaign against the Heldannic Knights, word has spread of the deeds of the soldiers of that city-state, how they systematically drive forth or enslave those who will not submit to their authority and how they are conscripting locals into their armies and

forcing them to fight for their new overlords. With each telling, the tales become more embellished, until the Mivosians acquire almost hellish aspects and seemingly become veritable demons.

Coupled with this general feeling of fear is the presence of refugees from those city-states, villages and towns that fell to the Mivosians, who relate their tales of woe to anyone who will listen and urge them to flee this region of the plains and seek a new home where they will not have to live in the shadow of the Mivosians, the Heldannic Knights, or their wars. Some listeners take these words to heart and pack what belongings they can carry and head to what, they hope, will be greener pastures. Hundreds have already done so, hearing of the relative safety and stability of the city-states of the western Meghala Kimata Plains and even of the empire that is rumored to exist to the north.

What This Means: No one wants to live in, or near, a war zone and the people of the Milenian city-states are no exception. Having survived for centuries by relying on themselves, they are no strangers to war, but the campaign being waged by the Mivosians, which is also forging an empire, is something unprecedented. This, coupled with the rumored powers of the Heldannic Knights and the historical distrust among the city-states, has created an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty. People are no longer certain that their homes will still be standing tomorrow, or that their towns or city-states will remain free. For those whose homes were destroyed, or fell to the Mivosians, there is nothing keeping them here anymore. The events set into motion over the past few months are about to unleash a demographic shift unknown in the region since the fall of the Milenian Empire.

Flaurmont 19, AC 1017: A Strange Patron.

Location: City of Shraek, Kingdom of Blackheart, Floating Continent of Alpathia, Alpathian Empire. HW

Description: At one of the city's taverns,

the normal retinue of patrons are joined by a solitary individual dressed in black pants, blouse, hooded cloak and boots, which is hardly abnormal attire here. Across his chest is a brace of three daggers. The individual spends a few hours working the room; buying drinks, partaking in games of skill and initiating light conversation.



Initially his presence is welcomed by both tavern patron and tavern employee alike. However, as the magist Talmaron and his entourage enter and take a seat at a table, his demeanor changes drastically. Spotting them from across the room, he strides towards their table and unleashes a volley of spell fire into their midst. As the tavern goes into a scramble for cover, the black-clad individual stands over the stunned and hurt figure of Talmaron and casts a final spell, which leaves behind but a pile of dust.

In a final act, the darkly-clad individual kicks the dust pile with his foot, dispersing it across the tavern floor. He then turns and strides towards the door. His egress is challenged by one of the party's members, Kasista, but a quick and sternly-worded comment freezes the individual in her tracks. With that the figure continues his way out into the street and closes the door behind him.

With the figure gone, the tavern patrons scurry from their havens. Several want to pursue the attacker but are stopped by Kasista. When pressed, she merely cryptically responds that their prey is a hunter and such a hunter is best left alone. She then mutters something about the "the Tagoro have exacted their revenge." At hearing this any thoughts of pursuit are forgotten.

What This Means: This incident is a simple retaliatory assassination. Talmaron, Kasista and their entourage are adventurers. Months prior they had entered the tower estate of the magist, Calmad, a known

member of the Tagoro Sect. Initially, the Tagoro were going to slay the entire party. However, their raid also showed a number of flaws in the stronghold's defenses, so the sect decided just to target their leader Talmaron. In particular, they wanted no harm to come to Kasista as she is related to certain sect members and is being contemplated for recruitment into the sect.

To execute their retaliatory strike, they decided to send a party led by Klandis, the older brother of Kasista. He would be tasked with making the kill while the rest of his team acted as lookouts and assisted in his flight from the scene. Klandis and his team had tracked Talmaron's party for months, seeking to find an opportune time to strike. When they learned that they were going back to Blackheart they decided to strike at them there.

In Shraek, Klandis's team had little trouble observing their targets' habitual activities. They decided to strike at the tavern as it offered a relaxed setting, but a setting where the execution could be seen by many. The strike went off as planned. Klandis entered before their targets and ingratiated himself in with the locals. Talmaron's party eventually arrived and the assassin struck. As hoped, few rose to defend Talmaron. Even Kasista backed off after recognizing her brother as the attacker and having heard his comment: "Back away sister... the Tagoro are willing to let Talmaron's blood pay for your party's folly."

For Kasista, the combination of sibling and the Tagoro is more than enough to back off. Likewise, the show of force and reference to the Tagoro keeps pursuers from following. This was wise, as Klandis had the rest of his team out on the street, strategically placed to handle any tavern patrons that chose to give chase.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs affiliated with Talmaron may be caught up in the assassination. Or the PCs may be in the tavern during it. PCs may even find themselves hired by friends or family of Talmaron to avenge his loss, thus possibly finding themselves discovering the Tagoro

Sect and even coming into conflict with them.

Flaurmont 20, AC 1017: *Baronesa Isabel Gets a Visit.*

Location: Town of Ciudadela de León, *Baronía de Torreón*. SC

Description: *Baronesa Isabel* “La Terrible” of Torreón gets a strange visit in the night. She is awakened by a black garbed man sneaking in through her window at night—no mean feat, as *la baronesa* has many enemies and sleeps in a very well defended villa. Feigning sleep, she reaches for the dirk under her pillow, but before she can act the man in black has slipped away, leaving behind a note and a single rose, from which emanates a sweet sounding hum.

Upon opening the letter, she finds it is nothing less than a love letter, addressed to her! And the rose is a magical Gargoñan rose, a rare plant indeed. (*See Ya. 12, Ya. 17.*)

What This Means: *Baronesa Isabel* may be getting a bit old now and have a reputation for being a harsh, cruel leader, but secretly she has always had dreams of finding true love. Unfortunately her nature has put off would-be suitors who are looking for the same thing she is. *La baronesa* keeps the matter to herself, but her courtiers notice that she is in an uncommonly good mood in the next week.

Flaurmont 21, AC 1017: More Defenses for Helskir.

Location: City of Helskir, Dominion of Helskir, Heldannic Empire, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: *Ordensgeneral Anna von Hendriks* announces another initiative to bolster defenses around Helskir to her advisors. In addition to the outer wall that is even now slowly being constructed, she proposes that a series of wooden motte-and-bailey fortresses be constructed at a distance of 500 to one thousand feet from it. After a few moments of discussion, her advisors appear to agree with the idea and plans are immediately put into motion to assign

knights and prisoners to building crews. (*See Fl. 2, Fl. 17; Ya. 4, Ya. 10.*)

What This Means: Motte-and-bailey fortresses are relatively inexpensive and easy to build compared to stone fortifications. They are also economical in that no materials need to be manufactured in Helskir to supplement the effort; all the necessary materials exist in the wilderness. It is believed that a ring of such fortresses could provide early warning to the defenders of Helskir in the event of a Heldunian counteroffensive and slow down any advance as forces are diverted to besiege and occupy each one.

Flaurmont 20, AC 1017: Stop By at Gereth Minar.

Location: Tower of Gereth Minar, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: Khel the dragon knight arrives at the tower of Gereth Minar with Professor Dove. Here he requests the keep’s commander’s permission to volunteer another six men to replace his lost soldiers and to continue the tour of Denagoth together with the archaeologist. After checking the documents presented by the knight, the orcish commander grants Khel what he asked for and after a night’s rest at the tower, the group marches forth eastwards. (*See Th. 28, Fl. 15; Ya. 12, Ya. 14.*)

What This Means: Khel knew the dangers of the northern wastes might give them trouble during the trip to the Nameless Tower, so he used a bit of cunning. He marched into Gereth Minar, presented his orders to its commander and tricked him into lending to the knight and Dove some of his men to guard the duo’s trek towards the hidden tower. He only hopes the commander won’t inform the high priestess of the direction they have taken, since they were not supposed to go further than Gereth Minar.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are with Khel they might be powerful enough that this risk can be avoided. Khel may want to increase the size of the party anyway,

leading the (maybe already suspicious) PCs to either accept or oppose his actions.

Flaurmont 21, 1017, AC: A Messenger Dispatched.

Location: Town of Lothar, Continent of Iciria. HW

Description: Uart-neter Semsu oversees the launching of a small vessel, carrying a party of four Nithian soldiers, which will send word to the *pharaoh* concerning what has happened in Lothar since the last report. As it glides out of sight towards the Sea of Yr, the Lord of Lothar ponders his outpost's isolated position and how long it will take before colonists will begin to arrive in force. That evening, a secret meeting takes place... (See *Tb. 10, Fl. 14; Ya. 4, Fe. 16.*)

What This Means: Lothar is relatively magic-poor by Nithian standards; there are no pyramids to supply the low-level spells which many Nithians come to expect in their homes and there are no flying barges. Although the soldiers garrisoned here have accomplished much, they are still too few to make much headway against the wilderness. That and Lothar's isolated position, makes Uart-neter Semsu well aware of his people's vulnerable position.

What the PCs Can Do: Trustworthy Nithian PCs may be assigned this task, in which case they will be in for a grand trek across the continent...

Flaurmont 21, AC 1017: Mivosian Siege Still Ineffective.

Location: Town of Polakatsikes, Dominion of Polakatsikes, Heldannic Empire, Meghala Kimata Plains. DV

Description: Once again, a Heldannic *warbird* lands in Polakatsikes, but not without taking a few potshots at the Mivosians. This time, however, the besiegers are aware of the dangers and manage to get out of harm's way with minimal casualties, though another catapult is destroyed by the vessel's *blight belcher*. (See *Fl. 2, Fl. 7; Ya. 2, Ya. 26.*)

What This Means: Wolfgang Stimmel has received another 100 soldiers to bolster

his garrison, as well as more essential supplies. The fact that the Heldannic Knights are able to receive such aid, albeit sporadically, is something of a blow to the confidence of the Mivosians, who until now were quite convinced that, eventually, their enemies would be forced to surrender.

The Mivosian commander has long ago ruled out a direct assault on the town; the walls are far too thick and well-defended to make the expense (in terms of men) worthwhile and the clerical abilities of the knights themselves must be considered. Instead, he will decide to continue the siege and resort to other, more indirect, means to achieve victory.

Fourth Week

Flaurmont 23, AC 1017: The Murderer Unmasked?

Location: City of Hapta, Empire of Nithia. HW

Description: While on patrol during the sleep, a patrol of city guardsmen is accosted by a pale, frantic man. Babbling almost incoherently, he identifies himself as Amun, one of the three people who had disappeared over ten days previously. Speaking extremely quickly, he tells them that he was abducted by a tall, gaunt man, who was able to paralyze him with a glance. He was taken to an abandoned house in the poorest district of Hapta, where, along with two other victims, he was drained of much of his blood over several days. The other two victims had died, but Amun's opportunity for freedom came when his captor left the building—presumably to find more victims.

Intrigued by Amun's story, the guardsmen usher him to the nearest city guard building for further questioning. (See *Va. 18, Fl. 13; Fl. 24, Fl. 26.*)

What This Means: The mysterious killer has changed his tactics: instead of attacking people in the open, he is abducting them for his own fiendish purposes. Thanks to

Amun's successful escape, the authorities now know where the killer is hiding.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are helping the Haptans solve this mystery and put an end to the killer's reign of terror, they may be the ones to venture to the house in question.

Flaurmont 23, AC 1017: Darokin Spies a Rival.

Location: City of Darokin, Republic of Darokin. OW

Description: The Merchants Guild of Darokin experiences a particularly strong commotion today as many prominent merchants express their concern about the Thyatian trade expedition to the west. Adding fuel to the fire is a visit by Elissa Pennydown, who is by now known and popular among the merchant class as a strong supporter of Darokin's prosperity. She gives a speech about Thyatian opportunists who are attempting to muscle in on western trade while Darokin is fighting to save the known world from the forces of darkness. After she finishes speaking, she is met with wild applause. (*See Th. 19, Fl. 7; Fe. 1, Fe. 10.*)

What This Means: This is part of the continued efforts on Hule's part to undermine relations between Darokin and Thyatis. Hulean agents are quietly stirring up anti-Thyatian sentiments among the merchants of Darokin. They don't have to try hard—recent Thyatian activities don't leave a good impression on Darokin and vocal Darokinian extremists certainly affect the Thyatian view of Darokin's policies.

Flaurmont 24, AC 1017: Raid!

Location: City of Hapta, Empire of Nithia. HW

Description: Acting on the information provided by Amun the previous sleep, a squad of city guardsmen storm the house said to be occupied by the killer. Inside, they find a scene of utter horror: four corpses sprawled on the ground, apparently drained of blood, with gaping tears in their necks!

Before they can assess the situation fully, one of the men is enveloped by a sickly green mist, which then coalesces into the now-familiar form of the killer. With lightning-fast reflexes, he twists the guardsman's neck at an odd angle, killing him instantly.

The man's death spurs the others into action, as they swing their blades at the killer. Though they draw blood, the injuries they inflict do not seem to hinder the killer in any way, as he grabs another man and bites him savagely in the neck. What was initially a hopeful quick strike turns into a rout, as the city guards are forced to flee in terror, having lost two men. (*See Fl. 13, Fl. 23; Fl. 26, Ya. 15.*)

What This Means: The Nithians have never faced a creature who seems not to suffer from sword thrusts, or who can assume gaseous form and attack without warning. The authorities will soon ask their clerics to commune with the Immortals to determine the nature of their foe and how to defeat him. In the meantime, panic is sure to spread amongst the inhabitants of Hapta if word of the killer's powers spreads and becomes embellished with each telling.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs who are from the surface world may have their suspicions as to the nature of the killer, though they will not be able to verify them without seeing their foe first.

Flaurmont 24, AC 1017: Helter-Skelter.

Location: Trevanion Hills, Duchy of Retebius, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Travelers come across the homestead of some settlers in the hills just west of the Mesonian River. The inhabitants, a family of farmers and their farmhands and servants, have all been horribly slain, their bodies torn apart. Disturbing words are scrawled on the walls of the house in the blood of the victims. The travelers flee the area in horror and report the crime to the imperial authorities. Soon the team tasked with investigating the strange murders in the region is brought into the investigation of

this crime. Once again the initial blame falls upon the naturalists and druids.

However, when the investigating team arrives on the scene, they find a heavy iron scroll tube. The previous patrolmen who first arrived on the scene don't remember seeing it before. In the scroll tube is a parchment, with a message written in human blood. The message is addressed to Emperor Eusebius and a courier is dispatched to the city of Thyatis with it at once. (*See Fl. 13, Fl. 17; Kl. 24, Am. 3.*)

What This Means: This is part of the pit fiend's reign of terror intended to draw some of the empire's most renowned heroes to their deaths. This is the contents of the message—it instructs the emperor to send his most able champion(s), alone and unarmed, to face him two months from today in a certain location in the hills south of Biazzan. They are to allow themselves to be killed, or the murders will continue. Various divinatory spells used to analyze the scroll determine that the writer is a powerful pit fiend, giving the emperor and his advisors some clue as to what they are up against. Demetrian also warns the emperor that most of the time such creatures come from the outer planes by means of the *summoning* of another and that his investigations have revealed this to be the case in this instance. But he has not been able to uncover who or what sent the fiend.

After discussing the problem, the emperor's advisors come to the conclusion that they should send someone as the message suggests—but to try and trap the fiend and hopefully discover its origins, to track down and eliminate the source of the fiend.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs investigating the matter will be sent to the site and find the scroll. This is also a point where characters that haven't been involved up to this point might be drawn into the events. Note that trapping a powerful fiend that can *teleport* at will and detect most illusions and disguises will require careful planning. The fiend's message will actually identify by name the imperial champion it expects to

have show up, but this is left vague so the DM can insert whoever is appropriate from the campaign.

Note that if the fiend discovers deception in time, or if it is losing a melee, it will use its abilities to escape by *teleportation* rather than fight to the death. So the PCs will have to be both creative and very deadly to both get the information they need and to eliminate the fiend.

Flaurmont 24, AC 1017: Petition in Kittings.

Location: Town of Glenswych, Bishopric of Kittings, Kingdom of Bellayne. SC

Description: Commoners of Kittings deliver a petition to the Bishop of Kittings, denouncing the king for being out of touch with the people. However, royalist militants appear in Glenswych with their own petition. Things turn ugly remarkably quickly when the royalists tear up the parliamentary petition and skirmishing begins across Glenswych in a similar fashion to the rioting seen recently in Leominster. Unlike in Leominster, the rioting is not fully quelled and Glenswych remains a dangerous place for royalist and parliamentarian alike for some time to come. (*See Fl. 2, Fl. 9; Ya. 6, Ya. 21.*)

What This Means: Opinion is divided across the nation, while the specter of civil war looms. The tensions are such that families and friends are split over the issue of the king versus the parliament. Similar events on a lesser scale are being played out right across the kingdom, as brother is turned against brother and father against son—if it does flare into full scale war it will likely be the ugliest and most telling war that Bellayne has yet seen.

Flaurmont 26, AC 1017: An Answer from the Immortals.

Location: City of Hapta, Empire of Nithia. HW

Description: After many sessions of intense prayer and meditation, the clerics of Hapta announce to the authorities that the

Immortals have provided an answer to their earnest questions. They have identified that killer as a creature known as a “drinker of life,” a powerful form of undead which preys upon the living by drinking their blood and sometimes using its powers to dominate mortal creatures. Incredibly evil, they are said to be creatures of utter darkness and thus cannot long withstand the life-giving rays of the sun. The clerics were told that holy symbols are powerful wards against such creatures, as is natural light, the sanctified waters of the River Nithia and wooden stakes.

Quickly, this information is passed on to the city guard and they arm themselves with pointed sticks, while their patrols are accompanied by clerics bearing holy symbols and blessed vials of water from the River Nithia. (*See Fl. 23, Fl. 24; Ya. 15.*)

What This Means: The Nithians’ Immortals have spoken the truth; Hapta is beset by a vampire. This one found himself in the Hollow World late last year after being banished by a *wish* uttered by a powerful Glantrian wizard, who said, “I wish to banish you to a place where you will suffer forever under an eternal sun!” Finding himself in a place where the fiery red sun never set, the vampire went insane from the constant agony and only barely managed to avoid death.

Not long afterward, he had found his way to Hapta, where he found ample supplies of food and obtained temporary relief from the sun through the application of mud on his exposed skin—though being outside was still excruciatingly painful. Driven mad by the sun and nearly dead from hunger, the vampire fed in a savage manner, literally tearing his prey apart in a frantic urge to feed. It is only recently, after finding a suitable hiding place where he could feed at leisure, that his sanity has slowly begun to return.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are from the surface world, the PCs could be well-equipped to handle a vampire. If this is the case, they might make short work of the vampire once they locate him. Otherwise,

they may have their hands full trying to catch up with him, as he seeks out a new hideout and resumes feeding.

Flaurmont 26, AC 1017: Survey Complete.

Location: Thanegioth Archipelago, Sea of Dread. OW

Description: The surveyors dispatched by Adonai Stephanos to the island’s interior return to the campsite on the western beach, where the young politician and his entourage have since encamped themselves while waiting for the group’s return. They report that, although there appears to be no intelligent life on the island, or any overly dangerous animals, there are a number of carnivorous plants growing deep within the jungle. One surveyor feel prey to what appeared to be a giant Venus flytrap and another fell fatally ill, after apparently sampling some recently discovered berries.

The surveyors also report that, although predators seem to be absent (the largest land animal encountered was a giant tortoise on the eastern shores), some species of birds could be considered dangerous, including a tree-dwelling stirge bearing colorful plumage and a medium-sized, flightless bird bearing a long, sharp beak. The surveyors also report the presence of numerous streams and small rivers in the island’s interior and the richness of the island’s plant life indicates rich soils. Furthermore, they note that the interior of the island appears to contain a small escarpment of sorts, above which stands a mountain peak—possibly a dormant volcano, given the igneous nature of the local rock formations.

Satisfied with the report, Adonai orders his retinue to begin clearing the jungle from a small escarpment lying above the beach; it is there where he has decided to erect permanent structures. (*See Th. 25, Fl. 13; Fe. 3, Fe. 7.*)

What This Means: This island, due in part to its small size, poses little in the way of threats to colonists. The richness of its soils is an added bonus; any colony established here could ultimately become self-sustaining, a critical concern for a city-

state such as Kastelios. Still, no one, save for Adonai himself, knows the full extent of his plans for the place.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs who took part in the surveying of the island could very well have run afoul of the carnivorous plants and dangerous birds of the interior, or have contracted malaria or any other type of disease carried by the local mosquitoes. Alternatively, the PCs could have been instrumental in saving the lives of a number of surveyors, for which they will be seen as heroes.

Flaurmont 27, AC 1017: Eusebius's Ascension Celebrated.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: On the fifth anniversary Eusebius Torion's ascent to the imperial throne, epic games are held in the Coliseum and a large banquet is held in the imperial court. The emperor issues numerous patents of nobility today, filling out the ranks that were depleted during the War of the Crown rebellion. Eusebius also surprises the assembled nobility by restoring Hattias to its ancient status, elevating it from a county to a duchy. He also elevates Lucinius from the status of a county to that of a duchy, in recognition of the service the fleet has given during the Crown War, but also the Twaelar War. Eusebius also makes some changes to the titles already granted to the loyal Isle of Dawn rulers: Redstone becomes an *exarchate* rather than a county, Furmenglaive is changed into a wider dominion, becoming the *Archonate* of Meridia.

The new nobles include: Ettore Ottaviano, Duke of Kantrium; Jamila bint Nadir, Duchess of Tel Akbir; Thyarius Palykratidius, Duke of Hattias; Justin Karameikos, Baron (Davania); Tredorian, Duke of Kerendas; Vivianna Romanones, Lady Knight of the Isle of Dread.

Elevated in status are: Anaxibius and Stefania Torion, *Exarchs* of Redstone; Phileus and Lyra Furmenglaive, *Archons* of Meridia; Leilah ben Nadir, *Exarch* of the

Hinterlands; Patrizio Baldassare, Duke of Lucinius.

Numerous others also receive knighthoods and lordships.

Eusebius also announces that Machetos is to be a county rather than a duchy and that Kendach and West Portage will be combined into one dominion, the *Archonate* of Hesperia. But he does not appoint rulers of Hesperia or nearby Septentriona yet. He does appoint his eldest son, Prince Coltius, to govern Machetos. He hopes this will give him experience in governing, which will serve Coltius well when he ascends to the imperial throne. Eusebius plans to appoint a permanent ruler for Machetos eventually. Heldun also becomes an *exarchate*, with Asteriela its *exarcha*, although a large part of Helskir is still occupied by the Heldannic Knights; the Alphatians still consider Heldun a kingdom with Asteriela its queen.

Though he doesn't have to in most cases, Eusebius makes a show of submitting his choices to the senate for their approval, because he believes they are likely to approve them all without trouble and thinks taking this step will make him look good. The new nobles all take their oath to serve the empire and uphold its laws and are quickly confirmed in their new positions by the senate. The only problem manifests during the ratification of the position of Tredorian: the aristocratic faction votes compact against it, even if they know that Tredorian's position will be voted by the rest of the senate. In an impassioned speech, Leana Scaurus, leader of the aristocratic faction, rises against this appointment. She objects to one of the oldest dominions of the empire falling under the authority of a stranger, son of the woman who brought destruction and suffering on Thyatis. She says that instead Kerendas should be in the hands of a rightful Thyatian noble. None the less, the majority of the senate, who knows that Tredorian has become an honorable and loyal Thyatian, votes to approve his nomination. Upon his elevation, Tredorian follows tradition and takes the last name Kerendas, becoming Tredorian Kerendas. Thyarius Palykratidius and Jamila bint Nadir

both have their work cut out for them restoring the distinction of their dominions and ending lingering hard feelings. Justin Karameikos received the status of baron, with an area in the Hinterlands to be determined later this year (after the errors in dominion assignment in previous years, the Office of Title and Estate has learned to be a bit more careful, to ensure that those handed out are suitable). Though Justin himself is not much interested in governing, he sees this as a way of taking care of those who came with him, ensuring they are properly rewarded by Thyatis for their service and sacrifice. The volunteers who came with him will settle in the region Justin receives (and some will likely receive lordships and estates of their own nearby). Justin will hire capable seneschals and administrators to help with the actual business of rulership.

While in the city of Thyatis, Phileus and Lyra Furmenglaive request time to speak before the senate when the newly-elected members reconvene to begin debate on the bill to extend citizenship to the lycanthropes living under The City. Though the reclusive Furmenglaives invariably appoint someone else as their senatorial representative, this request is granted. (*See Va. 21; Ya. 3, Ya. 4.*)

What This Means: This is a normal predictable event. Following the losses and demotions of so many nobles during the Crown War, it was necessary to replace them.

The move by Leana Scaurus was a desperate one: she knows that the appointment of Tredorian to govern Kerendas is a stroke at the heart of the aristocracy and she hopes, by her moving speech, to attract more votes to her party when the elections will come. Other factions of the senate also fear that Eusebius's faction will end up with a crushing majority of seats, but they don't know what to do with it. This feeling is strengthened since they feel it is dangerous to create problems when a civil war has just ended and while the empire is still recovering. Most senators know that it is better for the cause of the *imperium* that the emperor is strongly on

throne, but they hope he will not advantage himself of this situation.

Archonates are a new type of dominion, created exclusively in the overseas colonies. They are in some ways similar to *exarchates*, but are more directly tied to the imperial government. They are typically created in smaller, developing areas with sparse populations, while the *exarchates* are larger, more settled and developed.

Leilah ben Nadir is present personally at the ceremony, having returned (again via magical transportation) to Thyatis from the growing conflict in the Hinterlands to brief Eusebius on the situation, discuss war plans and coordinate the transport of reinforcements.

During the banquet held in celebration for those who have been promoted today, Gabrionus Torion, Eusebius's younger son, becomes somewhat enamored with the vivacious Vivianna Romanones. Lucianna notices this and in it sees a possibility to draw him out of his shell. The next day she tells Eusebius about it. He wants Gabrionus to stop being such a mouse and sees this as the first sign of life in the boy. He asks Vivianna if she will teach Gabrionus the fine art of swordsmanship and she agrees.

What the PCs Can Do: Characters who served Eusebius capably and loyally during the Crown War or in other ways and are scheduled (by the DM) to receive dominions or titles as a reward can gain them today. If for your campaign one of your characters receives one of the domains handed out to any of the NPCs, simply omit that person's name and replace them with the character from your campaign.

Events: Yarthmont

First Week

Yarthmont 1, AC 1017: Varkha Raids in Stygia.

Location: City of Kragm'aanle, Grand Duchy of Stygia. WB

Description: During the nights between Flaumont 28 and the Yarthmont 1, which are the two holiest nights of the Stygian troglodyte calendar, a large number of varkhas arrive in Kragm'aanle. They begin to spread chaos among the population, killing bystanders in a random fashion. The varkhas are very organized and the Stygian guards are surprised and caught unprepared by their attack. When the dawn illuminates the city once more, several buildings have been burned, many troglodytes have been killed and only a few varkhas are dead, while most seem to have disappeared. In the following days, varkhas are sighted in several parts of Stygia. (See *Ya. 3, Ya. 21.*)

What This Means: The varkhan assault had been planned in AC 1016 and they are in fact allied with the Horned Skull, a cult dedicated to the Arch-Devil Charun, who wishes to overthrow the priesthood of Yeg Shuta.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are present in Kragm'aanle during the attack, they could help the Stygian population; if they are members of the varkhan scouting party, they could instead try to kill some important members of the clergy of Yeg Shuta, which would sow even more chaos.

Yarthmont 1, AC 1017: Turned Away From the Temple.

Location: City of Rardish, Kingdom of Randel, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: The people of Rardish are shocked to find that the doors of the Temple of Alphatia are closed and guarded by armed clerics and acolytes. These guards

turn away all who try to enter the temple, either to pay homage to the Immortal or to purchase clerical magic. The reason given is that the people of Randel have showed little respect to the ways of the Immortal and therefore will not benefit from Her bestowed powers. The order comes directly from Sister Riddlynn, the head priestess. (See *Va. 6, Va. 12; Ya. 27, Fy. 8.*)

What This Means: Though Alphatians in general pay little homage to the Immortals, the spellcasting abilities of their clerics are coveted. For them, being turned away is of little importance as they can simply access these spells at other temples to other Immortals. The closing of the temple is more a matter of need than it is a matter of respect to the Immortal Alphatia. As the clerics have become corrupted, Alphatia has stopped granting them their spells. The corrupted clerics do not wish to draw suspicion, especially from the clerics that are not corrupted.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs could be hired to discover the truth behind the temple's closing. PCs that are clerics of Alphatia, depending on their personal attitude, may have their spells revoked as well and may have to undertake a suitable task to regain their Immortal's favors; the PCs may also be hired by the church to help them complete such quests.

Yarthmont 1, AC 1017: A Different Plea for Help.

Location: City of Andaire, Kingdom of Alphas'ar, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: On behalf of King Qinn of Arkan, Etesse, a cleric of Koryis, arrives from Ceafem to ask for imperial aid to stand against Stonewall's invasion. Wars between Alphatian nations are not unheard of, so Empress Eriadna says that she currently sees no reason to get involved in this conflict and sends Etesse home to Arkan. In the coming weeks, Arkan begins its own preparations to meet the expected invasion. (See *Fl. 9, Fl. 17; Ya. 9, Ya. 16.*)

What This Means: Arkan has finally discovered that it is the target of Stonewall's coming invasion. Given that Arkan has even fewer spellcasters than Stonewall and a much smaller army, their chances of withstanding an invasion are not good. Ironically, their best ally is really the distance that the forces from Stonewall must cross to get to Arkan. But if this problem can be solved and King Qinn assumes that this is already the case, then Arkan has little chance of survival because Stonewall has a much larger population to draw from for their armed forces. They also have far better warriors, while Arkan has mostly farmers, fishermen and other common people. Eriadna will not get involved because she doesn't see why she should. Given that such wars are well-established in Alphatian history, she really has no business getting involved unless one of the sides starts violating Alphatian law, or threatening the stability of the empire. In addition, some of the same factors hurt Arkan in its pleas that hurt Stonewall: because Arkan has few aristocrats now, it has a hard time getting its case seriously considered in imperial councils.

What the PCs Can Do: Apart from being the spies who discover who Stonewall is planning to go to war with and telling Arkan, there really isn't much the PCs can do here.

Yarthmont 1, AC 1017: Help Me Moghul-Khan, You Are My Only Hope.

Location: Keep of Dast, Orcland. OW

Description: *Bratak* agents of Duttai Khan reach the orc stronghold of Dast with a plea for assistance. The few *dagams* of rebellious Kiyat tribesmen under Duttai's command cannot possibly withstand the armies of the Murkit tribe. Duttai has already joined forces with the Hooplak hobgoblin hordes of the foothills of Rockhome and they suggested he approach Moghul Khan for aid.

Unfortunately, Moghul Khan denies any help to the rebellious Kiyats. The current unrest in the Sea of Grass has proven profitable enough for the yellow orc and he sees no need to put himself in further

jeopardy by aiding the doomed band of rebel Kiyats. (*See Am. 11.*)

What This Means: When the former *khan* of the Kiyats died last year, he named Manghai (his son-in-law) as his heir. Manghai then united the Kiyats with his own tribe, the Murkits, effectively eliminating the Kiyat tribe. Duttai led several hundred of his tribesmen in rebellion and though they were defeated, many of them escaped to the plains. They have been living there ever since, staying just a few steps ahead of Murkit reprisals, but with the coming spring there is little doubt that Manghai will attempt to bring an end to their rebellion.

Yarthmont 1, AC 1017: Zuyevans Besiege Tashgoun.

Location: City of Tashgoun, Kingdom of Douzbakjian, Midlands. WB

Description: The Zuyevan forces under Crown Prince Dmitry have been making steady progress in conquering the crumbling former empire of Ustalam. The vast majority of Douzbakjian's forces were destroyed by the Master towards the end of AC 1016 and what forces that remain are still reorganizing under their new ruler, Kiligi Alp Arslan. Today, the Zuyevan forces arrive at the capital of Douzbakjian. Tashgoun is a city of 13,000 and will not give up to the Zuyevans easily. As a result, Crown Prince Dmitry leaves 5,000 troops to besiege the city while the remainder march on to conquer the surrounding countryside and gather supplies. (*See Th. 1, Fl. 11; Fe. 6, Fy. 19.*)

What This Means: The Douzbaks are not entirely broken yet. The merchant aristocracy in Tashgoun has no intention of giving up its wealth to the invading Zuyevans, but they have few troops remaining with which to fight them. They hope that a long siege will reduce the morale of Zuyevo's serf infantry and if the Douzbaks can hold the Zuyevans until winter, Douzbak raiders and white orc marauders will play havoc with the Zuyevan supply lines.

Yarthmont 2, AC 1017: Fire!

Location: Town of Polakatsikes, Dominion of Polakatsikes, Heldannic Empire, Meghala Kimata Plains. DV

Description: As the siege continues and the Heldannic garrison prepares for yet another day of expectant tension, an alarm is raised—coming from the granaries! Within moments, it becomes clear what the source of the alarm happens to be: two of the granaries are on fire, with pillars of black smoke already billowing their way skywards. Losing no time, Governor Wolfgang Stemmel orders fire crews, composed of off-duty soldiers and townsfolk, to deal with the problem, while at the same time ordering high-ranking knights to investigate the cause of the incident.

Before long, the fires are doused, but one of the granaries has been completely destroyed and Wolfgang's suspicions have already been aroused. (*See Fl. 7, Fl. 21; Ya. 26, Fe. 4.*)

What This Means: Wolfgang will soon suspect that, with the number of refugees who managed to make it to Polakatsikes before the beginning of the siege, it might have been possible for Mivosian spies or saboteurs to sneak into the town as well. He hopes that the identities of any such infiltrators, if they do indeed exist, will become known soon. In the meantime, the damage done was considerable: roughly two months' worth of grain and other stores have been destroyed. This will make resisting the siege and bolstering morale, all the more difficult.

What the PCs Can Do: Ambitious PCs might try to ferret out the Mivosian spy (or spies) if they do indeed exist. Alternatively, the PCs might be Mivosian spies, in which case they might have set fire to the granaries and might now be awaiting orders from the Mivosians (delivered by some prearranged and possibly magical, means) as to what their next target should be.

Yarthmont 2, AC 1017: Saragóner Force Near Breaking Point.

Location: Border between *Baronías de Gargoña* and Saragón. SC

Description: Under the relentless pressure of the Narvaezan forces with their new secret weapon, the cannon, the Saragóner army under *Barón* Balthazar is slowly being pushed back towards Saragón. There have been no decisive battles in the war yet, but the Saragóners are consistently losing the skirmishes with Los Matónes and the Narvaezan regular troops. (*See Fl. 3, Fl. 16; Ya. 14, Ya. 27.*)

What This Means: Unless armed forces come to the aid of Saragón soon, *Barón* Hugo is going to crush them and add Saragón to his growing list of conquests.

Yarthmont 3, AC 1017: The Proposal Is Presented.

Location: City of Andaire, Kingdom of Alphas'ar, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: Admiral Soltunun and his supporters have worked out a proposal and present it to the Grand Council. The text recommends canal-building projects be ordained by individual patrons, but with some imperial funds. The owner of a canal would have the right to levy a toll for fifty years; after this period the canal would become property of the respective kingdoms under the general supervision of the Empire of Alphatia. The necessary reconstruction of existing harbors can receive imperial funds likewise.

Of course a heated debate starts immediately afterwards. Zallaras describes the picture of an Alphatia cut down into small pieces by a myriad of canals, all of them built by greedy investors. Unfortunately for him, this picture seems to inspire a visionary fire in some yet undecided members. Being rich aristocrats they indeed like the idea to do something on a scale that only Alphatia can do—and to earn money with it that will finance more of their magical studies or other enterprises is not bad either.

Jolinar has noticed the reaction to Zallaras's speech and in his own speech he intensifies the grimmest part of the picture. He describes the many harbors which would dot the continent with all the dirt, the drunken and bad-mannered sailors, the whores and taverns—and all the mundaner crowds that go with them, swarming in the wild territories where many council members and other prominent aristocrats keep their estates. All of those aspects are more or less typical for harbors and cities even in Haven, but with so many coastal cities Alphatia is used to it. The Grand Council is considering this aspect though. (See *Th. 8, Th. 27; Kl. 15, Am. 1.*)

What This Means: After some days of discussion this proposal seems to be that one with the greatest chances to be accepted. Whether it will get a majority is still unsure, but Zallaras has damaged his aims definitely.

What the PCs Can Do: A fight for every vote is committed and nearly all is allowed.

Yarthmont 3, AC 1017: High Priest Killed.

Location: City of Kragm'aanle, Grand Duchy of Stygia. WB

Description: News spreads in Kragm'aanle that one of the patriarchs of Yeg Shuta has been killed by the varkhas. Indignation and rage fill the hearts of the troglodytes and many rally in favor of a full-scale war against Gournzee. Other citizens reach the royal palace and protest the seeming inability of the king to stop the varkhan assaults in the last few years. They also demand that Stygia leave the Confederacy of Klagorst because of the continued illegal activities on the part of Duke Nhorg of Vrancea, who had apparently let the varkhas pass through his lands to reach Stygia. Some dissidents begin to demand the abdication of Archduke Xagash and the passing of political power into the hands of the clergy of Yeg Shuta. (See *Ya. 1; Ya. 21, Ya. 22.*)

What This Means: This is a move by the clergy of Yeg Shuta to obtain more power

and to make war against Gournzee and Vrancea. In fact, no patriarch has been killed: the supposedly dead priest was sent to the Kerminhae secretly before the varkhan raid and was told to remain there for the time being. This would allow the clergy to throw down the Archduke (which would be a better solution for them) or to have him declare a war.

What the PCs Can Do: Not too much, really; if they are not special agents of Yeg Shuta. In this case, they could be among the ones sent to the Kerminhae to contact the patriarch and relay the instructions for him to remain in hiding.

Yarthmont 3, AC 1017: The First Duchess of Tel Akbir.

Location: Duchy of Tel Akbir, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Jamila bint Nadir returns home in the company of her aunt Leilah, to inherit the throne of Tel Akbir, having been crowned such



by Eusebius. She is the first Duchess of Tel Akbir. Although she is acclaimed by most citizens of Tel Akbir, some of them (mostly Alasiyan traditionalists) are very displeased of having a female duchess; they are not enough to create worse problems because many of them died or were imprisoned because they sided with Farid. There is some grumbling, however. The wizard Sarapammon, the magist of Tel Akbir during the reign of Tarik and Ralak Ahman al-Mustafa, a High Priest of Protius, both prominent locally and instrumental in the defeat of Farid, proclaim their support for Jamila, however. This helps limit overt opposition.

Jamila and Ettore Ottaviano become quite taken with each other during the festivities celebrating the victory over Farid and Jamila's ascension to the throne of Tel Akbir.

One of Jamila's first announcements is the outcome of the investigation of al-Azrad House's involvement in Farid's conspiracy. It has been conclusively proven that merchants of al-Azrad House supported Farid's treason, an act of sedition against the empire. Therefore, the properties of al-Azrad House in Tel Akbir are expropriated permanently by the empire in penalty. These properties are sold off to native Thyatian (including Tel Akbiran) merchants, ones known to be supporters of Eusebius. (*See Nu. 21, Fl. 27; Ya. 6, Fe. 15.*)

What This Means: Jamila bint Nadir is a beautiful but tough lady who will prove she deserves her position, but will also face significant internal challenges to her rule. Eusebius appointed Jamila due to her blood ties to the previous duke, but also as a way to score points internationally. Thyatian Tel Akbir will seem more open and cosmopolitan compared to Kin-led Ylaruam. Leilah ben Nadir came to celebrate the elevation of her niece to the rule of Tel Akbir. After the ceremony she returns to Raven Scarp via a temporary *worldwalk* wormhole created for that purpose with several prominent and skilled Thyatians and a small cadre of additional troops to prosecute the war against the Hinterlanders.

Sarapammon knows Jamila well and admires her spirit and feels she'll be a good ruler for Tel Akbir. He will serve as her magist, as he served her father. Ralak Ahman al-Mustafa is less pleased with the idea of a woman ruling Tel Akbir, but feels honor-bound to support her for now and keep the duchy stable. But he hopes she will marry soon and have a proper husband and then return to the woman's role.

As for the investigation, the findings are accurate but incomplete. Investigators discovered the involvement of al-Azrad merchants in the conspiracy and their financing of Farid. But they didn't look to differentiate between the personal actions of those involved and al-Azrad House itself, mainly because they didn't want to. They were looking for any excuse to hurt al-Azrad's operations in Thyatis and this was close enough. The fact is, most al-Azrad

merchants even in Tel Akbir were not involved and Eshram al-Azrad knew nothing of the activities. In truth, the Master of Hule manipulated things to reach this outcome, as Akir al-Sudif is one of his agents and he persuaded the others to participate in the conspiracy in order to fan the flames of antagonism between Thyatis and Darokin.

When they hear of this seizure, the Darokin Council officially protests the confiscation, but can do nothing about it. Eshram al-Azrad claims innocence of any wrongdoing, but uses none-too-flattering terms when referring to Thyatians and so Thyatian authorities ignore his claims. Elissa Pennydown supports him, further adding to the Thyatians' unwillingness to listen (they have had enough of her diatribes by now).

What the PCs Can Do: Alasiyan traditionalists will scheme to initiate plots intended to embarrass and disgrace the new duchess, to prove that they were right all along and that women can't rule effectively. Players could be set up as dupes or patsies in such plots and then have to put things right—or they might work for Jamila to thwart such plans in the first place.

Yarthmont 3, AC 1017: The Shadow Does Not Only Extend South.

Location: City-State of Miletos, Meghala Kimata Plains. DV

Description: The peace of this city-state, thus far free of the conflicts enveloping many of its neighbors, is shattered by the arrival of a large band of brigands, who descend upon the town and begin raiding its outlying regions. The local militia is dispatched to repulse the raiders and does so effectively, managing to capture a number of them in the process. It soon becomes apparent that many of the raiders were once denizens of other city-states located further south, who lost their homes and livelihoods during the Mivosian invasions. (*See Ya. 9.*)

What This Means: Although the Mivosians have not turned their attention towards those city-states lying north of the region of conflict, such as Miletos, the consequences of their actions are affecting

the lives of even those people who live far away. Although many people are seeking new homes as refugees, others have been unable to rebuild their lives and thus have turned to raiding in order to survive. This is but the first of many raids that will be suffered by Miletos (which lies closest to the region of conflict) and its neighbors.

One nasty consequence of these raids is that commerce between the city-states, small-scale though it might be, will be disrupted even further than it has been already, as caravans are attacked and merchants' warehouses ransacked. This will cause the economy to worsen considerably and people's lives will become even more miserable as a result.

Yarthmont 4, AC 1017: Treason at Close Quarters!

Location: Town of Lothar, Continent of Iciria. HW

Description: The peace of Lothar is shattered during a period of rest, when everyone living within the colony's walls is awakened by sounds of fighting coming from the docks. As squads of guards hurry towards the source of the commotion, they are momentarily blinded by sudden flashes of light and are surprised as Lothar's only ship of substantial size (an Antalian longship) breaks free of the last of its moorings and makes its way east to the Sea of Yr.

Although the garrison manages to assemble some patrols to track the vessel from the shore, it soon becomes apparent that any true pursuit is impossible; the remaining ships are either too small, or they have been sabotaged. After a few fruitless hours, the pursuit ends and Uart-neter Semsu takes account of what happened from those who witnessed the theft and subsequent incident. He soon learns that it was von Dreiburg and his fellow knights, plus a handful of Antalians, who stole the craft. (*See Fl. 14, Fl. 21; Fe. 16, Fy. 3.*)

What This Means: Friedrich von Dreiburg and the other Heldannic Knights, having grown frustrated by their own

seeming inability to convert the bulk of Lothar's inhabitants to Vanya's cause, due in large part to the *Spell of Preservation*, did not give up their dream of rebuilding a base from which the Heldannic Knights could operate in the Hollow World. They realized that, if they were to have any hope of surviving amid so many "heathens," they would have to tone down their own proselytizing and put on a show of being cooperative. This is what they have done for over a year, during which they managed to convert a small number of Antalians to their cause and their faith. They then plotted a means of escaping from Lothar in order to establish a stronghold elsewhere and resolved that they must steal one of the ships to do so. Once the messengers had been dispatched to Nithia, they saw their chance and took it, using *light* spells and other minor magics to throw the Nithian guards off balance and allow them to escape.

Now that Lothar has no ships at all, the Nithians garrisoned here, their handful of Antalian allies and the townsfolk, are all the more vulnerable.

What the PCs Can Do: Nithian PCs may have greater resources and thus may be able to track von Dreiburg and his cronies much longer than the garrison. Otherwise, the PCs might be part of von Dreiburg's group, in which case this could be a means of moving them to another part of the Hollow World for further campaigning.

Yarthmont 4, AC 1017: Asteriela Gets Her Wish.

Location: City of Dunadale, *Exarchate*/Kingdom of Heldun, Thyatian Empire and Nayce, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: While leafing through several documents pertaining to the ongoing war preparations on the part of her army, *Exarcha*/Queen Asteriela is interrupted by a messenger bearing news from Thyatis and Nayce.

Excitedly, the messenger informs her queen that both empires have consented to the temporary increase of Heldun's armies, to a number not exceeding 4,500 men, in

order to meet the Heldannic threat. In addition, both empires will provide whatever aid they deem appropriate, in due consideration of the existing geopolitical developments. Upon hearing this, Asteriela orders the messenger to carry an order to all of her generals in the city—full mobilization may proceed at their discretion. (See *Fl. 21, Fl. 27; Ya. 10, Ya. 28.*)

What This Means: Although Heldun was intended to be relatively demilitarized by Isle of Dawn standards, recent developments have made it clear to both empires that something must be done, if only on a temporary basis, in order to restore Heldun's sovereignty. Thus, it was not difficult to persuade the leadership of both empires to agree to a temporary lifting of the ban on large-scale mobilization within Heldun. Asteriela did not expect that either empire would also provide more direct aid to Heldun, but this is certainly not unwelcome.

Yarthmont 4, AC 1017: A Challenge Is Issued.

Location: City of Baraga, Merry Pirates Seas. HW

Description: Captain Theodor Merryweather challenges Captain Luciano "Barbarossa" Saviola in the Golden Skull, one of the taverns in which the pirate captains can usually be found. He proposes a naval race round the Island of Baraga and the northern islands. As both men have been bitter archenemies for years now, nobody is really surprised that Saviola accepts the challenge. (See *Ya. 7, Kl. 1.*)

What This Means: Merryweather has started his career as a ship cook, not unusual for a hin. He has worked for Saviola for eight circles until he left his service eleven circles ago. Shortly after this he acquired his own ship and became a captain himself. Saviola has suspected ever since that Merryweather had stolen gold from him but he had never gathered enough evidences to prove his guilt. Of course both men have become enemies.

Neutral observers see Saviola as the better seaman while Merryweather's ship, The

Banquet, is slightly faster than Saviola's Tornado. On the other hand it is an open secret that The Banquet is in fact led by her first officer, Fanalir Meditor. Naturally all pirates are intrigued about the forthcoming race and gamble on the outcome.

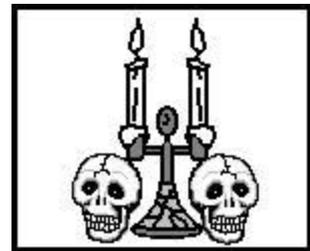
What the PCs Can Do: Both captains might hire additional sailors or fighters. They might even send some men to the other captain's ship to commit acts of sabotage.

Yarthmont 4, AC 1017: Battle of Almisford—The Advance Halted.

Location: Town of Almisford, Kingdom of Qeodhar, Nayce. AS

Description:

The assorted warriors of the Antalian *jarls* of Qeodhar, fresh from a string of recent victories in the eastern and



central regions of the island, set their sights on the town of Almisford, which last year had been one of the towns that turned away Harald and his followers. This time, Harald Yorlsson (who is serving one of the *jarls* as an aide) hopes to derive some ironic satisfaction from the upcoming battle—the town that so cruelly turned the Antalian refugees away last year will be forced to let them in now.

Marching boldly and singing Antalian folksongs praising the Norse pantheon, the assembled force of 600 warriors heads directly for the eastern gate of this walled town, confident in their impending victory. Coming over a final row of hills, the small army is given a rude shock—arrayed between them and the town stand a large force of men, some of whom are dressed in Naycese military uniforms! Also present among the defending force are several pockets of undead. While the Antalians stand frozen in shock, the assembled force of Alphatians and Qeodharans let out a roar and charge the attackers!

The necessity of holding off the assault galvanizes the Antalian into action, but the consequences of the situation become clear. Having many battle-hardened soldiers in their ranks, the Alphatians slice into the Antalian force, while shambling zombies and skeletons nip at their flanks. Sensing a rout and seeing his *jarl* overcome with shock, Harald grabs his leader's banner and loudly orders the warriors to make a strategic withdrawal. Nearby warriors follow his lead and the middle and rear ranks of the Antalian force are able to disengage themselves from combat. Several times, the *jarls* attempt to relieve their embattled companions in the front ranks, who are quickly becoming surrounded, but to no avail. With great regret, they order a retreat to Sjostrom, the closest Antalian-held village, to regroup and develop new strategies. Those Antalians unfortunate enough to be left behind are captured and marched to Farend. (See *Va. 27, Tb. 16; Fy. 9, Fy. 15.*)

What This Means: The Antalians were overconfident in their abilities, having encountered little in the way of strong resistance up to this point and they still lack the experience to stand toe-to-toe with veteran soldiers. The fact that a large portion of Norlan's forces had been campaigning in Norwold last year—officially they were pirates unaffiliated to the king—reduced his available forces considerably, to the extent that outlying regions (such as those the Antalians had been raiding and occupying) were left without much protection. This made the Antalians much more successful in their efforts than might otherwise have been the case. The unsatisfactory results of his campaign in Norwold cost Norlan considerably in terms of casualties and only recently has he been able to bring his forces back up to strength. The promise of aid from the other kingdoms of Nayce has taken the form of an expeditionary force, composed of soldiers from Bellissaria, plus some expendable undead creatures from Thothia. Qeodhar, despite being a member of Nayce, is still considered by many Alphatian kingdoms to be a peripheral

region at best; thus, most of the soldiers sent here are not of elite quality and few wizards are counted among their number.

Despite this, however, the infusion of fresh troops—2,000 in all—will help Norlan in his bid to crush the Antalian revolts. That and the fact that his own troops, battle-hardened from their experiences in Norwold, are once again ready to do battle, can only spell trouble for the embattled descendants of the once-mighty Ystmarhavners.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are fighting for the Antalians, the PCs could perform valuable scouting activities for the *jarls*, possibly alerting them to the presence of the large defending force, or they could inflict many casualties upon the Qeodharan-Alphatian force. Regardless of their efforts, a bloody battle will likely take place today, with a loss for the Antalians, though the actions of the PCs could result in reduced casualties. If they are with Norlan or the Alphatians, the PCs may play a decisive role in the battle—possibly routing the invading Antalians utterly.

Yarthmont 5, AC 1017: Celebrations in Cinsa-Men-Noo.

Location: Emirate of Nithia, Emirates of Ylaruam. OW

Description: In a public ceremony in the town of Cinsa-Men-Noo, Mahmud-ibn-Rachid is installed as the new Emir of Nithia. His predecessor, Emir Shawki Khalid, disappeared during the fiendish raids of AC 1015 and a successor was found. He declares that Cinsa-Men-Noo will be the center of his new reign and he vows that he will end the threats of demons and vampires in the north and that he will bring all heathens and necromancers to justice and usher in the word of the Eternal Truth.

To demonstrate that he is not just a big talker, he presents the means by which he will root out evil in Nithia: a new military order of the Ylari army, the Order of the Blessed Truth. This order consists of veterans of the war with the demons of 1015

and is specially equipped to deal with beings of entropic leanings. (*See Va. 15, Tb. 6.*)

What This Means: The Sultan of Ylaruam is continuing his measures to bring the emirates more firmly under the control of his new regime. The new emir has his hands full, however—the remote territories of Nithia have long been independent and rebellious and the forces of evil—in the guise of demons, sorcerers and now vampires—will be difficult to root out.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are veterans of the war against the demons in 1015, it is very likely the PCs are asked to be a part of the Order of the Blessed Truth. Even if they are not, there will be a high demand for powerful adventurers to help root out the nests of evil that reside in Nithia.

Yarthmont 5, AC 1017: Underocean Forces Arrive.

Location: Torenal Site, Sunken Arogansa, Nayce. AS

Description: The Underocean contingent sent to defend the site arrives. Commander Deltart is surprised to discover that the force is only half the size promised to the Aquans. The tritons establish a small camp on the outskirts of the site and begin patrols in the area, supplementing the overworked *submersible* forces. The tritons also report that they engaged a sizable undead force some days' swim to the north. (*See Tb. 11, Tb. 19; Ya. 14, Ya. 17.*)

What This Means: Juliaist was uncomfortable with sending a large portion of the army away from Underocean all at once, particularly in the midst of the recent difficulties. Over the next few months, as he confirms that no immediate threats exist, the remainder of the promised force will be sent. The undead force the triton destroyed was actually a scouting party of the lightning zombies.

What the PCs Can Do: Underocean PCs may be part of that force, maybe in their first extensive contact with air-breathers (if from the undersea city of Aquas).

Yarthmont 5, AC 1017: Imperial Skothar Expedition Stops in Crossroads.

Location: City of Crossroads, Kingdom of Ne'er-do-well, Nayce. SD

Description: The joint imperial expedition to Skothar stops for a day and a night in Crossroads. While the crew enjoys the port's seedy nightlife, the expedition commander, Theodorian Metothemius, meets with Koryn the Harpist for some private scheming, both imperial and personal. The expedition then sets sail the next morning for Skothar itself. (*See Fl. 16; Kl. 27, Fe. 21.*)

What This Means: The Thyatians are trying to maintain some contacts with individual Nayce kingdoms such as Ne'er-do-well, hoping to get some influence over them through scheming and plotting. Several unmarked crates are unloaded from the Thyatian ships during the night and taken to the king's personal storage facilities. For what purpose, no one but Koryn and the expedition commander knows.

King Koryn isn't exactly friendly to Thyatis—he just sees contacts with them as potentially useful in his own plots, just as the Thyatians hope to use Koryn.

What the PCs Can Do: A run-in with pirates, either in a drunken brawl on shore or in a maritime battle at sea, or both, is almost mandatory here. An attempt might also be made to drug the PCs and capture them for sale into slavery, or better yet someone might kidnap a friend of the PCs for the same purpose. The characters would then have a short deadline to recover their friend, or find themselves stranded as the expedition sails on the next day. Because Koryn is currently on good terms with the expedition, things won't get too out of hand, though. PCs wanting to pick up something unusual or of dubious nature can do it here, as almost anything or anyone is for sale in Crossroads.

Yarthmont 6, AC 1017: One of Hatfei's Favorite Daughters... Missing.

Location: Hatfei Territory, Neathar Lands. HW

Description: The Hatfei tribe is all a-buzz with the discovery that one of its more powerful families is missing one of its daughters, Tyana. Though stealing a wife is common within the Neathar tribes, most feel that this incident is more than just a simple act of spousal larceny. The Hatfei note no signs of foul play in the abduction, however with recent events they scour the surrounding area for signs of a Makekei raiding party. (*See Va. 22, Fl. 2; Fe. 6, Fy. 13.*)

What This Means: The missing girl, Tyana, was not kidnapped. In actuality she left voluntarily and met with her suitor, Zallon. The two are truly in love, having been nurturing their affections for months. Knowing that tensions were ever increasing they thought that this elopement was the best option.

What the PCs Can Do: Tribe members will be tasked with investigating the whereabouts of Tyana's disappearance.

Yarthmont 6, AC 1017: New Regime in Hattias.

Location: City of Hattias, Duchy of Hattias, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Thyarius Palykratidius arrives in Hattias to assume the position of duke. The crowd that waits for him when he enters the Oesterhaus Palace receives him with cheers and hails. Dissident Hattians do not dare openly boo or manifest their dislike... (*See Fl. 27.*)

What This Means: Although Thyarius is accepted because he avoided too many damages to their island by his military actions and conquests, mixed feelings are found in the population. The majority of the population, especially in the city, is anyway happy of the arrival of the new duke and the fact that Hattias is once again a duchy, equal in status to Kerendas and Thyatis again. And many hostile Hattians have also died in the

War of the Crown and thus aren't available to cause trouble.

What the PCs Can Do: Palykratidius (and other newly-anointed dominion rulers) will need skilled subordinates to help them administer their realms, advise them and be entrusted with important missions. PCs uninterested in ruling on their own might like being trusted troubleshooters for one.

Yarthmont 6, AC 1017: Trouble in the Church.

Location: Village of Wickerton, Viscounty of Furfield, Kingdom of Bellayne. SC

Description: Belbion-worshipping parliamentarians are rumored to be planning to smash up the organ in the church dedicated to Pax Bellanica in the village of Wickerton. Today the Bellanica clergy set an armed guard on their church—and this provokes yet another riot. The priests of Pax Bellanica avoid bloodshed but are forced to use magic to disable the more belligerent rioters. (*See Fl. 9, Fl. 24; Ya. 21, Ya. 25.*)

What This Means: Religious strife is increasing along with strife of the political variety. Urged on by their priests, Belbionites seem to favor the parliament's stance, while the worshippers of Pax Bellanica tend towards the royalist camp. With priests of both sides in some cases egging their followers on, trouble was bound to start at some point. Today, trouble started.

Yarthmont 6, AC 1017: Ettore Ottaviano Drinks the Cup Full.

Location: Town of Kantridae, Duchy of Kantrium, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Ettore Ottaviano, the victor at Tel Akbir and new Duke of Kantrium, formally arrives in Kantrium to take control. (*See Fl. 27, Ya. 3; Fe. 15.*)

What This means: Ottaviano's friend and advisor, Iulius Scaevola, proposes that he consider sending an offer of marriage to Jamila. This is an interesting idea to him: it would unify the duchies of Kantrium and

Tel Akbir, it would give him the power on the two territories and it would give him the possibility to marry a strong-willed and beautiful woman. The thing could also get the approval of Tel Akbir citizens, due to some discontent over the fact that a woman now rules the duchy.

What the PCs Can Do: Ettore Ottaviano is infatuated with the young Jamila bint Nadir, the new Duchess of Tel Akbir. He is even further infatuated with the idea of combining the two duchies into one, under his leadership. Players could be used as go-betweens between Ettore and Jamila. Characters could also be encouraged by Jamila's aunt Leilah to quietly investigate things and make sure Ottaviano's intentions are honorable.

Yarthmont 7, AC 1017: The Rules for the Race Are Worked Out.

Location: City of Baraga, Merry Pirates Seas. HW

Description: The exact rules of the race between The Banquet and the Tornado have been worked out. The race will start in Baraga. The first stage will be Floresque at the southern tip of Baraga Island, the next ones will be at Puerto Morillos and Kota-Jayang on the northern island. The finish will be Baraga City again. Some captains have volunteered to maintain control points at the three harbors and King Necco the Black has sponsored a prize for the winner. The race will start on Klarmont, 1. All dirty tricks are allowed. (*See Ya. 4; Kl. 1, Kl. 6.*)

Second Week

Yarthmont 9, 1017: Sardal Pass Reopened.

Location: Kingdom of Rockhome and Emirates of Ylaruam. OW

Description: After being almost completely closed to outside traffic for a few years, the trade route between the Emirates of Ylaruam and the Kingdom of Rockhome is reopened to caravan traffic. A long train

of wagons from the Emirate of Makistan journeys to the town of Karrak to conduct business with the reclusive dwarves. (*See Ya. 20.*)

What This Means: Representatives of Sultan al-Kalim and King Everast XVI met several months ago to discuss resuming trade between the two nations. It was agreed that such an arrangement would be mutually beneficial—the dwarves are in great need of outside agricultural supplies and the Ylari are eager to get hold of more weapons with which to equip their armies. Other diplomatic ties between the two nations have resumed as well, particularly military alliances. Mutual training missions against humanoids of the northern mountains will help both sides to maintain their fighting edge.

Yarthmont 9, AC 1017: From Bad to Worse.

Location: City-State of Miletos, Meghala Kimata Plains. DV

Description: The people of Miletos have suffered a number of raids since the first one, scarcely a week ago and the townsfolk are already discussing how much longer they can stand such a dangerous atmosphere. Almost one-third of the residents have suffered from the depredations of raiders and some merchants have already packed their belongings and left, claiming that they will only sink further into poverty if they remain. This presents a stark choice to many Miletans: remain in their homes and possibly see a better future, or seek a new home entirely. The latter option is becoming more appealing to many of them. (*See Ya. 3.*)

What This Means: Although relatively few Miletans have died as a result of the raids, many of them have seen their wealth stolen, their homes burned and their lives disrupted. The fact that their town is not even in the zone of conflict is especially galling to them, since they had originally considered themselves to be safe. The growing awareness of their uncertain position will force many of them to assess their options carefully.

Yarthmont 9, AC 1017: Stonewall Negotiates with Stoutfellow.

Location: City of Denwarf-Hurgon, Kingdom of Stoutfellow, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: While Rogart and Amagast are still in Limn, Selcomad has traveled to Stoutfellow to negotiate similar arrangements for forces from Stonewall to travel through Stoutfellow. More than that, Selcomad asks for guidance through the Kerothar Mountains. Queen Buthra Bofadar of Stoutfellow says that she will only allow Stonewall forces to travel through her lands if Stonewall signs a treaty of non-aggression and friendship with Stoutfellow. If they do, however, she'll not only make sure Stonewall gets the best guides to travel through the Kerothar Mountains (if they pay them), but also help Stonewall maintain the supply lines of their army. Selcomad considers the matter and agrees, though he also points out that King Koblan Dracodon of Stonewall will ultimately have to decide on the matter. Then Selcomad travels back to Draco. (*See Fl. 17, Ya. 1; Ya. 16, Ya. 27.*)

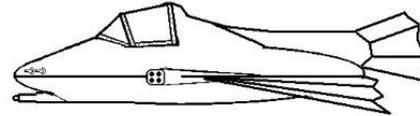
What This Means: Queen Buthra is no fool. Though Stonewall has a much larger army, they'll have little chance of doing any real harm to Stoutfellow because of the Kerothar Mountains, so a hidden threat like the one Rogart made to the rulers of Limn does not work so well against her. However, she does see an opportunity here: Stonewall has a vast army, so it's probably a good idea to have them as friends if Stoutfellow gets into trouble one day. For that reason, she proposed the friendship treaty. Selcomad had to agree because his army really needs the support of Stoutfellow to travel through the Kerothar Mountains, so now he'll have to convince King Koblan Dracodon of this treaty.

What the PCs Can Do: Help Selcomad travel to and from Denwarf-Hurgon. They can also help either Queen Buthra or Selcomad during the negotiations. If Arkan has heard of this, they will doubtlessly send people to stop Selcomad. If the DM prefers, other nations might also want to stop

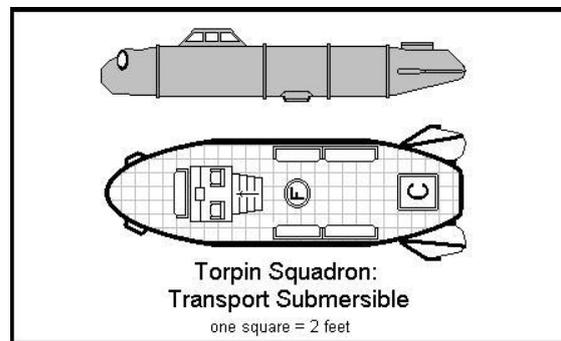
Selcomad, such as Ambur, which might not like Stonewall cutting them off from the rest of Alphatia on all sides, or Blackheart, which is not friendly to warriors.

Yarthmont 9, AC 1017: New Submersibles on Maneuvers.

Location: Seashield Dome, Kingdom of Aquas, Nayce. AS



Torpin Fighter/Scout Submersible



Description: Citizens of Seashield are thrilled to see a group of three sleek *submersibles* moving about in formation outside the dome. Soon, they are joined by four smaller *submersibles*. The group then moves out away from Seashield and out of sight of the spectators. (*See Th. 27; Ya. 23, Kl. 24.*)

What This Means: These *submersibles* are designed for the *Torpin Class Submersibles* as transports and as fighter/scouts. The maneuvers were actually staged for Nayce Council officials in Seashield to bolster support. Ironically the display is missed by the officials as they were busy touring the catacombs beneath the dome, examining pumps set to be shipped to Torenal. Having performed their orchestrated maneuvers, the *submersibles* head to the *Torpin* construction site.

What the PCs Can Do: The Alphatians make it so easy a job to be a spy in Nayce—you don't even have to resort to the usual shady stuff to discover about their plans. PC spies will have to go to greater lengths to get

the blueprints of the various *submersibles*' designs, though.

Yarthmont 9, AC 1017: So Close... Yet So Far Away.

Location: Kitma Tribal Lands, Tanagoro Plains. HW

Description: A Shazeke warparty arrives in Kitma lands seeking the reported female warriors. After a brief dialogue with Kitma warriors, Dazuza is brought before Chief Xalmak. He tells the chief that his chief and kinsman, Shazula, has heard of the recent incursion into Kitma lands and offers his assistance in dealing with them. Dazuza is told that the female warriors have been driven off of Kitma lands several days earlier. The Kitma warriors drove them towards Malpheggi Swamp.

Dazuza asks the chief to describe to him the female warriors. Xalmak does better than that and takes him to several bodies that are awaiting burial. After a quick examination, he sees that all of the slain women are pale-skinned and wear hide tunics. Unsatisfied at his own judgment, he asks about their weapons and armors. Xalmak responds that the few that wore armor wore hides of animals. As for weapons, Xalmak shows him stone-tipped spears, slings and a few clubs.

Dazuza then asks about any reports of any dark-skinned female warriors in their midst, possibly leading them. Xalmak responds that they were all pale and lacked any real signs of a leader. He relates that their tactics were chaotic and seemed focused upon the fighting abilities of the individual. He also relates that the warriors seemed more intent upon passing through than actually standing for a concerted fight. Such was the reason that his people let them go.

Xalmak pulls Dazuza away from the morbid display and tells the warparty that his people do appreciate the efforts of the Shazeke warriors in coming to their aid. Xalmak invites Dazuza and his warriors to stay as his guests for a celebration that his people are holding to celebrate their victory. During the celebrations, Xalmak bestows

great admiration upon his warriors and aggrandizes the assistance offered by Chief Shazula and the Shazeke Tribe. He states that such actions should hopefully lead to greater alliances and a strong relationship between their two tribes. Xalmak also uses the celebrations to announce his sending of his eldest daughter Miopi back with Dazuza to stay in Shazeke Lands. (*See Nu. 22, Fl. 15; Ya. 10, Kl. 3.*)

What This Means: The Shazeke warriors arrive after the female warriors have left Kitma lands. However the arrival of Dazuza's warparty has bolstered Kitma trust in the Shazeke for offering aid without even being asked. The Kitma chief wishes to strengthen ties with his neighbors. Since his tribe is small and rather weak, he sees that he must seek power through other means. He uses the interdiction as an excuse to lobby the powerful Shazeke by exaggerating their own victory and the gratitude for their offered assistance. His real motives show themselves as he sends to Shazula his daughter, in a covert suggestion of a political marriage. If he can arrange a marriage it will greatly add to his tribe's power and prestige.

What the PCs Can Do: Shazeke PCs will be the emissaries sent to Kitma lands. In that case they will find Xalmak very friendly and helpful, trying to work them into a tribe alliance. The PCs probably didn't expect to return with a would-be mate for their chieftain; they will have to defend her on the way back as her life is threatened by some dangerous beast, else this creates strained relations between the Shazeke and Kitma possibly leading to skirmishes or war.

Yarthmont 10, AC 1017: Let's Sink Them!

Location: *Dominio de Vilaverde* and *Estado de Texeiras*. SC

Description: The governments of Vilaverde and Texeiras are approached by several independent traders and financiers, who offer to finance the baronial navies for an expedition against the Zuyevan fleet, in retaliation against Zuyevo's conquest of Richland last year.

What This Means: Some of these traders are secretly agents of Hule, who hope to strike at Zuyevo from yet another direction, as well as to turn the attentions of Vilaverde and Texeiras away from Hule. Texeiras suffered some naval and economic losses last year when Richland was taken by Zuyevo and Texeiran interests in that colony were expelled; they are keen for revenge. As for Vilaverde, they see Zuyevo as a threat to their hold on the mouth of Yalu Bay. If Zuyevo in concert with Renardie manage to take over Porto Maldição and Porto Escorpião, then they will lose the massive trade revenues they gain from their trade with Zuyevo, Preuve and the Yezchamenid Empire.

What the PCs Can Do: Baronial PCs will have a chance to engage in some naval warfare. Zuyevan PCs can attempt to prevent the aid getting from Hule to Vilaverde or Texeiras or could foment ill feelings between the two (that are only ever just below the surface).

Yarthmont 10, AC 1017: Dazusa Reports.

Location: Shazeke Tribal Lands, Tanagoro Plains. HW

Description: Dazusa and his warparty return to Shazula's main camp and are seen immediately by his cousin. The warrior tells of his meeting with Xalmak and the nature of the female warriors. Shazula seems relieved as the female warriors are described as being pale and primitively equipped. With some reluctance, he also presents to his chief Miopi and her retinue of servants. Shazula is immediately taken aback by her beauty and mannerisms. He surprises Dazusa by accepting her in his camp and affords her a hut and numerous adornments. (*See Fl. 15, Ya. 9; Kl. 3, Fy. 5.*)

What This Means: Shazula is both disappointed and relieved by Dazusa's report. Though the coincidental presence of female warriors bolsters his prophesied rise to power, the warrioresses being pale-skinned and not equipped like the Milenians undermine his beliefs in the matter. Secretly,

he is a bit embarrassed by his rekindled interest in the crone's tale.

His placid reception of Miopi is sincere. The Kitma Tribe is small but does hold a great deal of influence with the king. Hence there is political motivation. Likewise, Miopi is a remarkable woman in both beauty and in personality. However, Shazula has no immediate plans to take her as his wife. If Xalmak seeks to arrange a political marriage, then surely there are better offers out there with stronger tribes. Therefore, Shazula can afford to wait a few months before acting on Xalmak's offer.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs were the emissaries they will have to present their own report, as well as the "gift" from Xalmak.

Yarthmont 10, AC 1017: Skirmishes near Westrouрке.

Location: Near the Westrouрке-Heldun border, Dominion of Helskir, Heldannic Empire, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: While on patrol along a Heldannic-controlled portion of the Heldunian frontier with Westrouрке, a column of knights is attacked by elements of the imperial auxiliaries based in that territory. The battle is fierce and the Thyatians have a numerical and strategic advantage. Before long, the Heldannic patrol is decimated; the survivors flee northwards to Helskir. (*See Fl. 21, Ya. 4; Ya. 28, Fe. 7.*)



What This Means: The Thyatian war machine, still active from the Great and Crown Wars, has maintained its high level of alertness on the Isle of Dawn, especially since the conquest of Helskir last year. Defenses along the Westrouрке-Heldun border have been reinforced. Attacks on Heldannic patrols that stray near the border are liable to be attacked more often in the future.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are serving with the Thyatians, the PCs could be instrumental in preventing any Heldannic Knights from escaping. Otherwise, they

could delay Thyatian pursuit—or even defeat them, if they are powerful enough.

Yarthmont 11, AC 1017: University of Biazzan Expands.

Location: City of Biazzan, County of Biazzan, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: The University of Biazzan announces that, thanks to some generous new funding from alumni and other philanthropic givers, it will be expanding its courses of study. The creation of a new Department of Agricultural Studies is announced, with classes set to start in the fall. Several facilities are being improved and upgraded, with expanded dormitories planned. Also, the University of Biazzan has managed to hire the services of several new instructors and theorists on the Hollow World. These include a fallen former Heldannic Knight who had served on several expeditions to the Hollow World, a Karameikan veteran of its first expedition and even a Thyatian explorer who claims to have made the journey through tunnels under the City of Thyatis. The university thus announces its intention to regain its status at the forefront of the study of Hollow World theory and practice. The hiring of several Ylari scholars is announced as well, citing the increasingly closed intellectual attitude in Ylaruam as their reason for leaving. (*See Ka. 8.*)

What This Means: The faculty and alumni are concerned that with all the focus on the centers of higher learning in the City of Thyatis and elsewhere in the Old World that they will fall into irrelevance. Thus they have conducted a fund drive to reinvigorate the university. Also, with the closing of trade into Ylaruam, Biazzan's local economy has depended more and more on the presence of the university. Thus local leaders also contributed to expanding its facilities.

Plans for clandestine scholarly exploration trips to the Hollow World, sponsored by the university, are also initiated, though these are not publicly announced.

What the PCs Can Do: Characters might be engaged to go on one of the expeditions to the Hollow World.

Yarthmont 12, AC 1017: A Second Visit.

Location: Town of Ciudadela de León, Baronía de Torreón. SC

Description: The man in black again makes an appearance in Torreón this month. Riding on a black charger into Ciudadela de León in broad daylight, the man in black heads into *la baronesa's* villa, where he drops to one knee in front of an astonished *Baronesa* Isabel and asks permission to ride with her in the scenic hills and wilds of her barony—as he “would value such company more than the company of Valerías Herself...” *Baronesa* Isabel thinks about it, but not for long and the two head off into the hills. The man in black soon proves to be excellent company and *la baronesa* does not regret her decision, although he never gives her his identity and she cannot quite place his accent. She is returned to her court at nightfall and the man in black rides off into the sunset. (*See Fl. 20; Ya. 17.*)

What This Means: *Baronesa* Isabel was more than a bit skeptical with the message and rose incident some time ago and she has since dismissed her escapade. The man in black is back in her thoughts (and heart), after this.

Yarthmont 12, AC 1017: A Strange Meeting.

Location: Aryptian Savannah. DV

Description: While running across a more verdant region of the Aryptian Savannah, the scouting party dispatched by the Meghaddaran clan elders comes across a party of strangely-attired, furry humanoids, resting in the shade of a large rock jutting out of the tall grass, not a hundred yards away. Lying nearby are the remnants of an antelope, its bones stripped of their meat. Before the humans can do anything, one of the humanoids springs to its feet with unprecedented agility and in only a handful of strides stands roughly ten feet away from

the startled newcomers. Although it stands in a relaxed posture, the Meghaddara somehow surmise that the creature could easily leap into action if it had to. It appears to be nothing less than a tall cat-man, dressed in loose, sandy-colored clothing! It addresses them in a snarling, growling language, while gesturing with its spear.

When it becomes clear that the Meghaddara do not understand what the humanoid is saying, the creature gestures with his (it indicated its gender) clawed hands, indicating that he saw the Meghaddara arrive from the southeast and that the lands where they are now belong to the cat-man and his tribe. One of the Meghaddara seizes the opportunity and through similar gestures indicates the he and his companions meant no offense and that they are seeking someone. The cat-man, who indicates his name as being Kenka, gestures for the Meghaddara to join him at his camp. (*See Fl. 9, Fl. 17; Kl. 20, Kl. 24.*)

What This Means: After weeks of searching, it appears that the Meghaddara have finally found the rakasta they have been seeking.

What the PCs Can Do: Assuming they are among the Meghaddara, PCs could take part in the “discussions” to follow.

Yarthmont 12, AC 1017: Ship Disappears near Maelstrom.

Location: Sundsvall Maelstrom, Nayce. AS

Description: A merchant ship that was carrying precious wood from Alpha to Skyfyr is lost at sea. The Nayce Council is able to determine that it was sailing close to the Sundsvall Maelstrom and suspects that she may have been drawn to Alphatia in the Hollow World. Later accounts from Alphatia bar this possibility though, so they suppose she simply sank for some undetermined reason. (*See Fe. 10, Fy. 16.*)

Yarthmont 12, AC 1017: The Nameless Tower.

Location: Eastern Forest of Geffron, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: After braving the dangers of the northern wastes and the eastern woods, the dragon knight Khel and his party finally reach the black basalt building called the Nameless Tower. Khel knows the tower is protected by black magics, so he sends forth some of his soldiers to activate the traps, in order to identify them and think of countermeasures. By the end of the day, Khel, Dove and the two remaining soldiers have made it into the heart of the ground level and rest inside the inner sanctum with open eyes. (*See Fl. 15, Fl. 20; Ya. 14, Kl. 28.*)

What This Means: Khel doesn't know what lies inside the Nameless Tower, but Henadin has instructed him to guide Dove there and help him infiltrate the inner chambers. For this reason the dragon knight doesn't refrain from sending to certain death the soldiers of the Shadow Army he took with him at Gereth Minar. The soldiers are used to receiving suicidal orders and are too afraid of the dragon knight's powers to disobey him. In the meantime, Dove has found some ancient runes engraved in the tower's walls and has begun to translate them, hoping they will reveal Idris's secrets.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are with the party, they will be tasked with the dangerous job of finding the traps... especially if they prevented Khel from requisitioning some soldiers at Gereth Minar. The traps are lethal, but a careful party may be able to detect them.

Yarthmont 13, AC 1017: Rebuff in Tanakumba.

Location: City of Tanakumba, Divinarchy of Yavdlom, Serpent Peninsula. SC

Description: The imperial exploratory flotilla reaches Tanakumba and its envoys are politely welcomed by the *mokubu* in a formal audience. The imperials and the *mokubu* exchange gifts and the Thyatian officers are invited to dinner that evening. After a sumptuous meal, all are given

comfortable quarters for the night. The next day they meet for more serious business, but though the *mokubu* is exceptionally friendly and polite throughout, he refuses to agree to most of the things the Thyatians want. The imperial envoys ask for an alliance, help against the Twaelar, but Yavdlom declines. They then try to negotiate a preferential trade deal, but the *mokubu* refuses, saying that Yavdlom welcomes the traders of all friendly nations and will not make a special deal with a distant empire. They then request basing privileges, but again are denied any special favors.

The imperial flotilla restocks on supplies and then sails on, disappointed in the outcome. (*See Fl. 1, Fl. 8; Kl. 8, Sv. 7.*)

What This Means: Thyatis would have liked the help of Yavdlom in the war against the Twaelar, but the seers of the divinity advised the *mokubu* to turn down the Thyatians' requests. Thyatian influence in Yavdlom will remain slight. However, even without any special provisions, Yavdlom is an attractive market to Thyatian traders. The imperial merchants will sell Thyatian cloth, weapons and armor, in exchange for the spices, mahogany, teak, ivory and especially tea and chocolate cocoa of Yavdlom and the area will become a route on the way to Kastelios in Davania. With a million people, Yavdlom may become one of the largest markets for Thyatian exports, even though they must compete with traders from other lands.

The seers turned down the Thyatians' requests for more substantive agreements because they are naturally wary of becoming too entangled in Thyatis's affairs or letting the empire get inordinate influence over Yavdlom.

What the PCs Can Do: Exploring the wonders of Tanakumba, especially the shell towers and the ruins of the undercity, full of undead and other nasties and getting into mischief should be enough to keep the PCs busy. Characters who are skilled negotiators might be able to talk the *mokubu* into making some concessions, but Yavdlom is very

unlikely to agree to do anything major on Thyatis's behalf. The seers have spoken.

Yarthmont 14, AC 1017: The Children of the *Khan*.

Location: Camp of Bargha, Ethengar *Khanates*. OW

Description: Bakai, the oldest daughter of the late Moglai *Khan*, has called all her siblings to the court of her brother Manghai. She tells them that the body of the Golden *Khan* deserves a traditional burial atop the World Mountain. She is asking for her siblings help in recovering the body. When her brother, Manghai *Khan*, seems reluctant, Bakai mentions that fulfilling this duty would win him prestige in the eyes of the other *khans* that he is attempting to make alliances with. Manghai agrees with his sister's request, but regrettably cannot accompany her as the situation in the *khanates* is too delicate for him to leave. All of the other siblings agree to go with Bakai.

Moglai's thirteen children, minus Manghai, will set out with their bodyguards and Akmad ibn Yusef immediately the following morning. They will demand the return of Moglai's body from the Glantrians or, failing that, steal the body. (*See Fl. 11; Ya. 20, Ya. 27.*)

What This Means: Manghai *Khan* was possessed by an evil spirit, Jaku the Render, last year and has been trying to unite the tribes of the *khanates* under his rule, the better to spread mayhem and death. Unfortunately for him, the other *khans* are not being very cooperative. In particular, Batu *Khan* and the Bortak clan have rejected Manghai's claims on rulership. Bakai is Batu's wife, which gives him some claim on the title of great *khan*. Manghai sees in Bakai's quest an opportunity to rid himself of the eldest daughter of Moglai and thus weaken Batu *Khan's* claims. For his part, Batu *Khan* has reluctantly agreed to allow his wife this opportunity and a temporary peace treaty will be in effect between the Murkit and Bortak tribes until Moglai's body is recovered and buried.

What the PCs Can Do: The children of the Golden *Khan* will need bodyguards and retainers to accompany them on their quest and the PCs could certainly score some points by volunteering their services.

Yarthmont 14, AC 1017: Guadalante Sends Troops, Cimarron Remains Neutral.

Location: *Baronía de Saragón*. SC

Description: Today, Guadalantan forces arrive to shore up the failing Saragóner army. The Guadalantans know that they may be the next target of Narvaez if they do not step in to oppose them while they still have allies like Saragón around. With this influx of new troops, the Saragón/Guadalante alliance begins to push the Narvaezan troops back into Gargoña. Meanwhile *Barón* Balthazar again sends messengers to Cimarron asking for their aid; again the messengers are sent back empty-handed. Cimarron is focusing on building a force to retake Richland from Zuyevo and it does not have the troops to spare for Saragón. However, the increasingly chaotic situation in the Savage Baronies is making the Cimarron leadership think about whether an expedition against Richland is warranted at this stage and whether in fact the troops could be better used to shore up stability in the baronies. This is also looking to be a better idea given the recent increase in goblinoid attacks on Fort Whitestone. (*See Fl. 16, Ya. 2; Ya. 27, Fe. 8.*)

What This Means: Guadalante and Saragón have long been allies of a sort. While Guadalante was not prepared to step in earlier to save Gargoña, they will not let Saragón fall. Cimarron lost its colony of Richland last year to the resurgent Zuyevan Empire and has suffered economically from the loss of such a valuable colony. It is important for Cimarron's flagging trade concerns to recover it as soon as possible. They may not be possible just yet though.

Yarthmont 14, AC 1017: What Lies Beyond?

Location: Nameless Tower, Eastern Forest of Geffron, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: Since his arrival at the Nameless Tower, Dove has managed to decipher many of the inscriptions in the ground level of the building. Apparently, they tell the story of an elf turned into a dragon because of a curse laid upon her by her kin. Dove has understood that this may have something to do with Idris, but cannot figure out the whole story since the inscriptions continue on the other levels of the tower. Unable to bypass the wards placed at the entrance of the upper levels, Dove decides to leave the Nameless Tower with Khel and to return to Idris Tower to gather help in order to complete his investigation. (*See Fl. 20, Ya. 12; Kl. 28, Fe. 3.*)

What This Means: Dove has transcribed all of the story told in the frescoes and inscriptions found in the tower in his personal notebooks and believes he is near in unfolding the mystery that lies beneath the Cult of Idris. Judging from the tale told in the runes, he now believes Idris to be nothing more than a cursed elf, who's been imprisoned in a draconic form and cursed to live forever to pay for her sins, hated by her own kin. If his deductions are correct, then there is no Immortal named Idris and Her cultists are instead a group of cunning sorcerers that pose as priests. The information Vespen gave him about the Onyx Ring (a secret cabal of powerful wizards) seem to confirm that these mages have created the whole myth behind Idris to influence and gain power over the people of Denagoth, ruling with an iron fist from the shadows and using the high priestess as their spokesperson. Yet many things are left unexplained (the role of the Shadow Lord and the true nature of the high priestess), so Dove is resolved to free Vespen and enlist his aid to bypass the magical wards in the Nameless Tower and gain access to the final truth.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs should be looking for a way to enter the upper levels of the tower... and maybe they will find it! If they don't, though, they will likely accompany Dove back to Idris Tower, a journey that can be spiced up with encounters with the dangerous denizens of Denagoth.

Yarthmont 14, AC 1017: Underocean Settles Out of Court.

Location: City of Ionace, Ionace Island, Nayce. AS

Description: Underocean agrees to pay reparations to the families of three Aquan immigrants killed in the recent rioting. With that matter out of the way, the last immediate effect of the Allanas vs. Underocean case is dealt with. However, the issue has raised tensions that will not lower for some time. (*See Th. 8, Th. 19.*)

Third Week

Yarthmont 15, AC 1017: Driving Out the Darkness.

Location: City of Hapta, Empire of Nithia. HW

Description: After several sleeps of concerted investigation and following the trail of fresh victims, the city guard of Hapta manage to track down the vampire once more, this time to a partially-ruined shop just outside of town. Accompanied by a small host of clerics, they barge into the building, though their adversary is ready for them. Unlike the previous time, however, the vampire is confronted by pious clerics brandishing holy symbols, chanting prayers to their patron Immortals. Seeking to escape the religious onslaught, he attempts to back towards a hole in the wall, through which he plans to escape. Unfortunately for him, a watchful city guardsman stabs at the vampire through the hole with a wooden stake, running him through at the shoulder. In extreme agony and realizing that he is in serious danger, the vampire assumes gaseous

form and exits the building. (*See Fl. 24, Fl. 26.*)

What This Means: The knowledge shared by the Nithians' Immortals has allowed them to combat the vampire effectively and soon this knowledge will be shared with clerics in other cities across the empire, as news of the vampire's rampage spreads. In the meantime, the vampire will soon be forced to flee Hapta and resume his feeding elsewhere; the town authorities will soon become too knowledgeable for one still-weakened vampire to counter. Still, he will remember the treatment he received here and if he finds himself unable to escape the Hollow World, he may very well seek revenge against the people of Hapta.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are working with the authorities, the PCs could be instrumental in tracking down the vampire and driving him out. This may be especially appropriate if they are originally from the surface world and have told the locals of their experience (real or imagined) with such creatures.

Yarthmont 16, AC 1017: Twaelar Attack Raven Scarp.

Location: City of Raven Scarp, *Exarchate* of Davania Superior, Hinterlands, Thyatian Empire. DV

Description: Forces of the Twaelar Merrow Empire assault the harbor area of Raven Scarp several hours before dawn. They manage to get into the docks area, where fierce fighting breaks out between them and disorganized, half-asleep sailors and dock workers. Soon, however, the artillery of Fire-Height, the Thyatian fortress overlooking the harbor (and city) train down on the Twaelar and begin to pick them off. The Twaelar redouble their attacks, attempting to force their way into town, while others start to rip apart the harbor's facilities. Thyatian forces finally group for a counterattack, however. A timely charge breaks the back of the Twaelar assault, repulsing them and forcing them back into the sea. Specially-equipped elite troops then spend the rest of the day clearing the harbor

depths of Twaelar soldiers. (*See Tb. 13; Fy. 10, Fy. 19.*)

What This Means: This is part of the ongoing war between the Twaelar and the Thyatians. The dock facilities of Raven Scarp have been damaged by the Twaelar attack, but not as badly as they had hoped. Repairs will actually take only a few days. Casualties were also fairly light for both sides, because of the limited number of troops involved in the battle. Though it seemed like more at the time, there were actually only several hundred Twaelar—those that they managed to equip to operate on land.

What the PCs Can Do: Characters in Raven Scarp might get caught up in the fighting.

Yarthmont 16, AC 1017: A Secret Treaty.

Location: City of Draco, Kingdom of Stonewall, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: King Koblan Dracodon signs the treaty of friendship with Stoutfellow, then sends Selcomad back to Stoutfellow to verify the agreement with Queen Buthra Bofadar. (*See Ya. 1, Ya. 9; Ya. 27, Kl. 11.*)

What This Means: Koblan was not at all pleased with this idea because it binds him and his kingdom to undetermined promises and was quite angry with Selcomad. Their argument became quite heated at one point, but in the end Selcomad convinced his king that if he didn't sign it, he might as well give up on the invasion of Arkan, so eventually Koblan was forced to agree.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs were involved with the negotiations in Stoutfellow, then Koblan will be furious while Selcomad firmly stands his ground and so they will have to keep the two from blowing up in each other's faces. Once Koblan signs they can help Selcomad deliver the treaty to Queen Buthra.

Yarthmont 16, AC 1017: Something Wicked This Way Comes.

Location: Canolbarth Forest, Colony of Aengmor, Shadow Elves' Territories. OW

Description: Shadowelf patrols in the Canolbarth Forest spot a mysterious woman, with blond hair and scarlet robes, venturing into a forbidden area known to be a corrupted Magic Point. The shadowelf warriors pursue her, but they are stopped by a monstrous chimera, powerful sorcery and later, by a party of renegade shadow elves. The occurrence of strange magic, strange monsters, even of shadow elves killing their own kind, is not unusual in Aengmor and shadowelf authorities write this off as an isolated incident. (*See Fl. 13; Kl. 2, Fe. 20.*)

What This Means: Almost a month since she sent her minions to the Canolbarth Forest, Synn receives word from the nagpa Crwaarg about the situation in Aengmor. With the corruption of the forest, conflicts between Alfheim elf and shadow elf and even infighting among the shadow elves, Aengmor is a hotbed of chaos and evil—perfect for Synn! But most important of all is Crwaarg's discovery of a Magic Point, a focus of powerful and baleful magical energy.

Synn, in the form of a mysterious sorceress, has arrived in Aengmor and is testing the powers of the Magic Point and has found it to her liking. By tapping into this new source of power and using knowledge she previously learned from the Dead Place in Ylaruam, Synn makes plans to open a new *gate* to Pits. From this *gate*, Synn plans to summon fiends and other monstrosities of Entropy and unleash a veritable shadow over Mystara. [*This is the background for the arcade adventure D&D: Shadow Over Mystara.*]

Yarthmont 17, AC 1017: Tythus Assaulted.

Location: Fortress of Tythus, Milenian Empire. HW

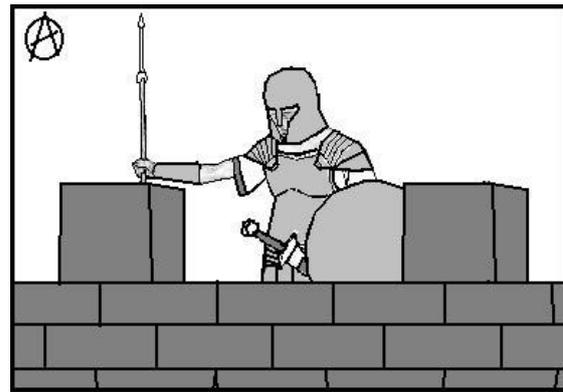
Description: As the bulk of the fort's garrison sleep, individuals stealthily scale the walls and overwhelm several of the sentries. Securing the main gate, they open the portal and allow more of their fellows to enter. However, the sounds of fighting reach the ears of other sentries, who quickly raise the cry of alarm. Milenian troops scramble into their armor and grab their weapons before pouring out to meet the invaders. Many are shaken that the warriors they engage are women. However, trained discipline takes over and the troops begin to systematically address the infiltrators, steadily pushing them back into defensive positions within the fort's buildings.



For their part the female infiltrators fight well. However they are outnumbered and lack the armaments to stand up to the Milenian forces in the fort, as more and more well-drilled troops enter the fight. What they do possess is a fanatical warrior spirit; neither asking for nor giving quarter. The women find themselves in a battle they cannot win. They literally fight tooth and nail against the Milenian infantry. As they are pushed back from the fortifications, this fanaticism is expressed with some of the warrior women who turn their weapons on each other rather than being captured.

In the end, the attacking women warriors lose a total of ninety of their kind. Twenty-five are taken prisoner before they can kill themselves, mainly because they were wounded and incapacitated. Only twenty or so of the women are willing or able to retreat from the fort. For their part the Milenians lose a total of sixteen troops and thirty-five civilians. Milenian wounded are more numerous, with seventy-five troops earning their badges of courage and thirty-

nine civilians being wounded.



What This Means: The female warriors are the Zieggi, a small Neathar tribe. The Zieggi are a matriarchal tribe, where females dominate both politically and militarily. As such, the tribe has found the Immortal Vanya as their patron. Vanya commanded them to travel south and strike at the Milenians. It is Her hope that their strike will undermine the Milenians' idea of male superiority and open the potential for Her Materans to exploit. Though She had few hopes of their having any success in taking the fort since the Zieggi were vastly outnumbered by the garrison, She did hope that they would inflict a lot of damage and be able to flee back out and start a guerrilla campaign against the Milenians.

Vanya is aware that the Zieggi are far outnumbered and too primitive to take on the Milenians. Her own experience with Her plate-clad Heldannic Knights and their campaigns against the barbarians can attest to that. However, She is hoping that surprise will offer the Zieggi a chance to strike fast and hard. She is also hoping that the Milenian mindset will underestimate the fighting abilities of the Zieggi and lessen their attack. Though Tythus Fort is one of the Milenians' strongest and best commanded, Vanya sees it as a testament to Milenian male pride. If She can undermine its security, She can cause harm to the Milenian male ego and the prestige of General Tythus.

The raid was doomed from the onset. Having to travel far to reach the Milenian outpost, the war party is weakened by fatigue from their journey to Milenian lands.

Also, this journey saw them traveling through both the Tanagoro Plains and through the fringes of the Malpheggi Swamp, where they were harassed all the way by the locals. The journey saw them losing over four score of their fellows to these attacks and the natural hazards of the journey.

Then there are the Milenians themselves. Limited by distance, the Zieggi had no idea what the Milenians are like in combat. All they knew is that they were men and therefore in the Zieggi's eyes, they are individually inferior on the battlefield. What they find is a people that are far beyond anything they had encountered in fighting the other Neathar peoples or the Tanagoro. The Milenians' numbers were far superior to anything they could dream of overcoming (several thousand Milenian soldiers garrison the fort). Likewise, the Fortress of Tythus is a spectacle in their eyes, its size and occupancy far beyond the simple huts they live in. The Zieggi had not figured that there would be so many troops inside.

With all these factors, Vanya's hopes are partially dashed upon the Milenian sword and shield. Though some of the warriors manage to flee, few will make it back to their native lands. Some of these women bear wounds that will finally claim their lives. Others will succumb to Malpheggi or Tanagoro warriors. The few that remain in the area will find themselves harassed and hunted by Milenian troops.

What the PCs Can Do: Fight for their own side. Also, Milenian adventurers may be hired by the fort commander to investigate the origin of these female warriors.

Yarthmont 17, AC 1017: The Eastern Forts Fall.

Location: Sentinel Fortress, Bastion of Nicodemus and Vigil Keep, Eastern Province of Verdan, Republic of Esterhold, Nayce. SK

Description: The united Jennites have succeeded—the Alphatians in the hated eastern forts of Verdan marshal their forces and try to run the Jennite lines to retreat.

Some are able to escape through the enemy lines, but many are obviously killed or taken captive. Some of these are used as servants or slaves, but all captives of Alphatian heritage are accused of oppression and executed! Their leaders are beheaded, and their heads put on spears, some left at the forts and some taken to inspire the cheering Jennite armies and show other Alphatians what awaits them in their future encounters. The three forts are then burned to the ground to set an example. (*See Th. 26, Fl. 14; Ya. 21, Ya. 26.*)

What This Means: Although the Alphatians have lived in a freer nation in the last few years, the customs they have learned during the ruthless and efficient rule of Nicodemus have not disappeared so easily and without the rule of someone like him or Xanthus their efficiency is much reduced. Most of the defenders were Alphatian commoners who were far too used to taking their orders from the magic-using aristocrats to suddenly find the inspiration to mount their own defense. Since there was no such leadership this time and because of the overwhelming numbers of Jennites, their defense was uncoordinated and their morale was low from the beginning and they decided to retreat rather than hold the Jennites back.

However, since all the Alphatian soldiers will try to retreat to Faraway, the soldiers from the Bastion of Nicodemus and Vigil Keep are in for a nasty surprise because they don't know that there are yet more Jennites between them and Faraway at the northernmost fort, Sentinel Fortress. Thus, a good number of soldiers are killed when they encounter the Jennites and most of the survivors end up fleeing south toward Rock Harbor instead. A few are able to slip by the Jennites, though.

What the PCs Can Do: Alphatian PCs should flee as fast as possible or they will suffer the same grim fate as those Alphatians captured at the forts! Jennite PCs can participate in the final attacks, hunt down fleeing Alphatians, or, if they're more merciful than most of the Jennites, convince the Jennite leaders to spare a few of the

Alphatians, either to keep as hostages or to hold for information or, in the case of the aristocratic Alphatians, ransom.

Yarthmont 17, AC 1017: Hugo Leans on Torreón.

Location: Town of Ciudadela de León, *Baronía de Torreón*. SC

Description: The man in black's visit to Torreón has not gone unnoticed. *Barón* Hugo sent a deputation to Torreón immediately upon hearing about the incident to complain bitterly to *Baronesa* Isabel and demand that she helps him capture this wanted criminal. *La baronesa* gives Hugo's ambassadors a very frosty reception and sends them away empty-handed. (*See Fl. 20, Ya. 12.*)

What This Means: Hugo is surprised that the ice-hearted *Baronesa* of Torreón treated his ambassadors the way she did. He never expected her to actually seem to want to protect him! In any case, *la baronesa* and Hugo both tend to hold grudges and this has done nothing to aid relations between the two baronies.

Yarthmont 17, AC 1017: Wayseeker Arrives in Andaire.

Location: City of Andaire, Kingdom of Alphas'ar, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: The *Wayseeker* arrives at the imperial capital of Andaire and captain Adath disembarks to present his report to the Alphatian admiralty concerning what he has learned about Selhomarr. (*See Th. 10, Th. 11.*)

What This Means: Adath has surveyed the central portion of the continent of Suridal and he has gained considerable information about Selhomarr. Alphatian strategists and analysts will be examining Adath's report for weeks to come. In the meantime, Empress Eriadna will be notified about the discovery.

Yarthmont 17, AC 1017: Peeping Toms at Torenal Site.

Location: Torenal Site, Sunken Arogansa, Nayce. AS

Description: Lookouts at an outlying picket bunker spot glowing figures moving about the surrounding countryside, just out of their missile range. As they observe these movements through their firing ports, the bunker commander sends a frantic message to the Torenal complex reporting this sighting and requesting reinforcements. Commander Deltart responds by alerting the other picket bunkers and sounding a general alert within the construction site.

Not to ignore the reporting bunker, he dispatches a *submersible* full of troops and a patrol of aquatic mercenaries to offer support. As the reinforcements approach the bunker they see the glowing individuals for themselves. Maneuvering to attack, the glowing figures pull back and flee into the surrounding areas. Though Torenal forces pursue them, they never get close enough to deal with them; eventually they give up the chase.

After the event, the Underocean commander orders his forces to begin a reconnaissance in force in the direction of the fleeing undead. His forces are ordered to attack the undead, if any are sighted. (*See Va. 1, Ya. 5; Kl. 6, Fe. 3.*)

What This Means: The glowing figures are lightning zombies from Bluenose. As with the Feyos incident, their presence around Torenal is based highly on curiosity about the Alphatian people. The facility's defenses prevent them getting too close. They do not want any trouble with the Alphatians, as conflict would undermine their quest for knowledge about themselves. Because of this they flee the area once offensive capabilities arrive.

What the PCs Can Do: This is yet another opportunity for the PCs to make contact with the lightning zombies.

Yarthmont 18, AC 1017: Aristocrats Reflect.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description:

On a dark street in the Estates district of Thyatis there is a small house, quite ancient. Tonight it is the scene of a reunion between several aristocratic senators, leaders of the main noble



families of Thyatis. The aristocrats are quite worried. After the Crown War, many noblemen have been killed, or stripped of their title. Kerendas is now in the hands of an Alphatian stranger, a relative of the despised rulers of that empire. They believe the emperor is trying to strip the senate of its rights. So the aristocrats attempt to plan some countermove before the elections, because they fear Eusebius's faction (known as *gens Zendrolian*) will have a clear majority in the next senate.

After some debate, Senator Alexander Penhaligon proposes to candidate Philippos Dassinites, son of Maldinius Kerendas, as *Archon* of Hesperia. But he also suggests that, after the elections (because there will surely be no time before), the *Optimas* (aristocratic factions) should try to make an alliance with the *Populares* for a new proposal he has in mind. When the other nobles hear his suggestion, they look a little less worried and begin to hope there still can be a way to halt the decline of aristocratic and senatorial influence in the empire. (See *Va. 21, Fl. 27; Ya. 25, Ya. 27*)

What This Means: The aristocrats are overreacting. Eusebius does not intend to dispense with the senate. The present political situation is simply part of the ongoing power conflict between senate and emperor, with the latter obviously in a stronger position since the outcome of the Crown War was so successful to him and

since several noblemen and senators supported Manfred. However, it's also evident that the aristocrats want to do something to strengthen their party's position.

Yarthmont 19, AC 1017: Advance in the South.

Location: Village of Asandapur, *Mumlyket* of Putnabad, Kingdom of Sind. OW

Description: With the stalemate at the borders of Baratkand, the southern forces of Chandra ul Nervi cross the Asanda River, entering Putnabad. They defeat the Hulean garrisons stationed there and enter the village of Asandapur. (See *Th. 22; Am. 17, Am. 19.*)

What This Means: The Master is withdrawing his forces from Putnabad, deeming it too costly to try and hold the *mumlyket* militarily. Nevertheless, he leaves the countryside infested with Hulean agents and the *buraiyas*, who will soon be put to good use.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs can help the Sindhi army advance to Asandapur.

Yarthmont 20, AC 1017: Ylaruam Reopens Borders.

Location: Emirates of Ylaruam. OW

Description: In a proclamation in the capitol of Abbashan, Sultan Hassam al-Kalim declares that the borders of Ylaruam will once more be open to foreigners and unbelievers. The poll tax on such persons living within the emirates will increase to 15 *dinars*/month and all peoples must live within designated foreigners quarters. Such quarters will no longer be able to establish their own rules and regulations (as they formerly did), but will be under the direct jurisdiction of an appointed official and bound to traditional Ylari law. The only exception to this are dwarves, who only pay a poll tax of 10 *dinars*/month and can operate their quarters under their own rules. The declaration is met by mixed feelings. (See *Ya. 9; Kl. 10.*)

What This Means: The sultan knows that Ylaruam cannot live in a vacuum and so has reopened ties to the outside world. He would have liked to have waited another year or so, to more firmly establish his reign and fortify his army, but on the advice of his Grand Vizier, Khalid-al-Sharif, he has made this proclamation earlier than intended. Over the next several weeks, diplomats from the emirates will travel to the other nations of the Old World and reopen ties with them.

Yarthmont 20, AC 1017: Electrum in Them Thar Hills?

Location: Village of Rialtos, Province of Septentriona, Thyatian Empire. SD

Description: A filthy settler, half crazed with excitement, stumbles into town with two overburdened mules. He claims to have discovered vast wealth upriver, near where the Great Escarpment rises. Everyone scoffs and laughs when he says he's found naturally-occurring electrum deposits. He takes his mules to the local appraiser's office and emerges a few hours later, without the mules or their cargo, but with a heavy bag of gold. He proceeds to the local office of the Office of Title and Estate, intending to file a claim, but finds it closed. He vows to return the next day, but then goes to celebrate his good fortune at a local tavern. He buys drinks for the house until late into the night and eventually seems to pass out, dead drunk.

When the establishment closes, the tavern staff try to rouse him from his stupor, but find he isn't dead drunk—he's just plain dead. The next day several prominent local colonists, who had been among those drinking with the miner the night before, each file claims for land upriver. The Office of Title and Estate establishes some limits on these claims before granting them. Soon, there's a rush as people set off for the frontier, hoping to strike it rich.

Many more sober-minded citizens just shake their heads at the fools who think they'll find electrum deposits upriver. Other, even more canny tradesmen take steps to

reap the ultimate benefit from anything the miners find. (*See Kl. 10.*)

What This Means: Electrum is an alloy of gold and silver. It is hardly ever found naturally, but such deposits do exist. There actually are deposits upriver and in other areas scattered around Septentriona. This will draw increased colonization and trade to the area over time.

What the PCs Can Do: Stake a claim, if they're so inclined. But more likely they'll find a way to profit from the miners without doing any of the actual digging, like so many others. The region where the electrum can be found, lying as it does near the Great Escarpment and the further wilds of Septentriona, is a dangerous area. Miners will face all sorts of monstrous threats, challenges to their claims and other conflicts. The characters can find a way to benefit from this, protecting miners in exchange for payment or a share of the profits.

Yarthmont 20, AC 1017: The Wrath of Khan.

Location: Taijit Territories, Ethengar Khanates. OW

Description: Up until now the, the quest to recover the Golden *Khan's* body had been uneventful. Yet, as the expedition prepares to make camp this evening, they are suddenly attacked by Taijit warriors. The children of the *khan* and their companions are very capable however and soon defeat their ambushers. No Taijit survives the attack. (*See Fl. 11, Ya. 14; Ya. 27, Kl. 10.*)

What This Means: Though the attackers are Taijits, this attack was not ordered (or even known to) their tribal *khan*. Instead this was Jaku the Render's first attempt to have Bakai assassinated. Even among the Ethengars it is possible to find people who are willing to follow commands by other than their superiors and Jaku has found a group of Taijits who thought that Manghai *Khan's* claim was absolutely justified.

What the PCs Can Do: Should the PCs be able to discover the man who gave the

commands it would be a certain sign that something is wrong with Manghai *Khan*.

Yarthmont 21, AC 1017: Alphatians Flee Verdan.

Location: Province of Verdan, Republic of Esterhold, Nayce. SK

Description: Following the fall of the eastern forts of Verdan and the expected siege of Faraway itself in a short time, most Alphatians panic and try to flee the nation altogether—prices for ship travel rise dramatically to 350% of the normal cost in a few days and prices for horses, mules and other beasts of burden rise sharply as well, some up to twice the usual cost. The aristocrats are the first to leave, often by magical means, hence rushing the rest of the population into following suit. Most Alphatians who cannot afford to leave by ship instead pack up their things and head west to Anchorage and then toward Skyfyr in Blackrock. Those who cannot afford horses or other beasts just collect a few belongings and leave the rest behind. Within a few days, hundreds if not thousands of Alphatians are reduced to homeless refugees on their way to distant Skyfyr. Many Jennites who are so used to life under Alphatian rule that they know little else decide to follow the Alphatians.

However, many Jennites and confident Alphatians decide to remain. The Alphatians who remain curse their fleeing Alphatian countrymen and call them cowards thinking they're better off without them anyway. (*See Fl. 14, Ya. 17; Ya. 26, Kl. 2.*)

What This Means: Everybody is expecting an impending siege of Faraway by the Jennite armies and with the rumors of the harsh treatment the Alphatians received at the hands of the Jennites at the fallen eastern forts, most Alphatians fear for their lives if they stay in Verdan. Despite the disgust they utter, the Alphatians who decide to remain aren't sure if it's a good thing that so many leave—on the one hand, it means that there are a lot less mouths to feed during the expected siege, but with the

massive migration Faraway may be doomed altogether.

What the PCs Can Do: Alphatian PCs have a good opportunity here to help. They can assist in organizing the Alphatian retreat, prepare defenses to meet the expected siege of Faraway and even escort the refugees to keep them safe from hostile Jennite patrols. There is a lot less for Jennite PCs to do, but they may spy on how things evolve in Faraway and plan their attack accordingly or hunt the fleeing Alphatians.

Yarthmont 21, AC 1017: Parliament Sends Ambassadors.

Location: City of Leominster, Bishopric of Leominster, Kingdom of Bellayne. SC

Description: The parliament decides to appoint its own ambassadors to foreign nations. This means that several Savage Coast countries will have two Bellaynish ambassadors present, one representing each of the two factions. If the rest of the rulers of the Savage Coast have not yet noted what is going on in Bellayne, they will know about it soon. (*See Fl. 24, Ya. 6; Ya. 25, Kl. 2.*)

What This Means: The parliament realizes that the king will likely seek aid from foreign nations, to attempt to narrow the gap between the two factions' resources. Thus, to prevent the king from getting his way without opposition, the parliament will send its own ambassadors to complicate the king's diplomatic efforts.

What the PCs Can Do: Characters with strong ties to foreign nations could be sent as emissaries to argue the parliament's case.

Yarthmont 21, AC 1017: A Declaration of War.

Location: City of Kragm'aanle, Grand Duchy of Stygia. WB

Description: After much deliberation and after many meetings with the patriarchs of Yeg Shuta, Xagash, Archduke of Stygia, declares war against the Duchies of Vrancea and Gournzee. He announces that, given the repeated breaking of confederated law on the part of Nhorg of Vrancea, he will no

longer consider the duchy part of the Confederacy of Klagorst. He also asks the other members of the confederation to side with Stygia in the war, in order to put a new ruler, who will be truer to the spirit of their alliance, on the ducal throne. (*See Ya. 1, Ya. 3; Ya. 22, Ya. 28.*)

What This Means: Xagash thought long and hard over what he could do to preserve the throne and the alliance with the other Klagorst nations and found this to be the only solution. He hopes that the other confederated kingdoms will support his claims of betrayal on the part of Nhorg and not remain neutral, or, worse, side with Nhorg.

What the PCs Can Do: Fight for either of the two factions parties!

Fourth Week

Yarthmont 22, AC 1017: The Baron of Cittanova.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: A proclamation is declared throughout the city of Thyatis, that henceforth, in accordance with his meritorious service to the Thyatian Empire during the Crown War, as well as his dedication to the virtues embodied by the empire itself, Baron Justin Karameikos has been named Baron of Cittanova. (*See Fl. 27.*)

What This Means: Though Justin had already received the title of baron the previous month, his actual barony has now been awarded. Eusebius is aware that Justin has a keen mind and is always open to new ideas and wishes to capitalize on the young man's loyalty and vibrance. Cittanova was chosen primarily due to its location in the Hinterlands. Situated at the northern edge of the northernmost peninsula of the region, the barony lies along the coastal shipping route between Kastelios and Raven Scarp and is the closest Davanian settlement to the Thanegioth Archipelago. Ships have already been stopping there for additional supplies,

minor routine maintenance and other tasks, but Eusebius feels that, under Justin's guidance, Cittanova could grow into a prosperous barony.

Arrangements will also be made to encourage settlement of the barony. Given Justin's good reputation in The City, a fair number of people will no doubt seek their fortune in Cittanova.

What the PCs Can Do: Although there is not much they can do directly, those PCs who are known and trusted by Justin might be asked to accompany him to his new dominion, or otherwise assume positions in the barony to help him administer it. Justin will also need help in surveying the land, clearing out hostile inhabitants and otherwise aiding in developing the region. Loyal PCs might also receive plots of land in and around Cittanova.

Yarthmont 22, AC 1017: Diplomats Make Their Move.

Location: Town of Gask, County of Gask, Confederacy of Klagorst. WB

Description: The council representatives of Valeryia and Gask try to halt the war by proposing a council measure that forces Duke Nhorg of Vrancea to submit to the council in Gask and answer to the charges for which he was accused by Archduke Xagash of Stygia. The proposal is immediately put to a vote and passes narrowly, when they modify it by asking also for the immediate withdrawal of the declaration of war on the part of the Stygian ruler. (*See Ya. 3, Ya. 21; Ya. 28, Kl. 1.*)

What This Means: The representatives of Gask and Valeryia are trying desperately to stop the war, but they know that it is a nearly impossible to do so, considering the situation in Stygia. They do not know that Xagash would actually prefer a decision of the council over a war: the problem is Nhorg, who, given his selfishness and strong independent streak, will probably not listen to the request of the council at all. However, the council is not dealing with the part of Xagash's declaration, which declared his

intention to war with the varkhas of Gournzee.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are representatives at the council, they could try to change the result of the voting. Otherwise, they will probably not have to do anything, and they will just live to bear the consequences of the political plotting.

Yarthmont 23, AC 1017: Officials Tour *Torpin*.

Location: *Torpin* Construction Site, Kingdom of Aquas, Nayce. AS

Description:

Naycese officials and officers, along with several prominent nobles of Aquas, arrive via *submersible* to tour the *Torpin*. They spend the day walking her



decks, being shown the interior extent of the big undersea vessel and speaking with the designers and workers. Though visually impressed by the size and design, the officials seem more impressed at the sheer size and complexity of the *submersible* construction site than the *Torpin* herself. Though invited to stay the night, the Naycese officials decline and head back for Aquas. (See *Tb. 27, Ya. 9; Kl. 24, Kl. 27.*)

What This Means: Prior to being sent to Aquas, the Naycese officials have been well prepared by the council and military about the needed information. They know what they need to know about the *Torpin* and are not going to be influenced by lobbyists. The future of the *Torpin* is not up to them; the information will be forwarded to a committee and the Naycese military for analysis. However they have taken note of the *submersible* facilities and have decided that the facilities could possibly be used to further Nayce's *submersible* fleets.

Yarthmont 23, AC 1017: Oderbry Captured.

Location: City of Mirros, Kingdom of Karameikos. OW

Description: The terrorist faction working for Alfric Oderbry has been infiltrated and their location discovered. Oderbry had been sending his orders from a secret hideout in the Old Quarter of Mirros. Drawn into the open and confronted by a group of intrepid adventurers, Oderbry and his lieutenants are defeated and captured. They are imprisoned while they await sentencing. (See *Tb. 14, Fl. 6; Ya. 26.*)

What This Means: Though the ringleader of the church schism has been captured, the troubles are far from over. There is still a strong sentiment of anger and bitterness between the Thyatians and Traladarans that has been stirred up and brought to the forefront and it will be a long time in healing.

What the PCs Can Do: Hopefully, the PCs are the ones responsible for bringing Oderbry in. If they have not managed to infiltrate his group themselves, they can be tipped off to their location by the real infiltrators and brought in as additional muscle.

Yarthmont 25, AC 1017: New *Archon* of Hespiria?

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Alexander Penhaligon, an aristocrat of the *gens Aurelia* (clerical aristocrats), proposes that the new ruler of Hespiria should be Philippos Dassinites, son of Maldinius Kerendas. Alexander says that Philippos has always been loyal to the emperor and has fought on his side in the Crown War. He also says that Philippos (who is currently a senator) should have inherited the title after his father's death, even if that was assigned to Tredorian. After that, Philippos speaks, saying that he is happy that a trustworthy Thyatian inherited his father's title, but that his blood tells him that he has the right to a title. The senate's vote on the matter is delayed after the

election's result, but it seems clear that Philippos has good chances to become *Archon* of Hesperia. (See *Fl. 27, Ya. 18; Ya. 27, Ya. 28.*)

What This Means: There is little Eusebius can do to prevent Philippos from receiving the title without seeming ungrateful for Philippos Dassinites's support of him, against his own father, during the Crown War. Eusebius isn't opposed to him anyway. This could be part of the project of settling the area and also serve as a way to soften the relationship with the senate—it's better to have good relations between the two main institutions of the empire, especially after the Crown War.

Another consideration in this for Eusebius is the fact that Philippos and Lucianna, Eusebius's wife, are cousins. Although Maldinius did not have good relations with his niece in recent years (since Simona Kerendas, mother of the empress, suspected that Maldinius killed one of their elder brothers to reach the ducal throne), the two cousins have always been good friends. If Eusebius doesn't accept this proposal, he will face his wife's discontentment and will appear to the population as uncaring of his own relatives.

Moreover, the emperor wants to do some electoral propaganda, showing that he intends to respect the nobility who remained true to the empire. Thus Philippos will succeed in gaining the position of *Archon* of Hesperia with little difficulty.

Yarthmont 25, AC 1017: Money—You Can Never Have Enough.

Location: City of Leominster, Bishopric of Leominster, Kingdom of Bellayne. SC

Description: The parliament unveils various new taxation policies within the kingdom. The parliament has had jurisdiction over raising tax for many years now and unlike the royal treasuries, which have been in debt for some time (having had to pay for Queen Catherine's extravagant military), actually has access to a substantial sum of gold. Donations from various parties (mainly traders, such as Sir Mewsbury) have

also helped raise a covert reserve of money.

However, the parliament considers that it is not enough and so reveals an increase in income tax across the nation and some increases in import tariffs and taxes on mercantile enterprises.

This is greeted with howls of dismay from most entrepreneurs, who expected the parliament to keep taxes low.

However, arms dealing is rapidly becoming big business in Leominster, as the parliament provides equipment to the newly-raised Leominster militias—a sizable force. Those businessmen abreast of the markets stand to make a great deal of money. (See *Ya. 6, Ya. 21; Kl. 2, Kl. 7.*)

What This Means: The parliament probably has enough money already to fund its forces. However, as every rakasta knows, one can never have too much money. Believing that public opinion will weather some tax increases for a just cause, the parliament decides to raise a little more money through official channels.

Yarthmont 26, AC 1017: Excommunication.

Location: City of Mirros, Kingdom of Karameikos. OW

Description: A crowd gathers in the court of the king to watch as the sentencing of Alfric Oderbry and his lieutenants begins. They are brought before King Stefan and Patriarch Halaran. In a solemn display, Halaran officially excommunicates Oderbry and his men from the Church of Karameikos. The crowd watches in stunned silence. King Stefan then sentences the men to make reparations for the damages they've done—their properties will be seized—and imprisonment. An outraged Oderbry supporter boos loudly and soon the crowd sets to catcalls and shouting imprecations at one another. The city guard and King Stefan silence the crowd long enough to usher Oderbry and his men out of the room. (See *Fl. 6, Ya. 23.*)

What This Means: This is the beginning of the healing process, but as evidenced by the mixed reaction, it is not going to be easy.

Yarthmont 26, AC 1017: Favian Vern Addresses Nayce.

Location: City of Ionace, Ionace Island, Nayce. AS

Description: Favian Vern, President of the Republic of Esterhold, makes an impassioned speech to the Nayce Council in which he expresses great concerns over the recent events in Esterhold, particularly in Verdan. The eastern forts fell quickly to the alliance between the free Jennites and the rebel Jennites under former Governor Talin and many Alphatians are now refugees fleeing Faraway in fear of their lives. He formally asks Nayce to intervene and restore the order of his democracy before it's too late. The council promises to consider the matter shortly. (*See Ya. 17, Ya. 21; Kl. 2, Kl. 15.*)

What This Means: Favian Vern is truly troubled by what has happened in Verdan recently. He has offered the Jennites freedom, but although some have accepted it, many, particularly in Verdan, have decided to throw the idea right back in his face. While Favian is not prepared to accept himself that his democracy has failed, this does mean that many members of the Nayce Council are beginning to think so—after all, there has been nothing but trouble in Esterhold since the council was constituted. This also means that the council's evaluation of what to do will take a good deal of time despite what they've promised Favian Vern; some believe Nayce should intervene now, some believe that the democracy in Esterhold must, now or never, prove itself by solving its own problems and some just believe that Esterhold is now more trouble than it's worth.

What the PCs Can Do: There is little here for the PCs to do. They could escort Favian Vern to Ionace, in which case they might run into Jennite assassins seeking to strike a blow against the "insidious and deceptive Alphatian lie of democracy" by

killing President Vern, or other random encounters. PCs with influence can obviously speak to the council for or against Favian Vern's desires.

Yarthmont 26, AC 1017: Trouble at Torenal Site.

Location: Torenal Site, Sunken Arogansa, Nayce. AS

Description: A construction crew working on one of the site's underground chambers are forced to scramble for their lives as water pours in to flood the area. Luckily they manage to scurry to safety and secure the nearest watertight doors to isolate the breach. The flooded chamber will need to be pumped out and the leak patched. As a precaution, the construction overseers order inspections of all of the chambers and a general strengthening of their walls and ceilings. Fortunately, this additional work can be readily accommodated as much of construction force is performing minor labor while awaiting the arrival of the domes. The downside is that the added strengthening will add to the project's budget. (*See Nu. 3, Ya. 5; Kl. 6, Kl. 11.*)

Yarthmont 26, AC 1017: Well Poisoned by Enemy Hands.

Location: Town of Polakatsikes, Dominion of Polakatsikes, Heldannic Empire, Meghala Kimata Plains. DV

Description: Amidst the continuing tension arising from the siege, a public outcry is heard near the central market of the town. A squad of Heldannic Knights is sent to investigate and they discover a shocking scene: one of the *tavernas* which abuts the market is silent, but not because there are no patrons. Within, they see a room full of customers, all sitting dead in their seats, having apparently died in the midst of their midday meals.

After interrogating the *taverna's* proprietor, the knights determine that he did not deliberately poison the patrons' food, nor did he employ some other means to have them all murdered; there was simply no

motive for him to do so. Instead, they discover that the well which supplies the *taverna's* water, as well as the water used by a number of other buildings, has been poisoned. Without delay, they arrange to have the well cleansed with a *neutralize poison* spell and order all other wells to receive the same treatment. Once this is accomplished, they pass on what they have learned to Wolfgang Stimmel and allow the locals to dispose of the dead. (See *Fl. 21, Ya. 2; Fe. 4, Fe. 6.*)

What This Means: The burning of the granaries caused enough of an uproar; the deaths of so many people at one time and by such a surreptitious means, is bound to instill even more despair amongst the townsfolk, as well as the garrison. Some will begin to wonder whether there is a ring of Mivosian spies active in Polakatsikes and tensions will increase even further.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are with the Heldannic Knights, the PCs could be assigned the task of trying to root out Mivosian spies operating in town and eliminating them. Otherwise, the PCs could be spies themselves.

Yarthmont 27, AC 1017: A Morbid Discovery.

Location: City of Rardish, Kingdom of Randel, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: A slave street cleaner is seen running wildly from an alleyway near the Temple of Alphatia, screaming about a monster. The city guard is summoned and soon several venture into the alley to investigate. They find the body of a gray-skinned, featureless creature lying dead amid the refuse. The dead creature is wearing the vestments of an acolyte of the Order of Alphatia. On its person are found a small narrow bladed dagger and two vials of what prove to be blood.

The guard quickly closes off the alley and summons the city administrator, Alphatar. Arriving with his sister Karatnora, they examine the body and the alley. After a few moments, they emerge and Alphatar orders

the body to be removed and burned. (See *Va. 12, Ya. 1; Fy. 8, Am. 14.*)

What This Means: The body found is that of a doppleganger; a shape-shifter capable of assuming the physical appearance of individuals. During the previous night, a group of Randel troops was returning from a night on the town when they came upon a lone cleric of Alphatia. Bolstered by drink, the troops picked a fight with the pacifist cleric. Push turned to shove and surprisingly, the cleric fought back rather viciously. The troops struck back and killed the cleric, it returning to its natural form at death. Horrified and unsure what had exactly transpired, the troops fled after dragging the body into a nearby alley.

Following standard procedure, the city guard arrived and notified their superiors of a monster being found. Normally, such a discovery would not have garnered the attentions of the city administrator and been more the duty of a subordinate and the guard. However, with the rumors running about, the body and its proximity to the temple drew his immediate attention and he summoned his magist sister to assist him. Identifying the body as a shape-shifter is easy enough. Though no connections can be established, the presence of shape-shifters within Rardish is alarming. Given the physiology of a shape-shifter, Alphatar initiates a full investigation to find out who killed this one and hopefully what form it was in when it was killed.

What the PCs Can Do: With this lead, any investigating PCs will have a strong ally with Alphatar and Karatnora. Both will take a great deal of interest in any odd creatures being linked to the Order of Alphatia. Finding the troops that killed the doppleganger should be fairly straightforward. In reality it will be a race between the PCs and the clerics to find them. However, finding the troops and getting them safely to the proper authorities is another matter. The clerics' priority is silencing the witnessing troops and anyone that can connect the slain doppleganger to the temple. Likewise, PCs not previously involved could be hired at this point, or

pulled in through aiding the troops or by witnessing the troops killing the doppleganger.

Yarthmont 27, AC 1017: Election Eve.

Location: Throughout the Thyatian Empire. OW, SD, DV

Description: This is the last day of campaigning for senatorial candidates in the Thyatian Empire and major efforts are made to stir up support. This is also the last day for their operatives to engage in various schemes to insure the defeat of their opponents. Efforts are made to buy vote. Last-minute deals are struck with prominent community leaders and politically influential hacks to gain their support, to encourage this or that ethnic, religious, or social group to turn out for a given candidate. (*See Fl. 12, Ya. 18; Ya. 28, Fy. 1.*)

Yarthmont 27, AC 1017: Idris, Our Friend.

Location: Town of Woodgate, Kingdom of Wendar. OW

Description: Just outside the walls of the city, Bensarian and the most important figures of Woodgate attend the opening of the first temple of Idris authorized by the Wendarian government. The opening is not interrupted by incidents and the humans assist to a normal holy ceremony inside the temple, with the priest of Idris celebrating the Wendarians' goodwill and trust with a passionate sermon. After witnessing the practices of the church don't involve human sacrifices and other grim offerings, the human authorities are pleased and leave the temple. (*See Nu. 22, Th. 22; Ya. 27, Fe. 18.*)

What This Means: This is another of Bensarian's achievements. After many requests made by the Denagothian ambassador, Bensarian finally decided to allow the creation of a public temple for worshipping Idris inside Wendar, thus making an exception to the royal decree that declared the Cult of Idris unlawful within the kingdom's borders. Bensarian ensured the construction took place near the city

with the lowest elven population and made no formal invitation to the elven leaders, who in turn didn't attend the ceremony with scorn. The priests of Idris on their part thanked the humans for their goodwill and made every attempt possible to show them their practices are not unlawful, hiding the true goals of their faith and worship. Idris has planted a firm step on Wendar's soil and has now instructed Her followers to slightly change their preaching to convert more human followers without openly showing the church's contempt towards the elven race. With their new motto being "Stealth over Strength," Idris's cultists spread near Woodgate to gain more converts.

What the PCs Can Do: Clerics of Wendar may be annoyed by the arrival of this new church into their kingdom; all the more if they are elves. They could be asked by their hierarchy to investigate the new faith. PCs who are not affiliated with any church, or who aren't even Wendarians, might be hired by those established churches to investigate on the Cult of Idris on their behalf.

Yarthmont 27, AC 1017: The Plot Thickens, Yet more Secret Negotiations.

Location: City of Shiell, Kingdom of Frisland, Floating Continent of Alpathia, Alpathian Empire. HW

Description: Rogart and Amagast of Stonewall arrive from their journey to Limn in Shiell, capital of Frisland, to negotiate with King Edjer "the Twisted." King Edjer is renowned for his skill in political backstabbing, which has also earned him his nickname. He is quite argumentative and loves nothing more than political infighting and intrigue, so Rogart and Amagast have their work cut out for them! Stonewall needs not only permission to travel through Frisland, but also ships for transport. Very few ships suitable for this purpose can be found in Frisland, however, so the Stonewall army will have to cut down trees in the kingdom and build the ships themselves, though these will really just be primitive river boats. Naturally this will take time and

they just cannot have Frisland oppose them after their army has traveled through the hostile Kerothar Mountains and are busy making their boats. Unfortunately, King Edjer knows this just as well as Rogart and Amagast do and he sees no reason why he should let a potentially hostile army travel through his lands. The negotiations go on for days and in the end, Stonewall must agree not only to a political alliance with Frisland on any imperial matters and pay dearly for the ships and timber they need; they must also hand over 25% of all taxes collected in Arkan to Frisland and allow it free access, via Arkan roads, to the river villages near the Ambur and Roaring Rivers, should the invasion be successful. This will seriously reduce Stonewall's funds, but they have little choice—the alternative is famine! (See *Ya. 9, Ya. 16; Kl. 11, Fe. 8.*)

What This Means: Stonewall needs Frisland's help, but has little to offer in return. Edjer knows this only too well and he has forced them to pay a high price for his support indeed. The leaders of Stonewall's army plan to travel north along the trade routes toward Frisland. When Alphatia was recreated in the Hollow World, the shipping lanes that used to connect the towns of Torpes in Limn with Nasta in Frisland were obviously lost, so in the years that have passed since, new trade routes have been established between Torpes and the closest town in Frisland, Azafez. These have been dangerous, though, because they must go through the monster-infested Kerothar Mountains in Frisland and northern Stoutfellow. Stoutfellow, Limn and particularly Frisland would really like to cut down on the monster population in this area because it is bad for trade and having a large army move through the area might just do the trick. Since the Stonewall army will have to do so anyway, though, the other rulers see little reason to grant them anything in return for this. Once the Stonewall army moves close to Azafez, they plan to head west through the hostile Kerothar Mountains in Frisland to the Rainbow River. There they will have to build the river boats they need and meet with the ships that Rogart and

Amagast are able to hire. These will then collect the troops and transport them to Shiell Lake and then northwards via the Fris River to the border between Arkan and Frisland and then mount the invasion from there. While doing this, a secondary force of only a few ships will travel south from Shiell Lake down the Snake River in Foresthome until they get close to the Roaring River. There a number of mages and clerics will help the ships through the ten-miles or so over land to the Roaring River (or, failing that, the troops will cut down trees to be used to roll the ships over that distance). From there they will sail north to Crystal Lake in Arkan. By the time they do, they hope that Arkan will have sent the majority of their forces east to stop the main Stonewall force attacking from Frisland. Then the secondary force will be in a much better position to surprise the towns and cities that lie along the coasts of the Crystal Lake, such as Arregghi and Ceafem, the capital.

What the PCs Can Do: The negotiations with Edjer are tough! Although Rogart is a skilled debater, he'll find that Edjer more than lives up to his nickname. If the PCs are good role-players and diplomats, then Edjer will be completely unwilling to allow Stonewall passage and the PCs will have to convince him otherwise. Also, if Arkan hears of this mission, it will definitely try to sabotage the negotiations, as Stonewall's agents are now far too close to its borders.

Yarthmont 27, AC 1017: Torreón Stays Neutral—More or Less.

Location: Town of Ciudadela de León, *Baronía* Torreón. SC

Description: *Barón* Balthazar of Saragón visits Ciudadela de León to request Torreón's assistance in the fighting against Narvaez. *Baronesa* Isabel considers it, but after much thought turns down Balthazar's plea. She does, however, allow Saragón to use the famous Torreóner mercenaries in their war, which will be of great assistance to Saragón in the upcoming fighting. (See *Ya. 2, Ya. 14; Fe. 8, Fe. 11.*)

What This Means: Torreón has till now stayed out of the fighting, as Isabel does not consider Torreón to be ready to start her dream of unifying the baronies by force of arms. She feels that Hugo has slighted her however and honor demands that she repay this debt in some way. And she can earn a little more tax into the bargain.

Yarthmont 27, AC 1017: When Two Ladies Clash.

Location: Borderlands of the Hinterlands, Thyatian Empire. DV

Description: Thyatian forces led by Leilah ben Nadir's command have marched south from Raven Scarp along the River Torion, finally scattering Thratian raiders before them. Today they are met by an overwhelming army of Thratians, combined groups of warriors from all the clans, operating under the command of Siobhan daughter of Maeve, with Leopard clansmen in the forefront. The clans arrange an ambush of the Thyatian forces along the river. The charge of the special rhino-mounted cavalry nearly breaks the Thyatian column, but Leilah rallies her troops in a counter attack that maintains order.

Then Siobhan engages Leilah in single combat. Both warrior-women are wounded severely, but Siobhan knocks Leilah unconscious with a strong blow. Nearby Thyatian soldiers manage to drag Leilah to the safety and the approach of more Thyatians convinces Siobhan not to pursue Leilah. But the battle is decided here—with their general unconscious, the Thyatian forces lack coordination. Individual commanders order a retreat while others try to direct counterattacks and the line falls apart. Thratian warriors enter the gaps and the battle breaks into a cluster of small skirmishes, where the Thratians excel. Soon all the surviving Thyatian forces are retreating towards Raven Scarp. (*See Va. 27, Tb. 6; Kl. 1, Kl. 5.*)

What This Means: Siobhan knew that raids would never be sufficient to force the Thyatians out of the Hinterlands. They would need to defeat the Thyatians' army

and take Raven Scarp. Therefore, when Leilah's forces marched, Siobhan's warriors were ready to meet them. The Thratians won a tremendous victory and for the moment the way is open to Raven Scarp and the Thyatian defenses are weakened and disorganized. However, Siobhan herself is too severely wounded to lead her troops on herself and she stubbornly refuses healing magic until her troops have received it. The other clan leaders begin squabbling over who should lead, since none of them want to follow the others and the only one they all accept as leader is Siobhan herself. Eventually, the leader of the Raven Clan gets sick of the squabbling and decides to lead his own forces to retake their ancient meeting-ground and gain the glory as well.

What the PCs Can Do: Characters can participate in the conflict on either side.

Yarthmont 27, AC 1017: Towards Skullhorn Pass.

Location: Principality of Bramyra, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: Bakai leads her siblings and their entourage into the town of Bramyra. They intend to journey through Skullhorn Pass and thence to Glantri City, rather than take the slightly longer path around the southern edge of the Colossus Mountains. (*See Ya. 14, Ya. 20; Kl. 10, Kl. 18.*)

What This Means: Bakai is aware that her entourage will face difficulties in their task, particularly since Glantrians are still feeling hostile towards Ethengars since the war. By passing through Bramyra and near to Krondahar—both principalities with large populations of Ethengar-descended peoples—they hope to remain largely unnoticed in their journey.

Yarthmont 28, AC 1017: Election Day.

Location: Throughout the Thyatian Empire. OW, SD, DV

Description: Elections are held as citizens cast their votes throughout the Thyatian Empire. The voting process itself is unusually clean—ballot boxes aren't stuffed,

election officials insure that things proceed smoothly, voters aren't intimidated at the polls and illegal voting is minimal (few cemetery ballots are cast and few votes of non-citizens as well). However, beneath the surface things are more compacted, as many votes have been bought by candidates, through arrangements or deals and political machines spur high turnout by supporters, many of whom have been promised civil service jobs or civic improvements (pork barrel projects) in exchange for their support. Poorer citizens (*clientela*) cast their votes in accordance with the wishes of their patrons, not necessarily in accordance with their own desires. (*See Fl. 27, Ya. 27; Fy. 1.*)

What This Means: Politics, Thyatian style. Actually, overt corruption is limited this time. These senatorial elections differ little from elections held in Darokin, for example. There are few of the worst abuses of some other recent Thyatian elections—no senatorial seats are actually stolen through fraudulent vote counts this time, for example. The election does serve to ratify a swing in Eusebius's favor, however. Perhaps this is one reason why these elections are relatively clean—the emperor didn't need to resort to dirty tricks to get his way, this time...

In any case, though most of those elected are supportive of Eusebius and his policies, Thyatian senators are essentially free agents. There are no political parties as such in Thyatis (though there are factions) and if the emperor stumbles and loses popularity, today's supporters can quickly become tomorrow's opponents. Several dominion rulers also take this day to either re-appoint their appointive senators or make new appointments.

What the PCs Can Do: Vote, if they are citizens. But, if they have been involved in the campaign, this is the day they find out if their efforts pay off. They might do a little last-second work (insuring that supporters of their candidate get to the polls, last-minute "truth campaigns"—slander—against their opponents and the like). But it is likely that the efforts and decisions they made during the campaign, before today, will be the

determining factor. This day just confirms whether or not those previous efforts were successful.

Yarthmont 28, AC 1017: The Army of Heldun on the March.

Location: City of Dunadale, *Exarchate*/Kingdom of Heldun, Thyatian Empire and Nayce, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: After several months of intensive training, Heldun's reformed army is pronounced ready to engage the Heldannic enemy in the field of battle. In a grand ceremony, Queen Asteriela inspects the gathered force of over 2,000 soldiers, stopping to talk to the occasional man or woman standing at attention before her. Once she completes her rounds, Asteriela ascends a wooden dais built for this occasion and delivers a passionate speech to the warriors assembled before her.

Drawing upon the histories of both Thyatis and Alphatia, she tells her soldiers about the deep roots all people living on the island today may claim as their own. She tells them of the unique spirit of the islanders who live out their lives on the frontier, of brave explorers and warriors past and of the uniqueness of the Isle of Dawn itself. With those images fresh in the assembled army's mind, Asteriela then paints a dark picture of the Heldannic Knights—of a force bent on destroying the land and its people and on imposing its own views on everything it encounters. Urging her soldiers to fight valiantly, she gives them her blessing and orders her generals to lead the army into battle. (*See Ya. 4, Ya. 10; Fe. 7, Fe. 7.*)

What This Means: Although pleased by the progress made by her developing army, Asteriela knows well that a motivated force fights far better than one that is not. Relying on emotional appeals to her soldiers' sentiments, she has sought to bind them—Thyatian, Alphatian and Northman—together into one cohesive force, one that will fight to the death for Heldun. Only if her army can put aside its internal differences will it become an effective force.

What the PCs Can Do: Unless they are high-level advisors, the most likely role for PCs would be as soldiers in the new Heldunian army. This scenario could serve as a means of introducing new characters to the Mystara campaign setting—first as soldiers and later as adventurers once their tours of duty are over.

Yarthmont 28, AC 1017: Just a Roll of the Drum...

Location: Town of Gask, County of Gask, Confederacy of Klagorst. WB

Description: Six days after the decision of the council of the Confederated Kingdoms of Klagorst, Duke Nhorg sends an answer to Gask. The Vrancean spokesman Gheil Parazaider announces that all the Vrancean representatives in Gask and in every other state of the confederation, will leave the country and return to the Duchy of Vrancea, because the sovereign duchy is no longer part of the Confederacy of Klagorst. He also says that Nhorg of Vrancea declares war on Stygia and if the confederated kingdoms side with the “foul” troglodytes, then the declaration will automatically extend to those, too. (*See Ya. 21, Ya. 22; Kl. 1, Kl. 12.*)

What This Means: There is not much to explain here; it means war.

What the PCs Can Do: This situation is very unlikely to be changed by PC actions, if they are not high level adventurers or representatives of the council. If they are PCs of high level, they could be sent by the council to kill Duke Nhorg.

Events: Klarmont

First Week

Klarmont 1, AC 1017: It Cannot Be Ever Said Ye for the Battle Were Not Ready, Stand and Never Yield.

Location: Missionary Station of Zirchev, Rogatus’s Rift, Territory of Thratia, Hinterlands, Thyatian Empire. DV

Description: Following their defeat by the Hinterlander army two days ago, Thyatian troops retreated north, with most returning in a disorderly fashion towards Raven Scarp. A small garrison of troops, reinforcements from Thyatis, rallied some of the fleeing troops. About a cohort’s worth are stationed at a small semi-fortified, defensible missionary station established by followers of Zirchev from Karameikos. The missionary and his daughter, after proving themselves bad for morale, are sent packing. Under the command of a *centarch* of engineers, the Thyatians have hastily fortified their position and secured it with a redoubt, as it lies along the approaches to Raven Scarp. They hope to delay the oncoming Thratian forces long enough for the city’s defenses to be organized, but they do not expect to survive.

This morning they hear a loud, rhythmic rumbling approaching, that sounds more like a dwarven or gnomish engine or locomotive than anything living. Down the valley—and up in the surrounding hills—thousands of Thratians, members of the Raven Clan, appear, beating in rhythm on their shields and giving their war chant.

While those above launch missile attacks with their slings, part of the Raven Clan forces charge the defending Thyatians in a probing attack. Thyatians armed with short composite bows and repeating crossbows repulse the attack, but it is only a small portion of the enemy army testing the Thyatians’ defenses. The Thyatians then find themselves surrounded.

That night, under cover of darkness, the Hinterlanders attack again, breaking into the

station and wreaking some havoc, starting fires and attacking the wounded Thyatians in the hospital ward. After some hard fighting, they are repulsed with severe losses, but it does not look like the Thyatians will hold out for long against such tremendous odds. (See *Th. 6, Ya. 27; Kl. 5, Fe. 6.*)

What This Means: If the Thratians can break through here quickly, they will probably be able to seize Raven Scarp, thus crippling Thyatis in the Hinterlands and paving the way to expelling the empire altogether. The Thyatians know their situation is desperate and that it is unlikely that they will survive, but they also know how important it is that they hold out. It is a battle of wills.

What the PCs Can Do: Characters involved in the fighting could tip the odds in the direction of their side.

Klarmont 1, AC 1017: Ierendi Crown Tourney.

Location: City of Ierendi, Kingdom of Ierendi. OW

Description: The Kingdom of Ierendi holds its annual Royal Tournament once more. To no one's surprise, Reston of Akesoli is once again the highest scoring contestant, becoming King of Ierendi for the 11th year in a row. The new queen is a hin adventurer from the Five Shires. (See *Kl. 15.*)

What the PCs Can Do: The contest is open to any potential adventurers, including the PCs. Any male PCs will face some stiff competition from Reston of Akesoli, however.

Klarmont 1, AC 1017: The Race Starts.

Location: City of Baraga, Merry Pirates Seas. HW

Description: The Banquet and the Tornado leave the harbor of Baraga head for the open sea. To the great disgust of Captain Barbarossa, his rival accompanies this event by singing some songs from his opera *The Pirate King* while standing on his quarterdeck. He is the only one who feels irritated by this;

the spectators are much pleased about the performance. (See *Ya. 4, Ya. 7; Kl. 6, Kl. 9.*)

What This Means: Captain Merryweather is known to be an excellent cook and probably the best composer and singer in the Merry Pirates Seas. Mockers say that, considering all these talents, he cannot be a good captain, of course. Merryweather is known to sing on his ship while Fanalir Meditor, his first officer, is running the ship. Meditor is a mysterious figure, an elf from a world with a yellow sun which causes days and nights; at least he tells such stories when he is drunk— every two or three circles. Though few believe them, those stories are true, as he is a water elf from the Meditor clan in the Minrothad Guilds.

Klarmont 1, AC 1017: ... And the War Has Begun.

Location: Town of Gask, County of Gask, Confederacy of Klagorst. WB

Description: The Council of Klagorst declares its support for the declaration of war by Stygia against Gournzee and Vrancea, with the notable exception of Tcheltar, which states that it will be remain neutral in the upcoming war. (See *Ya. 22, Ya. 28; Kl. 12, Kl. 13.*)

What This Means: It did not take long for the council to make a decision. Duke Nhorg has gone over the edge and Vrancea has always been a poor state, anyway; the goal of the war is to put a new ruler on the Vrancean throne, that will respect the laws of the confederation and who might make a greater effort to develop to region economically. The council is also resolute in its desire to stop the continual aggression against Stygia on the part of the varkhas from Gournzee. They hope that, once they conquer Vrancea, the varkhas will abandon the conflict and try to forge a peace treaty with Klagorst; it would be very difficult to enter Gournzee and effectively eliminate its troops, otherwise.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are mercenaries, sell out to the party that pays more. Otherwise, the PCs could fight for their country. This is an opportunity for the

DM to create an adventuring party and introduce the Klagorst region to the players, as a lot of low-level characters will be used for scouting, spying and other missions, aside from the actual fighting.

Klarmont 2, AC 1017: Faraway Under Siege.

Location: City of Faraway, Province of Verdan, Republic of Esterhold, Nayce. SK

Description: The predictions were correct—the armies of the rebel and free Jennites march on the city of Faraway and besiege it. There are some clashes, but the remaining Alphatians mostly barricade themselves and wait for what the Jennites will do.

Among the defenders are two surviving officers from Vigil Keep: Krael, a reformed Jennite who believes in Favian Vern's ideals of democracy and his commoner Alphatian subordinate, Lyriander, who was one of the soldiers Commander Broderick placed at the fort to reinforce it a few years ago. Lyriander is much younger than Krael and considers him a mentor, while Krael has come to rely on the youth. They were unable to affect the outcome of the siege at Vigil Keep because their superiors ordered them not to organize counterattacks, but they haven't given up hope that Faraway may be able to withstand the siege. (*See Ya. 21, Ya. 26; Kl. 15, Fe. 16.*)

What This Means: With so many people leaving Faraway, it is difficult for the city to organize a real defense, so the Alphatians defenders rely on minor officers to prepare it. The Jennites are in no particular hurry to storm the city either because Talin, having been the governor himself, knows quite well that no supplies or reinforcements can arrive anytime soon. However, he also realizes that there may still be rebellious Jennites in the city who might aid the Jennite army and help them seize the city without too many losses, so he waits a little to see what happens.

What the PCs Can Do: Yet another siege in Esterhold which the PCs may participate in on either side!

Klarmont 2, AC 1017: Militia Bill Refused and the King Takes Stock.

Location: City of Theeds, Earldom of Theeds, Kingdom of Bellayne. SC

Description: Again the parliament demands that the king give assent to the Militia Bill and again King James refuses. The parliament, having had enough, then passes the bill anyway, making the Militia Act law, an act in breach of the Bellaynish constitution. Such an open act of defiance would seem to make all those who voted in favor of passing the bill guilty of treason...

King James takes stock of the situation. Support in Leominster and Penwick is firmly behind the parliament, while most of Furfield and Pawcester remains loyal to the monarch—though sporadic rioting and lynching are becoming commonplace now throughout Bellayne as supporters of the two sides clash. The situation in Kittings is even more confused—law and order in Glenswych have deteriorated now so much that the town sees virtually continuous unrest.

The king begins mobilizing the reserves of Pawcester and Furfield and prepares for the worst. (*See Ya. 21, Ya. 25; Kl. 7, Kl. 15.*)

What This Means: Either the king will give in to the parliament's demands, or there will be war. Reasoning that sooner is better than later, as the kingdom seems to be tearing itself apart, King James is getting ready for a clash of arms—though, urged on by the clergy of Pax Bellanica, he is not willing to commence hostilities quite yet.

Klarmont 2, AC 1017: Shadow over Aengmor.

Location: Canolbarth Forest, Colony of Aengmor, Shadow Elves' Territories. OW

Description: A human sorceress identified as Synn has been recruiting shadowelf mercenaries in Aengmor for her decidedly wicked plots. Some shadowelf shamans warn the local populace of her evil and possible involvement with fiends and Immortals of Entropy, but the sorceress's charms, the lure of gold and the shadow

elves' occasionally vengeful nature make her propositions heard. (See *Fl. 13, Ya. 16; Fe. 20, Fy. 7.*)

What This Means: Synn requires a shadowelf army to protect her and her recently-begun plot. She is planning to build a magical fortress to serve as a base of operations in Aengmor, while she is still mastering the powers of the Magic Points. [*This is part of the storyline of the adventure arcade game D&D: Shadow Over Mystara.*]

Klarmont 3, AC 1017: Cabal Sends Out Feelers.

Location: Western portion of the Great Escarpment, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: Having secured a base area within the bowels of a small mesa and having intimidated some of the local monster population into their service, the leaders of the Cult of Thanatos decide they need to maintain contact with the wider world. But they do not want their continued existence discovered by Thyatis just yet. Therefore, they decide to send out a group to infiltrate the city of Ekto, on the eastern side of the Isle and establish a base of power there as well. Part of the cabal will remain here, building up its strength, while the rest go to Ekto. (See *Va. 14, Th. 2; Fy. 19, Am. 8.*)

What This Means: The cultists of Thanatos have yet to make contact with any of the other main power groups on the Great Escarpment. The western portion, largely steppe and badlands, is not heavily influenced by either the araneas or the Thothian lich, Haptuthep. A wide variety of humanoids and other monsters populate the area and they do have occasional contact with the araneas.

Knowing that Ekto is still in the process of recovering from the ravages of war, the cabal hopes to be able to quickly gain strong influence, even covert control over the city. They know that even if they don't, it will be a good place from which to gather information and supplies, which will then be sent on to the cabal's main base on the Great Escarpment. The members of the cabal also know there are some few Thyatian

colonists on the escarpment, sent there in AC 1010 when Thincol hoped to conquer the entire Isle of Dawn. The group sent out to Ekto is ordered to try and contact them, hoping that they can be subverted and serve as another source of minions for Thanatos's purposes.

What the PCs Can Do: Characters are unlikely to be able to influence events at this stage in the cabal's schemes, but will eventually have plenty of opportunities for adventures connected to them.

Klarmont 3, AC 1017: Shazula Promoted.

Location: Shazeke Tribal Lands, Tanagoro Plains. HW

Description: Representatives of the king arrive and announce that the *togoro* has decided to appoint Shazula, chief of the Shazeke Tribe, as High General of the Tanagoro army. Shazula is presented with the high general's shield, spear and standard. The Shazeke tribesmen applaud the appointment as it elevates their tribe to a high status among the Tanagoro tribes. Shazula accepts the symbols of the position and offers his thanks to the king for such an honored appointment. He offers the representatives food and shelter among his people until they have rested for a return trip. (See *Ya. 9, Ya. 10; Fy. 5.*)

What This Means: Though it will be days before he realizes it, Shazula's prophesied rise has been given added life by this appointment. Except in times of war, the king has customarily held the role of high general; therefore, the appointment is one of great praise and personal honor. Shazula's appointment places him up there with the royal family. It also increases his influence with the other tribes and their warriors that would be under his command in times of war.

Shazula knows that Korolo is no warrior, being more prone to civil engineering and domestic life. It would be feasible that Korolo would seek someone to fill the military role that he is lacking in. Ironically enough, Korolo's decision to delegate such

military authority to someone else greatly increases Shazula's opinion of the king: he can respect someone that recognizes his shortcomings and moves to address them. That Korolo chose him for the position only furthers that respect and loyalty.

What the PCs Can Do; Shazula's most trusted lieutenants will get indirect promotions alongside their leader.

Klarmont 5, AC 1017: This Shall Ever Be Your Story: Thyatians Do Not Yield.

Location: Missionary Station of Zirchev, Rogatus's Rift, Territory of Thratia, Hinterlands, Thyatian Empire. DV

Description: At dawn the Raven Clan forces besieging the Thyatian troops undertake long-range harassing sling fire from the hills around the missionary station, while the Thyatians hastily shore up their defenses, constructing additional barricades. The most nearly able-bodied wounded are returned to active service.

The Raven Clan Chief soon sends a wave of his warriors to attack, chanting their battle-song. The Thyatian defenders, feeling their end is near, respond with a defiant war-song of their own. As the Thratians charge the Thyatians respond with repeating crossbow volley fire and, when the enemy gets to close range, a volley of *pilia*. But the Raven Clan warriors overrun the barricades, pushing the Thyatians back. As the Thyatians retreat towards their final redoubt, the Thyatian reserve rank of troops armed with short composite bows spring up from behind the redoubt parapets, firing a lethal volley into the charging Thratians. The withdrawing Thyatians form up into two lines, with the crossbowmen firing from behind the serried ranks of a shield wall bristling with spears. The Thratians seem to come in wave after wave, till all the sudden the battlefield is quiet, except for the cries of the wounded, with bodies piled high right up to the feet of the surviving Thyatian troops. It seems, miraculously, as if the battle is won.

The Thyatians begin clearing the dead and calling the muster roll to see who has

survived. Then, along the hills around them, thousands of Raven Clan troops appear. The Thyatians are dispirited—they know they are low on arrows and bolts and lack enough able-bodied troops to withstand another charge. The Thratians begin a new chant, waving their spears. One of the Thyatians who lives in the Hinterlands and understands their language, a Hattian named Adendorff, understands the meaning of this new chant. He consoles his fellow soldiers, saying “They're saluting you. They're saluting your courage and warrior spirit.” The Thratians begin to withdraw, to the incredulity and relief of the remaining Thyatians, who brake into roar after roar of cheering. Later that afternoon, a relief force of Thyatian troops march into the mission station. (*See Ya. 27, Kl. 1; Fe. 6, Fy. 9.*)

What This Means: The Raven Clan Chief was alerted by his scouts that the Thyatian relief force was arriving, much sooner than expected. He then decided to withdraw, having taken unexpectedly large losses in failing to take the mission station (around 400 dead Thratians litter the field). The cause of the Thratians' defeat was the defensible position of the Thyatians and the fact that the Raven Clan Chief sent in his forces piecemeal, never committing them all to the charge. Once Siobhan, who has now allowed herself to be *healed*, hears of this she is infuriated. She berates the Raven Clan Chief for his incompetence, but he replies that he fought as his people have always fought. She retorts that this is his problem and they part in bitterness.

The arrival of the Thyatian relief column is due to Leilah ben Nadir's speedy action. After some confusion she was healed with a *heal* spell back at Raven Scarp. Then, once she had rallied some of her troops, she decided on a bold stroke. Leading out what forces she had, including the garrison of Raven Scarp, she hoped to persuade the Thratians that her forces were stronger than they really were and get them to withdraw. This stratagem worked, but she knows the Thratians will soon rally and shortly returns to Raven Scarp to begin bolstering its defenses.

In a few days, Siobhan has regained control over her forces and leads them to the outskirts of Raven Scarp by a different route, placing the city under siege.

In time, eleven of the defenders at Rogatus's Rift will be awarded the Vanya Cross, Thyatis's highest military honor, the most ever given as a result of a single battle.

What the PCs Can Do: Characters involved in the fighting could tip the odds in the direction of their side.

Klarmont 5, AC 1017: An Inconsolable Wife.

Location: City of Corisa, Milenian Empire. HW

Description: Dionios and Sephone arrive home from Tyrnus to attend to the matter of their home being burgled. As local authorities from the guard are recording the



items found missing, Dionios begins going through the estate examining various items. His examinations are short-lived thanks to a scream coming from the basement. Rushing down, he finds Sephone staring blankly at an open chest, her eyes full of tears and a look of terror upon her face.

Dionios goes to console her, telling her that he will replace whatever was in there. At this she begins to sob even more and begins ranting that she is dead, that they will kill them both for what has happened. Her husband asks her who she is talking about. Mainly he asks what she had kept in the chest that could be so valuable or so bad.

While he looks on in incredulity, the guard arrests them both on suspicion of treason and takes them into custody for interrogation. Dionios pleads his innocence the entire time, but the interrogators think he is just putting on a show. Meanwhile, in another interrogation chamber, Sephone

admits to everything, laying out in detail how Dionios helped the conspiracy against Emperor Adronius and how she, a mere weak woman and dutiful wife, helped him pass messages back and forth in the form of apparently innocuous letters to the wives of other conspirators.

The investigators have to admit a grudging admiration for Dionios so boldly maintaining his innocence in the face of all this evidence, but it seems clear to them that he is guilty. After his wife's confession, they bring her in to his interrogation chamber to lay out the same story and throughout the night they continue to question him relentlessly. After awhile, he breaks down and admits to it, making a statement of guilt. (*See Th. 16, Fl. 4; Kl. 12, Kl. 13.*)

What This Means: Sephone's charms over Dionios, along with the relentless questioning by the guard, finally broke the man. Even though he is innocent, he pleads guilty and admits to having been a ringleader, along with Senator Krameos, in the conspiracy. Emperor Adronius is quickly informed of these findings and orders men to arrest Krameos on suspicion of treason.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs involved with the investigation will sooner or later hear of this incident. The PCs may even be on hand to witness it by posing as members of the guard.

Klarmont 6, AC 1017: No Ghouls Is Good News... Hopefully.

Location: City of Ionace, Ionace Island, Nayce. AS

Description: With a lack of ghoule activity for the last few months, many Naycese officials see the inactivity as a testament that the ghoule threat is over. However there is a sizable and vocal minority that stress the need for vigilance in the security of Nayce's underwater interests and encourage a continuing of the current defensive measures. Several renowned mages and military officers cite that this is merely the calm before the storm. Underocean's representative is also very vocal in stressing the need for continued vigilance, as the

cause of the attacks is not yet determined. (See *Ya. 5, Ya. 17; Kl. 11, Kl. 19.*)

Klarmont 6, AC 1017: Grant to the Collegium Arcanum.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: The imperial government turns over a large quantity of documents to the research department of the *Collegium Arcanum*. Most of these involve the study of air-related magics, the creation of large enchantments and theory of spell design for magics useful at sea. Funding for the *Collegium Arcanum* is also increased. Several Alphatian mages who had entered service with the Thyatian military after the Great War but have now retired from active military duty also accept professorships at the *collegium*. Several of the wizards of Sclaras who don't already conduct classes are also hired to lecture and take on students now.

Shortly after this, a mysterious society known as the Justiciar Institute adds to the grant to the *Collegium Arcanum*. They provide funds to purchase several buildings near the *collegium*, to expand its facilities. They also endow the *collegium* with an unusually good collection of materials, tomes, alchemical information and the like. This allows the *collegium* to create an affiliated Magical Research Institute. (See *Am. 19, Sv. 9.*)

What This Means: The documents include some of those that were copied or otherwise acquired when Thyatis controlled Aeria, plus the results of researches in the war effort against the Twaelar and even during the Great War against Alphatia. These are largely theoretical documents only, helpful in expanding metaphysical magic-related knowledge and useful in researching and design, but not spell formulas or classified technical data. Though the ministries involved would, in general, prefer to keep this information to itself, the necessity to enhance the quality and prestige of the *Collegium Arcanum* took precedence. In any case, the Thyatian government kept several copies of each of the works that were granted to the college.

The *collegium* is one of the oldest magical academies on Brun, but has lately tended to lag behind newer institutions in prestige and international standing. This is part of the empire's effort to catch up and get back on the cutting edge of magical expertise. The *collegium* also begins to develop previously little-explored avenues of magical knowledge, attempting to develop specialties not available elsewhere. Research efforts will concentrate especially on developing methods of ritual magic.

No one's quite sure what the Justiciar Institute is, but some begin to quietly investigate the matter.

What the PCs Can Do: Characters attempting to research new spells or enchant magic items might find the expanded library materials useful. Note that most of these have duplicates and are fairly well guarded, so stealing them will not deprive Thyatis of the knowledge but will get the character hunted. Experienced characters with an innovative perspective on magic will be encouraged to teach and research here and share their insight with other Thyatian mages. Inexperienced characters might benefit from the enhanced status of the *collegium* and be able to acquire knowledge they weren't able to before. A more complete repertoire of spells can be learned now and training is available to higher levels than before.

Characters can also attempt to investigate the background of the Justiciar Institute.

Special Note: For those who are converting from old editions of the rules sets to the new 3rd Edition rules, this is also an opportunity to introduce magic-related changes within the context of the game world in a smooth manner.

Klarmont 6, AC 1017: First Stage Reached.

Location: Town of Floresque, Merry Pirates Seas. HW

Description: Both ships pass through Floresque, but The Banquet is the first ship and has left the harbor one hour before the

Tornado even arrives. (*See Ya. 7, Kl. 1; Kl. 9, Kl. 13.*)

What This Means: The Banquet is the faster ship indeed. As it was an uneventful voyage it could play out its speed, but the race is far from being won yet.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs aboard The Banquet working for Barbarossa should work on slowing it to even out the odds.

Klarmont 7, AC 1017: Don Jorge Agrees to Help.

Location: City of Leominster, Bishopric of Leominster, Kingdom of Bellayne. SC

Description: Don Jorge de Vilaverde meets with Blythe-Jackson in secret in the city of Leominster. Don Jorge agrees to assist the parliamentary war effort from behind the scenes, as long as the parliament promises to remove the recent tax increases decreed by King James upon Vilaverdan trading operations in Bellayne. Blythe-Jackson readily agrees and further proposes that they will buy some Vilaverdan warships to increase the size of the navy. Don Jorge agrees, but points out that Vilaverde will not openly enter the fray on either side and publicly at least will maintain a neutral stance. (*See Ya. 25, Kl. 2; Kl. 15, Kl. 27.*)

What This Means: Another effort on the part of Blythe-Jackson to isolate the king from the outside world, naval superiority will mean that the parliament can effectively blockade the king in Theeds—and eventually crush him by weight of numbers. Extra currency from Vilaverdan traders will also help to fund the war effort.

Second Week

Klarmont 8, AC 1017: The Ruins of Gwondoya.

Location: Ruins of Gwondoya, Divinarchy of Yavdlom, Serpent Peninsula. SC

Description: Sailing north along the western coast of Yavdlom, the imperial

exploration flotilla approaches the ruins of Gwondoya. Still smarting after the refusal of the divinarchy to sign an agreement with the empire, the expedition's admiral decides to try and salvage something from their time in Yavdlom through a little impromptu spelunking. Shore parties are sent ashore to explore the ruins thoroughly and return with anything of value they find.

The result is a confused debacle amid the darkening ruins, as various fiendish creatures beset the exploring bands. The explorers send distress signals (using fire and smoke) to the ships and the admiral is forced to send in reinforcements of marines to help extract the party. After a bloody fighting withdrawal, the Thyatians succeed in returning to their ships and sail on, fewer but wiser from the experience. (*See Fl. 8, Ya. 13; Kl. 14, Sv. 7.*)

What This Means: Adventuring isn't easy, if it were, everybody would do it. The expedition leaders thought they were in a barbarous, unsophisticated land and went into the ruins expecting an easy time of it, with little preparation, hoping to it would be a walkover. The admiral won't make the same mistake twice, however, having learned from the experience. Future efforts will be undertaken with better planning and preparation.

What the PCs Can Do: The characters are likely to be the ones selected to explore and adventure in the ruins. The DM should ensure that they find challenges that are slightly above those he or she normally throws at them and the party might fall into difficulty as described above. Rescue from the fleet can then help them retreat successfully. The characters might overcome these challenges, though, in which case the DM should reward them for their efforts with a suitable treasure. The ruins and the monsters infesting them are left undescribed so the DM can create suitable challenge according to the skill of the characters in the campaign.

Klarmont 9, AC 1017: Attack!

Location: Open sea east of the Island of Baraga, Merry Pirates Seas. H W

Description: The Banquet, one of the ships that is part of a race in the Merry Pirates Seas, is attacked by an unknown enemy ship. After a short battle the attacker retreats but The Banquet has suffered some damage which will slow it down. (*See Kl. 1, Kl. 6; Kl. 13, Kl. 14.*)

What This Means: The attack was not an accident but an underhanded act initiated by Captain Barbarossa. An unimportant and obscure captain owed him a favor, which is now paid back. Under the subtle code of honor among the Merry Pirates, it is not so much that one performs underhanded acts that is considered objectionable; it is whether one is seen to perform them or not. So long as no one has proof that Captain Barbarossa was involved, most Merry Pirates would not find it amiss that The Banquet was mysteriously attacked, but if word spreads that he was behind this and it is proven, then he would be condemned as a traitor and cheater.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs aboard The Banquet can fight to repel the attacker and the can help to repair the damages.

Klarmont 10, AC 1017: Ultimatum to the Sultan.

Location: Emirate of Abbashan, Emirates of Ylaruam. OW

Description: Envoys from the Empire of Thyatis meet with the sultan. They convey the emperor's condemnation of Ylari raids against Thyatis over the last several years. They also rebuke the sultan for Ylaruam's involvement in subverting the son of the *Sheik* of Tel Akbir at the beginning of this year. The envoys tell the sultan that the empire currently holds as prisoners of war several hundred Ylari raiders and inform him that Eusebius is willing to "generously" return the captives to Ylaruam and forgive Ylaruam's acts of aggression—if Ylaruam returns all the booty taken when Biazzan was sacked and pays 100,000 gp compensation. They add that a monthly

tribute of 1,000 gp will be required, plus the sultan will have to pay Thyatian taxes for himself, his wives and his children to the empire. Sultan Hassam replies coldly that he rejects these absurd demands, that furthermore it was his misguided predecessor who let "brigandish elements" within Ylaruam get out of hand and these raided Biazzan without government sanction. Hassam al-Kalim also says that since then the warriors of Ylaruam have only striven to reclaim their rightful heritage and that Ylaruam will pay nothing to Thyatian infidels. He insists that whatever captives Thyatis holds must be released at once, or Thyatis will once again learn to fear the name of the house of al-Kalim. He also tells them, in a clip, terse tone, that were he not a man of honor, he would slay such persons as the Thyatian envoys for abusing his hospitality and orders them to leave Ylaruam by the end of the day. The Thyatian envoys depart hastily. (*See Ya. 20; Fe. 9, Fy. 5.*)

What This Means: This was a calculated move on Eusebius's part. He made sure that the Thyatian demands would be so onerous that the sultan would not possibly accept them. But Eusebius will portray himself as having made peace overtures, which the "intransigent Ylari" rejected. Since the current regime in Ylaruam is not popular abroad, this virtually guarantees that no one will stand by their side when Thyatis "justly" punishes them for their continual acts of aggression and war against Thyatis. The imperial senate will unanimously vote for war against Ylaruam when Eusebius proposes it.

The Thyatian envoys also performed a bit of espionage within Ylaruam while they were there and secretly met with several pro-Preceptor dissidents. They did not get nearly as much encouragement and support from the latter as they initially hoped, because Thyatis is hardly popular among the Preceptors, either.

The sultan reacted as he felt he must, but is not blind to what the Thyatians were doing. He will order the Ylari armies to increase their readiness.

What the PCs Can Do: Thyatian characters could be sent on the mission, especially to conduct covert talks with representatives of the Preceptor faction. If they are extremely persuasive, they might get some promise of help or some information from them, but this will be very difficult. Ylari characters who have ties to the Preceptor faction might be the ones sent to meet with the Thyatians. If so, their task will be to try and get the Thyatians to promise as much help as possible without giving anything in return. The Preceptors wouldn't mind seeing the Kin regime embarrassed, but not if it benefits Thyatis. If there's one thing that unites all Ylari, both Kin and Preceptor, it is antipathy to the Thyatian Empire.

Klarmont 10, AC 1017: Grenzmarschallen Appointed.

Location: City of Freiburg, Territory of Heldann, Heldannic Empire. OW

Description: In the Star Chamber of Freiburg, during a meeting with his most senior officers, *Oberherr* Wulf von Klagendorf announces the appointments of several *grenzmarschallen* (border marshals) who will be entrusted with the task of keeping the peace in the borderlands of the Heldannic Territories—primarily Heldland. The *grenzmarschallen* will be granted a broad range of judicial and executive powers in order to exercise their responsibilities, though their authority will not extend into villages or larger settlements. These people will serve the Heldannic Order in these positions at the pleasure of the *oberherr*; their status may be revoked at any time. The appointees are:

Northern Heldland, Oceansend region: Siegfried Lenz (Pr14 of Vanya).

Northern Heldland, Nordberg region: Ulrike Bethmann (Pr15 of Vanya).

Southern Heldland, Seelitz region: Dirk Hollweg (Pr12 of Vanya).

Southern Heldland, Landfall region: Erich Barthold (Pr11 of Vanya). (*See Am. 26.*)

What This Means: The creation of the *grenzmarschallen* serves two purposes. First, they will enforce the Heldannic Order's will in Heldland and uphold the law, in response to recent humanoid raids aimed at halting colonization efforts. Second, as personal appointees of *Herr* Wulf, they will serve as his personal eyes and ears on the fringes of the Heldannic Territories. All of them were selected for their personal loyalty to Wulf, as well as their fighting prowess. Wulf feels that, given wide latitude to bring order to Heldland, the *grenzmarschallen* (plus their men-at-arms) will lay the foundations for tighter control over this region.

While powerful individually, the *grenzmarschallen* and their soldiers are too few to maintain effective order in Heldland. Although Wulf is well aware of this, he feels some action is necessary to show that the Heldannic Order has the strength to deal with any threats to its territories. On the other hand, many senior knights in Heldland might perceive this move as an attempt to undermine their own authority.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are higher-level and have served the Heldannic Order well for a fairly long time, the PCs might be among those chosen to be *grenzmarschallen*—in which case DMs should replace one of the NPCs above with a PC. If such is the case, a series of exciting and highly dangerous adventures might be in the offing, as the PCs try to tame Heldland's worst dangers.

Klarmont 10, AC 1017: Economic Developments.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: The imperial treasury announces the minting of a Thyatian electrum coin, the *justiciar*. On the obverse it bears a portrait of Empress Valentia, on the reverse an image of the Immortal Tarastia garbed in classical robes and holding the lamp of justice.

The treasury used foreign electrum coins that were exchanged for imperial currency over the last several months, along with

some Minrothaddan electrum coins. These foreign coins were melted down and re-struck to generate the initial minting of the *justiciar*.

At the same time the senate announces the passage of a new tax, an excise fee of 5% imposed on goods and services sold by foreign traders in the Thyatian Empire. A fifth of the proceeds are to go to the coffers of the local guild that regulates that particular trade or activity. Senators from Minrothad were instrumental in promoting the passage of this bill, as it is similar to—but somewhat lower than—an old Minrothaddan tax.

The Thyatians argue that this money will be used to improve roads and facilities that all traders, not just Thyatians, benefit from. They say that it is only reasonable that those who do not pay Thyatian income taxes should bear their fair share of the burden through paying the excise fee. They also argue that the proceeds that go to local Thyatian guilds merely covers the dues that the foreign traders would normally pay if they were Thyatians. But the merchants of other nations view this measure with special hostility, seeing it as forcing them to fund their competitors. (*See Ya. 20; Kl. 22, Fe. 4.*)

What This Means: This new denomination will make the empire's currency more flexible and thus useful in trade. This measure is well liked by all merchants. In the future, much of the metal for new coins will come from the electrum mines of Septentriona. The imperial treasury will acquire this by a variety of means—through the taxes paid on the electrum that is mined, to outright purchase when necessary.

The excise fee is intended to promote the interests of Thyatian traders at the expense of foreign traders—it doesn't apply to the goods themselves, so it encourages people to use Thyatian merchants to transport goods. It also further ties Minrothad's traders to the empire, because as members they do not have to pay it. It also produces revenue, filling the empire's coffers.

Darokin and other Western Defense League nations particularly dislike this measure and it further exacerbates the trade frictions between them and Thyatis, escalating the trade war. Darokin will resort to its best asset, the Darokinian Diplomatic Corps, to try and negotiate a resolution to this conflict before it spirals out of control and damages everyone's economies.

Klarmont 10, AC 1017: A Disastrous Showing.

Location: City of Rardish, Kingdom of Randel, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: Queen Junna officially displays the new design for the new Randel uniforms. As the models walk the runway displaying the new designs, the reception is one of shock and outrage. The spectators begin hurling items at the models: food, drink, stones, pieces of wood, animal droppings and a few spells. Junna is forced from the area and back to her palace, where she goes over the incident. Her advisors tell her that the Randel people are a crude and ungrateful people, the recent display even more of a justification of pacifying them. However, Junna seems to ignore them as she tries on an example of the new design and stares at herself in a mirror, doing a few combat moves with her trusty mace. She breaks her silence and issues an order to not issue the existing examples of the new uniform and to cancel the orders for future examples. (*See Va. 12, Th. 5; Kl. 21, Fe. 1.*)

What This Means: The public response to the uniforms is a surprise to Junna, who had thought them to be the best designs offered by some of the empire's most famous designers. She tries to imagine her father wearing such a uniform, the mental visage becoming quite comical even to her own eyes. Even with her wearing one, the image is not of one of a formidable Randel trooper. Realizing her folly, she cancels the plan to re-clothe the armed forces.

Klarmont 10, AC 1017: Request Denied.

Location: City of Glantri, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: Bakai, the children of Moglai *Khan* and their entourage, are blocked in their attempts to enter the Great School of Magic in Glantri City, as they are not students or scholars. Words get heated and the city guard is summoned, but things are prevented from getting out of hand by the timely arrival of Prince Urmahid Krinagar of Bramyra. He quells the discord and has the children of Moglai escorted to his nearby mansion, in the Noble's Quarter. (See *Ya. 20, Ya. 27; Kl. 18, Kl. 27.*)

What This Means: A master intelligence gatherer, Urmahid Krinagar has been aware of the children of Moglai nearly since they first arrived in his principality. He has had them followed by his own agents ever since. Upon discovering their goal in the city and the knowledge of when they would attempt to meet with the masters of the school, he made it a point to be personally present. Krinagar's arrival forestalled what could have been a potentially politically disastrous situation for Glantri.

Klarmont 10, AC 1017: Bardeen Cornered.

Location: *Jarldom* of Nordenhafen, Great Bay. NW

Description: A small flotilla of three heavily-armed galleys appears in the waters of the town of Nordenhafen. A delegation of emissaries from King Ericall is immediately granted an audience with *Jarl* Bardeen, who begins to think the worst. The head of the emissaries is none other than Overlord h'Caramore, who is here to complain about Bardeen's inability to secure the western waters of the Great Bay from pirate raids. Without making direct accusations, Ethendril h'Caramore warns Baron Bardeen that if the raids don't stop, King Ericall will be forced to send his own troops to use Nordenhafen as base of operations against the raiders of the Great Bay. Overlord h'Caramore departs with the ships, giving Baron Bardeen a one month

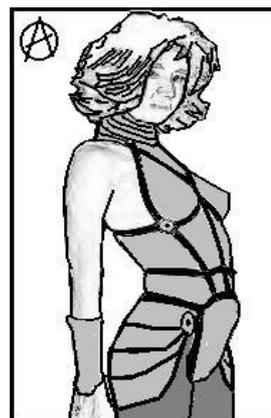
deadline to solve the problem. (See *Tb. 20; Fe. 9, Fe. 23.*)

What This Means: After many months of ongoing raids, the rulers of Panteria, Latela and Kameloth obtained evidence that Bardeen was backing the pirates to enrich his poor dominion. They vehemently protested to King Ericall, who in turn asked Overlord h'Caramore's advice on the matter. The overlord has now no real military power, since there is no threat menacing the whole Norwold Confederacy that requires raising the army, but he is still a respected warlord and a wise commander. Instead of pushing for a demonstration of strength (as asked by Latela and Kameloth), h'Caramore came up with a subtle warning for Baron Bardeen, in order to avoid embarrassing him and causing internal strife in the confederacy. However, if by the end of the ultimatum the Baron of Nordenhafen hasn't cut down all the pirates hiding in his isle, h'Caramore has suggested to Ericall to send his navy and Kameloth's own forces to take care of the problem and to remove the untrustworthy Bardeen.

Klarmont 11, AC 1017: The Die Is Cast.

Location: Kingdom of Stonewall, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alpathian Empire. HW

Description: The invasion army has finished preparing. The army numbers about 6,000 soldiers with various officers under the leadership of General Selcomad. The army begins its long journey toward Arkan. First they will have to march to Trollhattan and then Torpes in Limn, which should not be too much trouble. (See *Ya. 16, Ya. 27; Fe. 8, Fe. 16.*)



What This Means: The Stonewall army is on the move. After the army reaches Torpes, the journey will get a lot more dangerous

because of the monsters that live in the Kerothar Mountains in Frisland. Once the army reaches the Rainbow River, the rest of the journey will be a lot less dangerous, though—until they reach the border between Frisland and Arkan that is!

What the PCs Can Do: There is a war on. The PCs can either be mercenaries, leaders of Stonewall forces, or advance scouts for the army. Nothing much will happen in the first part of the journey, but there will be lots of adventuring opportunity once they reach the Kerothar Mountains in Frisland.

Klarmont 11, AC 1017: Proposal for the Princes.

Location: City of Glantri, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: Prince Morphail Gorevitch-Wozslany makes a surprisingly progressive proposal before the Council of Princes. As there are now 13 princes and only 10 council charges, Morphail suggests a creation of three new charges. First, the honorary title of warden of the marches should become an official council charge with 3 votes. Second, creating a charge of royal merchant-mage to oversee the foreign trade of Glantri with 2 votes. Third, a new vicerealty will be created and a new fort constructed for this charge.

Finally, Morphail also suggests the creation of a new duchy somewhere between Westheath and Touraine, as there is only the Duchy of Hightower left open for possible awards festivals. (*See Fl. 4; Kl. 20, Fe. 18.*)

What This Means: These propositions are of course inspired by Princes Jaggar and Malachie to strengthen their position against Dolores. In Morphail they found an eager ally to make them. To the surprise of many, all of the motions are passed by the council, save for the title of royal merchant-mage, which passes on to the parliament.

The position of warden of the marches in particular was a sore point among many of the princes. It barely passes the muster, supported only by two of its original proponents (Jaggar and Malachie—Morphail

was opposed to the idea). To their amazement, it seems that Dolores and her toady, Kol, support the idea as well (Dolores sees it as paving the way to a totalitarian rule over Glantri, in the long run). Angus McGregor throws his hat in the ring on the issue—which most perceive as an attempt to retain the alliance of Duke Eachainn McDougall of Hightower. Most surprising, however, is the evident support of Prince Harald Haaskinz on the issue. His motives for supporting the position cannot quite be fathomed.

In the meantime, politicking for the various new charges will begin in earnest.

Klarmont 11, AC 1017: A Motive for War.

Location: Nasperid Ruins, Sunken Arogansa. Nayce. AS

Description: The privately-owned luxury *submersible*, the *Dallyant*, is carrying a group of sightseeing nobles on a journey to survey the ruins of the sunken kingdom. Aware of



the undead threat and to avoid startling the natural animals, the vessel is shielded in a cloak of invisibility. While examining the ruins of the town of Nasperid, the passengers are shocked to see a trio of ghouls emerge from the ruins of one house. Though all are a bit disturbed at seeing undead in a resort area, their curiosity has them continue their observations throughout the town. They witness a definite ghoulish presence within the town, with the undead coming and going freely throughout the buildings. The passengers note the locations and what they had been before the sinking, several were favored resort areas. Some even humorously remark at how certain places are now having a better class of clientele. This dark humor seems to relieve a lot of the fear and apprehensions about the whole matter.

It is while observing the ruins of the family estate of the vessel's owner and captain, Delmarst, that the novelty begins to wear off. At seeing the doors of his family's crypt broken open, the mage goes into a rage. It takes the full efforts of his crew and fellows to prevent him from leaving the *submersible* and taking on the ghouls himself. However, after a few tense moments of rather stern discussion Delmarst obliges the caution his friends and crewmen voice. At their urgings the *submersible* sets a course away from Nasperid and returns to Aquas to report the matter. A still enraged Delmarst goes a step farther, using magic to report the incident to friends within the Nayce Council. (*See Ya. 17, Kl. 6; Kl. 19, Kl. 24.*)

What This Means: Though originally intended as an amusement trip to look over their old play areas and possibly do some dolphin spotting, the voyage has turned into an intelligence gathering coup. The *Dallyant* and her crew have unwittingly discovered a major marshaling area for the ghouls. The sighting is more than that though. The idea of the ghouls or any undead inhabiting inside what had been Alphatian dwellings is bad enough. Most of the passengers will attest to feeling some outrage at that. The sighting also adds another aspect that had not been contemplated before—since the ghouls feed on human flesh, they are eating something. Few had realized that the ghouls might be feeding on the remains of the Alphatian dead.

It is Delmarst that realizes this as his own family crypt is targeted. The thought of some undead feeding on the mortal remains of his parents or departed siblings is a bit unsettling. He is quite angry and would have taken matters into his own hands. However, the *Dallyant* is a private pleasure craft with no offensive capabilities; being more designed for stealthy underwater sightseeing. Likewise, he and his companions are not fighting mages—they are more favored towards social gatherings, gambling, trade and some spell research. Still, Delmarst is enraged enough to put the matter before the council for some resolution.

What the PCs Can Do: Aristocratic PCs may be vacationing aboard the *Dallyant*.

Klarmont 12, AC 1017: The Point of No Return.

Location: The Acropolis, City of Corisa, Milenian Empire. HW

Description:

Having collected enough evidence to support their accusations, imperial officials go to arrest Senator Krameos. But he has fled his estate and is nowhere to be



found. Others implicated in the conspiracy to overthrow Adronius are rounded up, though, including Senator Tibernos. Senator Tibernos claims that he and Krameos are being framed, that the evidence they've been gathering about the Cult of Matera is true. He then makes a nearly desperate gamble, accusing the emperor's wife Myrina of involvement in the conspiracy of the Materans. Emperor Adronius has always had high regard for Senator Tibernos and even now has difficulty believing he has conspired against him. So he calls in Myrina and lets Tibernos present his case—as part of Tibernos's defense against the charges against him.

Senator Tibernos calls in High Priest Dagos, High Priestess Helentia, Tassia Red-Hair, Xanthipon and High Magus Amnethon to present the case. They assemble before the emperor and are pretty straightforward on the matter, showing him a compiled report and offering examples of evidence for his perusal. Adronius examines all of the materials carefully and methodically. Adronius finishes the materials and rather calmly hands them back to Tibernos. After a moment of contemplation, he asks Myrina to reply to the accusations Tibernos has leveled against her.

Myrina denies the accusations, citing that these people are just trying to slander

Adronius to further their own political goals. Tibernos, outraged, demands that the empress's chambers be investigated, that evidence of the truth of his claims will be found there. Adronius sends men to search the chamber and Myrina seems shocked and appalled. But the investigators find nothing in their search that would implicate Myrina in any conspiracy—her chambers are filled with innocuous items and inconsequential correspondence, her diary boring and banal, expressing love and admiration for her husband and filled with flighty observations on daily life.

The emperor tells everyone that his evidence has been shown to be the result of forgeries commissioned by Senators Krameos and Tibernos as part of their conspiracy to overthrow him. Adronius orders Tibernos taken away, with Tibernos protesting his innocence as he is dragged off. Adronius then explains to the others assembled how they, like he, were duped by the conspirators into suspecting the Cult of Matera of conspiring against the empire, but that the truth has come out. Krameos's flight, as well as the admissions of Dionios and Sephone, are indications of the truth. Krameos must be guilty, or he would not have fled, while Dionios and Sephone have admitted to everything. He instructs them to begin preparations for the rounding up of the rest of the conspirators. Some are convinced, while others still have their doubts but stay silent for now in the face of the emperor's conviction on the matter, planning on looking into it discretely when they have the chance. (*See Fl. 4, Kl. 5; Kl. 13.*)

What This Means: Krameos fled hoping to by time and find conclusive proof of the Materans' machinations. He realized that if captured, it would all be over. But to Adronius and others, his flight is an admission of guilt. Also in his house, evidence (planted earlier by the Materans) was discovered that he had hired forgers and thieves to create and then plant documents implicating the Materans, as part of his conspiracy. As for the servant who planted the evidence, he is never seen again (he is disposed of by the order).

Krameos is now a man on the run, hunted both by agents of the Order of Matera and by the empire's agents. He still hopes to expose the truth, but his chances are slim and getting slimmer all the time.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs involved in the investigation will probably called upon to participate in its closure.

Klarmont 12, AC 1017: To Cleanse the Land...

Location: City of Freiburg, Territory of Heldann, Heldannic Empire. OW

Description: Following up on his announcement of the creation of the *grenzmarschallen*, *Oberherr* Wulf von Klagendorf issues yet another proclamation. Effective today, all senior knights commanding territories in the newly-recovered region of Heldland are to mobilize their troops immediately, in preparation for an assault on the Finsterwald. In addition, *Herr* Wulf pronounces a sentence of death upon Helmut Jaschke, a former Heldannic Knight who not only sided with the "traitorous scum" of Finsterwald in their efforts to remain independent of Heldannic rule; he apparently occupies a position of leadership among them. For added incentive, he also announces a bounty of 5,000 *gelder* on Helmut's head. (*See Fe. 2, Fe. 4.*)

What This Means: Since the campaign last year to regain control over all of Heldland after the Heldannic Knights regained their spellcasting powers, the bandits based in the Finsterwald region—known as the Company of the Resurgent—have been raiding the surrounding settlements intermittently. Led by the former Heldannic Knight, Count Helmut Jaschke (he calls his domain the County of Wolkenberg), the band of Antalians and elves have been living well in the forest, while helping the native farmers and woodsmen remain free of the order's rule. The fact that Helmut had managed to defeat the knights on no less than two occasions last year was bad enough; his continued existence is, in *Herr* Wulf's eyes, a blight on

the record of the Heldannic Order. To allow such a seemingly weak (in *Herr Wulf's* view) opponent to live unconquered, so near the order's own military might, without even acknowledging its superiority, is galling. Of especial strategic importance, however, is the fact that the region claimed by Helmut threatens a thin coastal strip of territory which links Heldann proper with the bulk of Heldland.

What the PCs Can Do: There is not much that the PCs can do in this case, but if they are prominent landowners, or dominion rulers in Heldland, they will no doubt receive *Herr Wulf's* order to mobilize.

Klarmont 12, AC 1017: Great Wall of Kings.

Location: Entrance to the Valley of Kings, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: Soldiers loyal to *Pharaoh* Ramenhotep and tasked to keep an eye on the secessionist Thothians in the Valley of Kings, see an unusual sight today. Several of the red-skinned giants known as hunakoi begin to haul tremendous stone blocks to the entrance of the valley. After a time, it becomes apparent that they are building a gigantic wall—their intent seemingly to wall off the entrance to the valley itself! They immediately send word to Ramenhotep in Edairo. (*See Nu. 4; Sv. 4.*)

What This Means: The hunakoi are indeed building a wall, at the behest of *Pharaoh* Haptuthep. With the entrance to the Valley of Kings walled off, Haptuthep's new realm will be effectively impossible to enter—the cliffs of the Great Escarpment are far too high to attempt to send an invading force over them. The hunakoi work swiftly, in the manner in which their ancestors built the Thothian pyramids of old, but it will still take a long time for them to complete a project of this magnitude. Ramenhotep will take his time deciding his next move.

Klarmont 12, AC 1017: First Battle in Klagorst.

Location: Near Lake Szwanski, Duchy of Vrancea, Confederacy of Klagorst. WB

Description: Centaurs of Chevalle attack the Duchy of Vrancea. Duke Nhorg leads his army personally against the invaders.

The two armies clash near Lake Szwanski, a mountain lake near the border of the centaurs' forest. The centaurs move even further and sack the village of Ezketaga, but then turn back towards the forest; they do not wish to have an open confrontation with the Vrancean army.

The lake is situated in a depression among the hills and thus it is nearly impossible for an army to maneuver with ease; any battle is going to be more of a one-on-one clash. The Chevallians prepare themselves, with their elven and human archers positioned atop the hill, on the eastern side, where the forest is nearer; centaurs occupy the lakeside, while fairies prepare to use their powers to create havoc in the enemy army. When the Vrancean army arrives, it stops at the hills and seems uncertain whether it should enter the combat, because it would be at a clear disadvantage.

Among the Vrancean soldiers, a figure advances. It is more than two meters tall, wrapped in a dark cloak and it wears dark plate armor with purple and violet decorations. It stops at the center of its soldiers and looks down toward the lake.

From the opposing hillside, the Chevallian archers begin to use their bows, but the man is too distant and they soon abandon hope of hitting him. When it becomes clear that the figure is preparing some sort of enchantment, the battlefield becomes very silent. The Chevallian centaurs do not want to climb the hills to stop him, in order to be able to maintain the advantage of their position, but at the same time they cannot do anything but wait.

In a few seconds, the voice of Duke Nhorg is clearly audible over the battlefield. "Darken my sky!" he calls out and the lake begins to turn red, then, enormous, horrible sinuous serpent-like creatures arise from the

lake and begin to attack the horrified centaurs. After a few minutes, most of the centaurs and their allies have retreated into the forest, while many lie dead. The creatures disappear again in the bubbling waters and one hour after the event, no trace of their passing remains, apart from the torn bodies of the centaurs. (*See Ya. 28, Kl. 1; Kl. 13, Kl. 15.*)

What This Means: This is an incredibly important event for the Klagorst region. First, it is the beginning of actual combat in the war; secondly, it is the first public appearance of Duke Nhorg of Vrancea in more than ten years. He was escorted by his bodyguards, the Reptile Knights, an elite group of forty men especially trained and recruited among the Vranceans. No nation in Klagorst has a regular army: the town guards are the closest thing to soldiers that most nations in this region possess and Vrancea, with Nhorg's institution of the Reptile Knights, is the only member of the confederacy to have some real fighting power.

Since most of these nations are little more than petty states, the war's outcome will likely rest upon a few well-trained and well-equipped troops. The effective manpower of the two sides in this conflict is highly disproportionate: the Klagorst Confederacy and their allies have 12,000 men (6,000 Klagorst humans, 3,000 from Chevalle, 3,000 from Stygia), while Gournzee and Vrancea have only 4,000, with nearly 3,000 varkhas.

Duke Nhorg has used Lake Szwanski for some weird experiments. This will not likely be his only surprise for the war, otherwise he would have been mad to accept the declaration of war, instead of bending to the confederation's will.

What the PCs Can Do: Considering the importance experienced troops will have in this war (which is very important in this remote region, even if it is nothing more than a petty squabble by Old World standards), PCs have the opportunity to play a decisive role.

Klarmont 13, AC 1017: The Sleep of the Short Sword.

Location: Throughout the Milenian Empire. HW

Description: All across Milenian lands armed troops, accompanied by the investigators and trusted agents, kick in doors and arrest those implicated in the conspiracy to overthrow the government. Some of the finest homes in the empire find themselves under siege and their owners placed under arrest. Few occupants resist, at least physically. The warrants do much to quell any verbal outrages and threats.

The investigators try to explain to the friends and family of those arrested, just what is going on. Some accept the charges. Most believe that there must be some mistake. Still others are vehement in their defense of the accused. Some of those arrested, many of the women but also a few of the men, break down and admit to their guilt. (*See Kl. 5, Kl. 12.*)

What This Means: Those who admit to their guilt are either members of the Materan Order or under their mental control. The Materan Order has sacrificed some of its clandestine members in order to carry out this frame-up, which is seen as necessary to save the order itself and its secrets from being uncovered. They will also have to lay low for awhile, as some suspicion is still on them. This thus sets the Order of Matera back, as it will be awhile before they can restore their network of influence and resume their plans.

Ironically, many of the accused women will be lightly punished, as a result of Milenia's attitudes towards them. After all, they believe, these are only weak-willed women who couldn't help it, they just did what their husbands told them to do and can't be overly faulted for that. Therefore, they get off with light sentences. Those men who refuse to plead guilty and maintain their innocence receive the harshest sentence—death for treason.

But this event results in the empire purging many of its most loyal and capable men, who have been framed by the Order of

Matera. Those who claim innocence are undermined by the ones who admit to the charges and testify against them. The emperor will keep an eye on General Tythus for awhile. Even though the evidence doesn't implicate him directly, the conspirators were supposedly acting on his behalf. Many of those involved in the original investigation of the Order of Matera still suspect it, but they keep their doubts to themselves for now. Some will help Krameos in eluding pursuit, knowing him to be a good and decent man, helping the fugitive elude capture and discretely exchanging information with him on occasion.

The Cult of Matera decided not to frame Tythus directly, nor High Priest Dagos, High Priestess Helentia, Tassia Red-Hair, Xanthipon and High Magus Amnethon among others, however, because they didn't think it would be believable to implicate them all and they wanted their frame-up to seem plausible.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs involved in the investigation will be busy for the next few days. Opportunities are endless for a variety of arrest scenarios to be played out by the DM. Conversely, PCs may find themselves drawn into the whole matter as friends, family and even employers are arrested. They can either try to prevent the arrest or they can try to gain their freedom through the legal system. A particularly devious DM may want to have one of the PCs erroneously implicated in the conspiracy and facing arrest.

Characters might also be approached by Krameos or his friends and asked to help him. They will then have to work both diligently and secretly to try and prove the truth, with few believing them because the evidence against the Materans has been successfully discredited. This might then lead to an entire campaign centered around trying to expose the truth to a disbelieving nation, being on the run from the agents of the empire whose interests they are serving.

Klarmont 13, AC 1017: Workin' on the Caravan Route, All the Livelong Day.

Location: Emirate of Abbashan, Emirates of Ylaruam. OW

Description: Laborers from Abbashan, Fabia and Jaboor set out to pioneer new caravan routes between these towns. The hope is to improve commerce between Ylaruam and outside nations, while keeping such traffic within the venue of the new capitol of Abbashan.

What This Means: The groundwork for such traffic was laid years ago, in order that Abbashan might better compete with the distant city of Ylaruam. It was abandoned during the chaotic years of the Great War and the work that had been done has sat idle ever since. Now, the sultan is hoping to improve the economy of his nation, while making sure that he is able to keep a close eye on foreign trade and influence.

What the PCs Can Do: The trailblazers will face many dangers: raiding humanoids, bandits, enraged nomadic clans, perhaps even a marauding demon. Adventurers will be welcome hands in the hard days of building roads.

Klarmont 13, AC 1017: The Tornado Arrives in Puerto Morillos.

Location: Town of Puerto Morillos, Merry Pirates Seas. HW

Description: Barbarossa's Tornado enters the harbor of Puerto Morillos as the first ship and leaves a short time later. The whereabouts of his rival's ship, The Banquet, are unknown. (*See Kl. 6, Kl. 9; Kl. 14, Kl. 15.*)

What This Means: The trick has worked. The attack against The Banquet has slowed down the ship enough to give Captain Saviola the chance to take the lead of the race.

What the PCs Can Do: Now Merryweather's men aboard the Tornado should try to hinder the ship.

Klarmont 13, AC 1017: Centaurs Plan Defensive Measures.

Location: Near Lake Szwanski, Duchy of Vrancea, Confederacy of Klagorst. WB

Description: The centaurs and their allies, fearing that the events in Lake Szwanski will not be the only time when the dark powers of Duke Nhorg manifest themselves, decide to concentrate their efforts on defensive measures, in case Vrancean troops march against their positions in the forest. At the same time, they send envoys south, to Brasov, hoping to convince that nation to help them in the war and westwards to Gask, to inform their allies in the confederacy of the unsuspected powers of Duke Nhorg. (*See Kl. 1, Kl. 12; Kl. 15, Kl. 17.*)

What the PCs Can Do: PCs may be sent to Gask or Brasov and could change, with their course of actions, the outcome of the events that will be presented later on in this scenario.

Klarmont 14, AC 1017: Shore Leave in Kladanovic.

Location: Town of Kladanovic, Northwestern Neck of the Serpent Peninsula. SC

Description: The imperialist expedition sails into Kladanovic's harbor today. The inhabitants of Kladanovic have heard of the arrangement the Thyatians made with Tyjaret, but opinions are split on it. Some hope for a similar agreement, especially since raiders have concentrated more on striking Kladanovic since the defenses of Tyjaret have been improved. Others are wary and resolved to keep the settlement clear of imperial influence. Several violent feuds have broken out over the differing opinions on the matter, since the town's leadership itself is split down the middle.

Little time is wasted before things come to a head. After making shore contact, several Thyatians are attacked by part of the anti-Thyatian faction, with members of the pro-Thyatian faction jumping in on the other side. Soon, there is rioting and the Thyatian commander sends in his marines to restore order. Factional battling goes on through

much of the night, but the Thyatians have gained much experience in the last several years putting down mob violence with efficient dispatch. By morning, the Thyatians are in control of the town. Ringleaders of the anti-Thyatian opposition are dragged off in chains to the Thyatian ships. In their "generosity," the Thyatian admiral proposes the same deal with the leaders of Kladanovic as was made with Tyjaret, even though the town has been effectively conquered. (*See Ya. 13, Kl. 8; Sv. 7, Sv. 13.*)

What This Means: The Thyatians know that Kladanovic is too far away to impose rule by absolute force. They take the ringleaders of the anti-Thyatian faction with them as hostages, putting the town under the control of the local pro-Thyatian faction. As order is swiftly restored over the town without bloody reprisals, life quickly goes back to normal and most of the residents are mollified. In a few days a small force arrives from Tyjaret and helps rid the area of roving raiders, which further influences people to docility regarding the arrangement. Kladanovic becomes a Thyatian dependency and protectorate.

The Thyatians are attempting to build up a string of small bases and mercantile colonies to facilitate the expansion of their trading network. Tyjaret and Kladanovic are among the first of these. Soon, imperial traders and Thyatian colonists, arriving mostly overland through Tyjaret, will settle in Kladanovic too, helping solidify Thyatian influence over the town. The establishment of this network has the secondary effect of further securing Minrothad's loyalty, since the guilds know that if they go against the empire they are likely to lose access to its bases.

What the PCs Can Do: A night of street-fighting and thuggery. The Thyatians try not to be too bloody about it this time, since they want the town to become a loyal appendage of the empire.

Klarmont 14, AC 1017: The Banquet Arrives in Puerto Morillos.

Location: Town of Puerto Morillos, Merry Pirates Seas. HW

Description: Merryweather's The Banquet enters the harbor of Puerto Morillos and stays for some hours for hasty repairs. When he finally leaves Merryweather is nearly three-quarter of a sleep behind his rival. (*See Kl. 9, Kl. 13; Kl. 15, Kl. 18.*)

What This Means: The Banquet is still hindered by the damages due to the attack it sustained at sea. After the repairs the most troublesome damages are fixed though, so Merryweather doesn't have to concede yet.

What the PCs Can Do: As time is the essence it is of vital interest for the crew to get supplies and men to repair the ship as soon as possible. Supporters of Barbarossa will make as much trouble as possible, for example by starting a brawl in one of the darker places of the harbor—when Merryweather's sailors are there, of course.

Third Week

Klarmont 15, AC 1017: Reston Named King for Life.

Location: City of Ierendi, Kingdom of Ierendi. OW

Description: In recognition of his many years of continuous success in the Royal Tournament of Adventurers, Reston of Akesoli is named king for life. He will retain the title until his death or until he voluntarily relinquishes it. There is a large celebration for the lauded hero in the streets and city of Ierendi. (*See Kl. 1.*)

What This Means: There has been talk of making this declaration for several years now; Reston's successful defense of his title this year finally decided things. The news brings mixed reactions—the annual tournament is one of Ierendi's biggest tourist attractions and some fear that it will diminish now that there will only be competition for the title of queen. Several members of the Tribunal—the body that truly governs Ierendi—are concerned as well; Reston has gained considerable political influence over the past decade and they fear

that he may take some of their power away from them.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs won the title of king this year instead of Reston, then Reston is instead elected tribune of military affairs—a still very considerable position of political influence for him.

Klarmont 15, AC 1017: Faraway Falls.

Location: City of Faraway, Province of Verdan, Republic of Esterhold, Nayce. SK

Description: The armies of free and rebel Jennites make an assault on the Alphatian defenders in Faraway and drive them back. Many Jennites in the city seize the opportunity to turn against their former Alphatian overlords and attack from their positions within the city as well. Suddenly the Alphatians are caught between the two groups of Jennites and it is obvious that the defense of Faraway is a lost cause. Many surrender, but most try to fight their way to escape, not expecting mercy from the Jennites after how they treated the Alphatians they captured at the three forts; Krael and Lyriander, who also escaped Vigil Keep, are among these. Some harsh battles are fought in the city as the Alphatians fight—some to survive, some to kill as many Jennites as they can before they're killed themselves and some to allow others a chance to escape. At the end of the day, all Alphatians are either killed, captured, or fleeing the city and the Jennites are in control. (*See Ya. 26, Kl. 2; Fe. 16, Fe. 20.*)

What This Means: Verdan has fallen to the allied Jennites. Now it remains to be seen what Talin and the other Jennite leaders will do with their victory—how they share the spoils of war and what they do with the conquered territory. Krael and Lyriander have once again been forced to flee the Jennite offensive and they are falling back to Anchorage to mount a more well-organized defense there.

What the PCs Can Do: There are many battles to be fought here and once they are over, there are other matters to take care of—Alphatian PCs will have their hands full just staying alive and, possibly, keeping other

refugees alive also as they will be hunted by vengeful Jennites. Jennite PCs should have some interesting opportunities to help Talin and the other leaders consider what the allies will do now.

Klarmont 15, AC 1017: Stefan Makes Concessions.

Location: City of Mirros, Kingdom of Karameikos. OW

Description: As part of his continued efforts at restoring peace in his kingdom, Stefan Karameikos enacts the Traladaran Reparation Acts. Also known as the “Davinos Acts,” the purpose is to grant sizeable tax breaks to Traladaran merchants whose businesses were weakened by Thyatian aggressors some forty years ago. Any Traladaran with a claim may present himself before the court. To ensure that such claims are honestly assessed, the DDC has agreed to evaluate such claims, as unbiased third-party witnesses. The tax breaks will begin effective Nuwmont 1, 1018, until Nuwmont 1, 1025.

The next few months find the DDC calling for more assistance, as the number of Traladaran claimants is sizeable—both legitimate and illegitimate. (*See Th. 26, Fl. 10; Fy. 4.*)

What This Means: These tax breaks were proposed by a Traladaran man named Davinos back in AC 1014. Stefan gave them a lot of consideration but couldn't think of a way to legitimately acknowledge certain claims; accusations of bias were bound to be made. The DDC has helped him with this problem, by providing a non-partisan third party to evaluate the claims. There will still be some accusations of bias, naturally, but the “Davinos Acts” will go a long way to helping repair damaged feelings with the Traladaran population. In the long run, they may even turn out to be to the nation's economic advantage as well.

Klarmont 15, AC 1017: Preparations.

Location: Throughout the Klagorst Region. WB

Description: Rumors regarding the battle of Lake Szwanski reach the allied armies of Fewalskij, Gask and Valeryia, soon followed by the messengers sent two days ago. Knowing that their resources are not enough, if Duke Nhorg shows dark magic abilities, they ask for further assistance from the Stygian troglodytes. Diplomats are sent to Kragm'aanle, where the troglodytes are still preparing their army, while the confederated army stops in Gask to wait for reinforcements. At the same time, scouts are dispatched to Chevalle, to inform the centaurs of the council's decision. (*See Kl. 12, Kl. 13; Kl. 17, Kl. 18.*)

What This Means: Archduke Xagash hoped to enter the war as the leader of his race, but if the confederated army needs magic to counter Nhorg's supposed abilities, the clergy of Yeg Shuta will use the war as another opportunity to play down the importance of Xagash. This is a hard blow for his hope of changing the troglodytes into a more sophisticated, moderate race, as he fears this will push them again into the role of fanatical zealots.

What the PCs Can Do: In these first days of war, diplomatic skills and scouting abilities are in great demand.

Klarmont 15, AC 1017: Council Makes Final Decision.

Location: City of Andaire, Kingdom of Alphas'ar, Floating Continent of Alpathia, Alpathian Empire. HW

Description: The proposal of Council Member Soltturnun comes to voting. The result is a narrow victory. Infuriated, Zallaras demands a check counting. According to the rules of the council the president of the council, Dalamar of Haaken, must decide now. Slightly irritated he agrees to this demand. He orders a pause so that the votes can be counted again—though, because the votes are counted magically, there is little chance for error. Still, the tension among the members is high.

After more than an hour the president reopens the session and tells the members that the first count has been affirmed. With

that he declares the proposal accepted. Soltturnun and his team cheer loudly. Zallaraz storms out of the hall without a single word. Jolinar swears revenge before he leaves too. (*See Th. 27, Ya. 3; Am. 1, Am. 2.*)

What This Means: Finally the Navy of the Lakes has made a big step toward its old goal. Now the sailors will have to make the final plans of constructing the first canals.

What the PCs Can Do: The political campaign is over now, but during the construction phase there will be work again. For now the only role is that of visitors of the session.

Klarmont 15, AC 1017: Breakout in Leominster.

Location: City of Leominster, Bishopric of Leominster, Kingdom of Bellayne. SC

Description: Colonel Lionel Edgwinton, commanding officer of the Royal Leominster Regiment, resigns his command today, saying before the parliament that he fears he could never bring himself to bear arms against his sovereign and king. The parliament votes to transfer command of the elite Bellaynish regiment to Edgwinton's second in command, Sergeant-Major Edward Lewin—who is promoted immediately to colonel.

That night, nigh on four hundred troops, almost half the regiment, sneak out through the dock and commandeer two naval vessels at anchor in the harbor. The city watch seems to be negligent tonight, as the ships are well away before the alarm is raised. Next day sees fury from the parliament as it is evident that Edgwinton's men are headed for Theeds and the king—the parliament then votes to seize all weapons, horses and munitions headed west, which may be used by the king's growing army. (*See Kl. 2, Kl. 7; Kl. 27, Fe. 3.*)

What This Means: Edgwinton and Lewin have been friends for over ten years, having seen action together in wars against the northern goblinoids and saved each other's life on more than one occasion. The night before, Edgwinton confided to his friend

that he felt that the oath he swore when he took his commission compels him to support his king in this, his hour of need. Despite his efforts to persuade him otherwise, Lewin was unable to dissuade his commanding officer from this course of action.

Edgwinton's escape came as nothing of a surprise to Lewin—who, as a final favor to his friend, did not warn the watch of the possibility of such a move.

Lewin, normally not a religious individual, is found the next day in the great cathedral of Pax Bellanica, praying to the patron of Bellayne for a bloodless end to this dispute.

Klarmont 15, AC 1017: An Failed Attack.

Location: Open sea north of the Island of Baraga, Merry Pirates Seas. HW

Description: The Tornado is pursued by an unknown attacker. Captain Saviola is using all his knowledge as a seaman and all the tricks he has learned in his long circles as a pirate captain to avoid the battle. Indeed the Tornado loses its pursuer in an upcoming storm. Barbarossa is not too happy as the storm forces him back east.

Later that same sleep The Banquet gets caught in the same storm. (*See Kl. 13, Kl. 14; Kl. 18, Kl. 23.*)

What This Means: Captain Merryweather has arranged the exact same treachery as Barbarossa did earlier, by hiring another captain to attack his rival, but hard luck has prevented the trick from succeeding. The storm is a normal weather phenomenon for the Hollow World.

What the PCs Can Do: In such a situation only seamanship and hard labor is needed. Sabotage would be suicidal so no such action is likely to occur, as pirate PCs should realize.

Klarmont 17, AC 1017: Discoveries in Ochalea.

Location: City of Beitung, *Exarchate* of Ochalea, Thyatian Empire. SD

Description: Ochalean officials submit the preliminary findings of their investigations to *Exarch* Teng Lin-Dieu. Surprisingly, they discovered no direct connection to the Alphatian Empire. Instead, the agitators all seemed to be part of a secret cult devoted to Ilsundal. During the war this cult, though not very large, seemed to devote all its resources to agitation and protestation in favor of independence. By carefully picking their targets, they garnered unusual visibility and eventually their cause took on a momentum of its own, until independence was eventually declared. According to the investigators' contacts on the Pearl Islands, things were similar there—an independence movement started by a small group devoted to Ilsundal.

Since Ilsundal never took much interest in either nation before and his followers were few and never politically vocal, this discovery leads to more questions than it answers. Especially when it is pointed out that due to the rivalry between the followers of Eiryndul (worshipped by the Shiye elves) and the followers of Ilsundal (worshipped among the Vyalian elves), the latter are generally more favorably inclined to Thyatis than Alphatia. Everyone is puzzled as to why two sects of Ilsundal's followers would be at the heart of the independence movement that sprung up during the Great War. (*See Th. 17.*)

What This Means: The Ochaleans are one step closer to uncovering some of the secret background of the Great War. Koryis is subtly encouraging their investigations, but others (especially Ilsundal) will do what they can to obstruct further inquiry.

What the PCs Can Do: Further investigation might get dangerous, especially if it involves looking into the activities of Immortals.

Klarmont 17, AC 1017: A Volospin Sighting!

Location: Town of Eriadna, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: Several of the residents of Eriadna report that they have seen someone

greatly resembling the late Prince Volospin Aendyr around town. Rumors begin circulating that perhaps he faked his death during the Great War with Alphatia. Such gossip is widely regarded as mere fancy, a silly pastime of a town in great need of relief from the pressures of deadly humanoids nearby. At least one person knows the truth is more sinister; Princess Dolores Hillsbury grits her teeth at the reports. (*See Th. 9, Th. 14; Am. 1.*)

What This Means: Volospin Aendyr is indeed alive and was returned to Mystara late last year. Since then, he has been in hiding, but Dolores has her agents searching for any rumors or information regarding his possible whereabouts. He can be a potentially very deadly enemy to her, should he surface again and she aims to make certain that he remains as dead as he was long thought to be.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs can be hired through agents of Dolores to seek out the “late” prince. Sightings of Aendyr in the town are becoming very common—and are mostly made up. It is becoming the chic thing to say that one has spotted Volospin, or had lunch with the ex-prince, or sold him a new suit of clothes. Sorting through all the lies and half-truths should keep the PCs busy for quite some time.

Klarmont 17, AC 1017: A Clash in the Woods.

Location: Chevalle Forest, Kingdom of Chevalle. WB

Description: A group of Reptile Knights from the Vrancean army enter the Chevalle Forest and begin to destroy trees and kill animals randomly, hoping to draw the attention of the centaurs. The commander of the Chevallian troops in the area, a human priestess named Aleksia Elkina, refuses to respond, claiming that the havoc caused by the knights is simply a trap and that they will not enter deeper in the forest; a group of centaurs, human rangers and elven archers confront the Vranceans. The Reptile Knights, though not more than forty in number, clash with nearly 100 enemies. Though there are few casualties, more are

lost on the centaurs' side and the knights manage to flee. (See *Kl. 13, Kl. 15; Kl. 18, Kl. 20.*)

What This Means: Duke Nhorq does not want the Chevallian folk to gain the initiative, because he is still waiting for the varkhan army to aid him and he is not capable of sustaining an open confrontation, yet. But several of the Chevallian leaders, especially the nature-worshipping priests and druids, are not willing to face a war if Nhorq has dark powers.

What the PCs Can Do: Charismatic figures among the Chevallian army could lead more persons in battle on their side, thus killing more Reptile Knights. If they are among the Reptile Knights, the opposite would be the case.

Klarmont 18, AC 1017: Can Dead *Khans* Walk?

Location: City of Glantri, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: Sometime during the course of the night, the corpse of the dead *Moglai Khan* disappears from the Great School of Magic. The theft goes unnoticed for several days. (See *Ya. 27, Kl. 10; Kl. 27, Fe. 3.*)

What This Means: Though he and the Golden *Khan* were once enemies, Urmahid Krinagar respected the former ruler of the *khanates* and feels honorbound to assist the *khan's* children in their quest. There is also the small matter of preventing any diplomatic incidents between Glantri and Ethengar—the principalities are still recovering from the war of AC 1015. Using his own powerful magicks and those of Akmad ibn Yusef, Krinagar retrieved the corpse of *Moglai Khan* from the laboratories where it was being stored. When the theft is finally discovered (by a routine inventory inspection), there will of course be an investigation, but Krinagar plans on having the corpse well on its way out of Glantri by that time.

Klarmont 18, AC 1017: Arrival in Kota-Jayang.

Location: Town of Kota-Jayang, Merry Pirates Seas. HW

Description: Again it is the Tornado that enters the harbor first. Despite sustaining damage while in the storm, Barbarossa refuses any repair and leaves immediately. Half a sleep later The Banquet sails into port too. When he hears about his rival's decision Merryweather orders to leave without any further repair. (See *Kl. 14, Kl. 15; Kl. 23.*)

What This Means: Both ships have been damaged by the storm and are in need for repairs. As both captains don't want to lose time and hurt their pride, they will have to handle the damages with contingency means only. It remains to be seen which crew can handle the problems better.

Klarmont 18, AC 1017: Sorry, Not This Time.

Location: Town of Kronstadt, Kingdom of Brasov. WB

Description: The envoys from Chevalle reach Kronstadt this evening; they present their request for the Brasovians to join them in the war against Gournzee and Vrancea. The Brasovian King, Szabo II, does not take much time to refuse. He has no desire to see his subjects' blood spilt in a war that does not concern him directly. The matter should be resolved inside the Klagorst Confederation proper, he suggests and should not involve countries that have no reason to fight. He also states that he is sorry about the current problems experienced by Chevalle, but that he really cannot risk his nation's welfare to help them. However, he promises that, once the war ends, he will do everything possible to help Chevalle recover. When the envoys mention Duke Nhorq's use of dark magic, the king says that, looking at the events objectively, Chevalle had no real reason to attack Vrancea and that they did it before the Vranceans could attack them. He suggests that Chevalle should leave the confederacy and abandon the war, claiming that nothing good will ever come to them from their membership and mentioning the past situations when Chevalle left, he says that maybe their

destiny is not to be part of the confederated kingdoms. (See Kl. 15, Kl. 17; Kl. 20, Kl. 22.)

What This Means: Chevalle, Stygia and Brasov were allied in the 6th Brasovian War (AC 1005-1008), but this time there is no reason for Szabo II to enter the conflict. Chevalle and Brasov are also not traditionally allied in local conflicts, which reduces the incentive for King Szabo II to commit troops to the war effort. Szabo's suggestion that Chevalle leave the confederacy is also not good for the nation, as there are several people in Chevalle who would listen to this suggestion with interest.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are very persuasive, they could change Szabo's mind, but they would have to present really good reasons.

Klarmont 19, AC 1017: Nayce Recognizes Undead Threat.

Location: City of Ionace, Ionace Island, Nayce. AS

Description: The Nayce Council convenes to discuss the reappearance of ghouls and undead. Paramount to the debate are the testimonies of Delmarst, his companions and crew. Amid verbal volleys of "I told you so" and "you are overreacting," the council is able to rule on the matter. It is decided that there is indeed an undead threat in the watery confines of the Alphatian Sea. They also rule that something must be done about it to protect Nayce's interests in the region as well as to secure their military. As earlier ruled, the Alphatian Continent is Alphatian territory and should be deemed sacred ground. Also, if any people are to exploit its state it is to be the Alphatian people.

However, the council is unable to decide upon the extent of the threat or how to deal with it. In the end, all that is decided is that a threat exists and that the current counters be maintained to keep it in check. The matter is turned over to a military committee to analyze. The committee is composed of King Verotherics, Representative Arantria of Underocean, Representative Sauqal of Aquas and three officers designated by Commander

in Chief Karszamon. (See Kl. 6, Kl. 11; Kl. 24, Kl. 27.)

What This Means: The report and testimony of Delmarst heavily influenced this renewed debate on the ghouls. The mage has many key political friends and acquaintances. His account and rationalization has sent a stir through Alphatians with connections with the continent. Those that had been opposed to admitting to a ghoulish threat are either ignored or are swayed into action. Those that were cognizant of the potential threat rally to Delmarst's cause and spread his fears into others. However most of these individuals would have rallied to any cause that encouraged an increased military presence in the aquatic regions. Though it has recognized the threat, the council has no idea how to deal with it and defers the matter to the military to evaluate.

What the PCs Can Do: The committee may order further investigation of the ghoulish sightings.

Klarmont 20, AC 1017: The Legends Live!

Location: Near the *Torala-dûn*, Meghaddaran Territories, Aryptian Savannah. DV

Description: In the predawn light, the elders of the surrounding clans gather once again at the *torala-dûn*, having answered messages carried by runners during the previous few days. As they mill about the stone, pondering the nature of the summons, they recognize the scouts they had dispatched weeks before, coming over a nearby rise—accompanied by ten cat-men! The Meghaddara greet their elders respectfully and relate to them briefly their experiences in trying to locate the cat-men of legend, concluding that the legends are indeed true, for they have the proof before them. One of the scouts introduces the tallest cat-man, who goes by the name of Kenka (who then nods stiffly to each elder in turn as they are named).

Agreeing that the scouts' apparent success is indeed auspicious, the elders gesture to the

rakasta to accompany them, where they may hopefully discuss matters of mutual interest. (*See Fl. 17, Ya. 12; Kl. 24, Fe. 18.*)

What This Means: The Meghaddaran scouting party was indeed successful, having found a tribe of fast runners, of the Shining Claw Clan. After an initially tense meeting, the scouts managed to earn the rakasta's trust, telling them of the conflicts they are facing at the hands of the Heldannic Knights and asking them for aid, promising them compensation in return. The rakasta agreed in principle and sent a small delegation, led by Kenka, to determine if it would be in their interest to get involved. Whether they agree to aid the Meghaddara and at what price, remains to be seen.

Klarmont 20, AC 1017: Parliamentary Procedures.

Location: City of Glantri, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: The proposal of a royal merchant-mage position is voted on by the parliament. The measure passes, which was expected. What comes as a surprise is that Duke Eachainn McDougall breaks ranks with House Crownguard and votes in favor of the motion. (*See Fe. 18, Sv. 12.*)

What This Means: Politics as usual in Glantri. Since Angus McGregor was confirmed in the role of Prince of Crownguard by the Council of Princes, Eachainn McDougall has been increasingly dissatisfied with the young prince and his politics. A longtime friend of Prince Jaggar von Drachenfels, Duke Eachainn has decided to shift his alliance to that of the more military-minded prince.

Klarmont 20, AC 1017: Plots.

Location: Town of Gask, County of Gask, Confederacy of Klagorst. WB

Description: The Stygian clergy, under military escort, arrives at Gask. They camp outside the city, while Archduke Xagash enters, accompanied by the highest-ranking priests of Yeg Shuta and by his lieutenants. When they get to Gask, a long discussion

takes place amongst the leaders of the Klagorst army, the topic being how to better conduct the war. They decide to strike against Klagorst as fast as possible, ignoring on one side the varkhas and on the other the Chevallians, allies that may prove not very resolute in battle, especially if Brasov does not join in (they still do not know that Brasov has refused to side with them).

However, as Count Essecki of Valeryia points out, if Nhorg is really a necromancer, the Klagorst army, at present much bigger than the Vrancean one, do not have the magical resources to counter him, if the Stygians do not want to use their clerical powers.

The clergy of Yeg Shuta warmly assure them that they will use all their skills for the benefit of the Klagorst army and that they will prove decisive in the war, because Nhorg has surely not enough magic to stop them. (*See Kl. 17, Kl. 18; Kl. 22, Kl. 23.*)

What This Means: The clergy of Yeg Shuta is taking steps to depose Xagash, who has interfered too often with their century-old influence over the troglodytes. Archdukes have generally been puppets of the clergy, used only as representative figures and sometimes as generals. But Xagash tried to change this situation and the clergy has decided to overthrow him. The varkhan raids and the subsequent war will give them the political power to bring him down. For the Klagorst army, however, the dark magic of the troglodytes will prove very useful, leading to better relationships within the confederacy.

Klarmont 21, AC 1017: The Rumbblings of Discontent.

Location: Throughout the Kingdom of Randel, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: Throughout the kingdom's armed forces and more traditional population, disgruntled talk is turning to open treason against Queen Junna. Tensions are building to the point that officers are having a difficult time keeping their troops in line. A message from the Randel High

Command, from both Army General Brikstrist and Air General Hevrothria, urge control and restraint until a unified resolution can be decided upon. The situation worsens to the point that several of the palace guards have resigned their posts to return to regular armed forces units. (*See Tb. 5, Kl. 10; Fe. 1, Fe. 8.*)

What This Means: Things are getting nasty in Randel. The military are on the verge of rebelling against their queen. Their problem is that the idea of rising against the royal monarch is not one they wish to follow. Randel has been ruled by essentially the same bloodline since its inception and no officer wants to break that tradition. Likewise, few high ranking officers want to assume the role and the responsibility of leading the kingdom.

The Randel High Command is searching for a means to preserve the royal line. Most of Verothrics's children are mundane or are too young. Such was the reason that Junna was entered into the clergy to offer a noble heir. Junna's uncle Alphatar is a capable person to take her place, however he is gentry and therefore disqualified from actual rule. This is a shame as he is the most capable ruler that the royal family can boast. Then there is Junna's aunt, Karatnora. Though a mage, she lacks the ability and desire to rule.

What the PCs Can Do: The high command, not used to that kind of non military action, needs some people who will defuse tensions in the kingdom, others to try to convince Junna or Karatnora to try and rule well and still others to search for other potential rulers.

Fourth Week

Klarmont 22, AC 1017: The Sheathing.

Location: Coastal Waters of the Five Shires. OW

Description: Shires pirates strike at several Thyatian and Minrothaddan vessels near the Five Shires. In each instance,

however, the fat merchant ship ripe for the plucking turns out to be heavily laden with marines and members of the Privateer's Guild. The predators soon become the prey as the battle unfolds and many a hin pirate never returns to port again. Many a Thyatian and Minrothaddan also falls during these battles, which are far from one-sided in casualties. In the end, the battles mostly go against the hin, however. (*See Tb. 19, Tb. 26; Fe. 1, Fe. 4.*)

What This Means: The Thyatians knew that the hin would be particularly aggressive today, so they prepared this trap. Real merchant ships avoided the region, while several q-ships (ships disguised as tradesmen, but equipped for battle) sailed through the area, as bait for hin pirates. This is part of the ongoing trade wars, as well as a long overdue response to the usual hin piracy. The hin pirates had gotten used to feeling they could attack Thyatian shipping with impunity, especially now that the Shires are under the protection of Western Defense League membership. They have now learned that Thyatis can respond to their raids.

The Shires and the league, will protest this, but the Thyatians will point out that in the past the Shires had always officially denied that any hin pirates existed. How can they now complain that some that did exist no longer do, when they weren't supposed to have existed in the first place? The Thyatian ambassador in Shireton says that, rather than complaining, they should be grateful that the Thyatians have made the hin claims regarding pirates retroactively true.

What the PCs Can Do: There are many fierce battles for the characters to participate in here. Hin pirates, especially, will want to seek revenge for the destruction of their fellow reavers

Klarmont 22, AC 1017: Early Warning System.

Location: City of East Portage, Kingdom of Hillvale, Nayce, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: After months of study, the researchers at the Alpathian Center for Disease Control have come up with a

magical device that can detect lycanthropy. It works by sensing the presence of the lycanthropic virus in the host body and emitting a loud piercing shriek. They only have one of the devices at present and it will take them several months to make more—not to mention funding from the *pharaoh's* treasury. They are not even entirely sure if it will work on the strange werespiders, whose arachnid bodies are so different from the mammalian lycanthropes they normally study. The system will require testing. (*See Va. 11, Va. 26.*)

What This Means: If the system works, Ramenhotep can install the devices in the temples of Rathanos, where the major rioting and discord have been focused. Hopefully this will help settle things in Edairo until more permanent solutions can be found to the aranean threat.

What the PCs Can Do: Can you say guinea pigs? Someone's gotta go up on the plateau and find some werespiders upon which to test the device.

Klarmont 22, AC 1017: Armies Converge.

Location: Duchy of Vrancea, Confederacy of Klagorst. WB

Description: The three thousand varkhas from Gournzee finally reach Vrancea. Duke Nhorq and the leader of the varkhas, Warlord Naarn Dvorcic, decide to leave Vrancea and head south, to reach the Epphinx Forest. There they hope to engage in combat, counting on their individual superiority in a region where organized combat is nearly impossible. They hope that the centaurs will not follow them, but know that the Klagorst army would not enter the forest, as they know very well that they would be at a disadvantage. However, Nhorq is sure that he will manage to bring them into the forest. (*See Kl. 18, Kl. 20; Kl. 23, Kl. 25.*)

What This Means: This is the only chance of success for Nhorq and Dvorcic. Otherwise, their troop strength will prove too small to allow any possibility of victory. Epphinx Forest is the only place where the

better preparations of the varkhas and of the Vranceans may prove decisive. This is well known by the Klagorst rulers, but it seems that the Duke of Vrancea knows of a means to trick them into entering the forest.

Klarmont 23, AC 1017: Chevalle Leaves Confederacy.

Location: Kingdom of Chevalle, Confederacy of Klagorst. WB

Description: The centaurs, enraged by the apparent indifference of Klagorst to their situation, decide to leave the confederacy. They also decide not to send envoys to Klagorst and to wait for representatives from the remainder of the confederacy to approach them, when they decide to give them due consideration. But it will be too late by that time! Dissension arises and some humans decide to leave for Klagorst, in order to tell the confederacy of this development. (*See Kl. 20, Kl. 22; Kl. 25, Fe. 2.*)

What This Means: It probably does not mean much for the war, because the Klagorst army is still twice as large as the Vrancean-varkhan alliance, but the situation in Chevalle is really not good. Especially since the human and elven residents of the region are extremely annoyed with the centaur ruler's and druids' decision to leave the confederacy every time some problem arises. This decision to leave will create a lot of tension in the future.

What the PCs Can Do: This is a good opportunity for the players to change the destiny of Chevalle, especially regarding the war, because they could lead a considerable number of dissidents (who may be willing to take up arms to defend the confederacy) in battle against the varkhan-Vrancean alliance.

Klarmont 23, AC 1017: Big Finish in Baraga.

Location: City of Baraga, Merry Pirates Seas. HW

Description: Captain Saviola is the first to steer his ship into the Sound of Baraga, but only some minutes later The Banquet

follows. Dismayed Barbarossa watches in dismay as his rival catches up as time passes. He gives the order to open fire on The Banquet after coming into firing range, but the Tornado cannot hit the other ship hard enough to stop it. The Banquet retaliates but does not damage the Tornado either. When getting passed by The Banquet Saviola hears his rival singing an aria from *The Pirate King* opera. Desperate and angry, he orders his crew to ram The Banquet. Unfortunately for Barbarossa, First Lieutenant Fanalir Meditor had anticipated such an attack and is able to outmaneuver the Tornado. The loss of speed is crucial for the Tornado and The Banquet docks first at the jetty. The crowd cheers loudly for the winner. A much-angered Saviola storms down the gangway and swears revenge. (See *Kl. 15, Kl. 18.*)

What This Means: The Banquet and her first officer have proven superior to Captain Saviola and his Tornado. It will be very likely that Saviola will challenge Merryweather sometime again in the future.

What the PCs Can Do: The day will be a party for all the inhabitants of Baraga, but the disappointed sailors from the Tornado might want to seek personal revenge against the crewmen of The Banquet. Over the next few days brawls between both crews will occur in the streets and taverns of Baraga.

Klarmont 24, AC 1017: A Pact Between Strange Allies.

Location: Near the *Toraladûn*, Meghaddaran Territories, Aryptian Savannah. DV

Description: The clan chiefs of the region gather near the *toraladûn* yet again, this time at high noon and accompanied by their most trusted warriors, to hear the words of the most senior chiefs. Also in attendance are the visiting rakasta. Wasting no time on formalities, the word is given: the rakasta have agreed to help the Meghaddara in honorable war against their Heldannic enemies, in exchange for territory towards the southwest of the region and half of all lands regained through the upcoming war. While some chiefs rejoice at the news,

others, particularly those whose lands lie near the region to be granted to the rakasta, are less than enthusiastic. (See *Ya. 12, Kl. 20; Fe. 18, Fy. 3.*)

What This Means: The rakasta are well aware of the fact that the Meghaddara are in dire straits and though they bear the humans no ill will, they see no reason why they cannot benefit from the situation as much as possible. What they neglected to tell the Meghaddara is that they needed a new home; rising tensions with rival clans and other humanoid races were beginning to endanger the existence of the Shining Claw Clan. Nevertheless, they feel confident in their battle prowess—hence the considerable demands for land. The Meghaddara, unable to find allies elsewhere, accept the terms, since the lands being granted now are not really inhabited by anyone at the moment and most of those lands to be gained by the rakasta in battle will likely abut the Heldannic fortress, thus turning their territory into a sort of buffer zone. Some of the chiefs, particularly those whose lands now border those of the rakasta, do not like the idea of such creatures walking out of legend and demanding such a settlement and fear for the safety of their people. This could sow the seeds of distrust in the future.

Once the deal is concluded, the rakasta party will send envoys back to their own lands and issue to order to move to their new home.

Klarmont 24, AC 1017: *Torpin* Verdict.

Location: City of Ionace, Ionace Island, Nayce. AS

Description: After lengthy deliberations the matter of the *Torpin* has been decided. For the time being, the *Torpin* will be the only example of that class of *submersible* to be built. The council announces the construction of smaller *submersibles*, dubbed the *Reaver Class*. The council also orders the military to begin recruiting and building up crews for the *Torpin* and the other *submersibles*. Since Aquas is relatively small it is decided that the *Torpin* and the rest of the

Naycese *submersible* fleet will be manned by a cross section of Nayce. (See *Ya. 9, Ya. 23; Kl. 27, Fy. 8.*)

What This Means: The *Torpin's* costs and construction time have doomed her from large-scale production. Also, the military has pored over the *Torpin* information and has found her not as militarily feasible as previously thought. Had so much time and money not been spent already, the *Torpin* may have been abandoned. However, the *Torpin* will sail and act as a long-range exploration and patrol vessel, mostly under the guidance of the Alphatian Artifact Agency. The *Reaver Class submersibles* will be faster, more maneuverable, individually less costly and require less construction time. They will form the backbone of the Naycese *submersible* fleet. The *Reaver Class* design already exists and construction will soon commence. Two are already under construction; production should increase after the *Torpin* is completed. Ironically the *Reaver Class* is one of Bordicar's designs; being similar to the *Shark* [Dawn of the Emperors *boxed set. Ed.*] but a bit larger and more focused in a military role.

The council's choice to expand recruitment outside of Aquas is based upon two key factors. The first deals with available personnel—Aquas is small and has a limited population, so to attempt to crew the *submersible* fleet singularly would tragically hamper Aquas's economy and population. The second factor deals with Naycese control of the *submersible* fleet: if residents of Aquas fill out its ranks, the fleet's loyalty to the council may be undermined by its loyalty to its native kingdom. A similar strategy is already being devised for Torenal Site.

Klarmont 24, AC 1017: An Invisible Touch.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Today is the day set by the fiend for the death of the empire's champion. As instructed, the champion goes to the hills alone and unarmed. Suddenly the pit fiend appears before the champion,

towering above the Thyatian. Oddly, they converse briefly but cordially. Then the fiend strikes the head off of the unresisting figure. As the champion's body collapses to the ground, slashing wounds appear to cut into the fiend from nowhere, along its right flank. It twists in agony, but before its can react against its attacker or *teleport* away, it is cut down by a flurry of blows, the final one lopping its head off its body.

Over the fallen corpses of both the champion and the fiend appears... the same "dead" champion, clad in gilded chain mail and several other Thyatian warrior-knights and foresters. After a moment, they gather up the fiend's head and his own body and with them *teleports* home. (See *Fl. 17, Fl. 24; Am. 3, Am. 23.*)

What This Means: Wheels within wheels. The Thyatians believed the fiend would only appear if the conditions were as its terms described. The pit fiend made sure, using its own skills and magic, that the expected champion was the one standing in the arena floor before it appeared. The person it killed really was the champion—or, rather, a *clone*, brought to life the day before (and thus not insane yet). It then appeared. The conversation consisted of it graciously offering to answer any one question the Thyatian had, as a last request before the killing. It was asked who *summoned* and sent it. Its response was "look for your answer far below the city of footmen." While this was going on, a *contingency* the clone had activated a *sending* to the other (or real) champion, who then *teleported without error* with a band of fellow heroes, protected by *nondetection* and *improved invisibility* as well as *basted* into the area to the rear and the right of the fiend. They managed to strike by surprise and killed the pit fiend before it could *teleport* away. This was a very dangerous plan, for had the fiend escaped, it likely would have resumed its killings and continued to be on the loose in the empire.

The Thyatians will soon decide that the fiend's cryptic message refers to the vast complex under Hattias City, which until now they have been slow in investigating. It will

have to be explored and the creatures therein rooted out room by room.

Actually, as well, this is all part of a plot Thanatos put into motion for His own reasons. He had hoped that the fiend would provide the Thyatians with just enough clues to pursue the issue and locate the old base of His followers under the City of Hattias. Why? For many reasons, known only to Him...

What the PCs Can Do: The fiend may easily have left behind others of its kind, from barbed to abishai, in various areas. These will plot subtly and dangerous and prove to be perfect adventure foils. Characters who were the ones named to face the fiend will have to come up with their own ingenious plan to thwart it.

If you don't want your PCs to face the fiend, use whatever NPC suits your campaign. Suggested champions, however, include Vivianna Romanones (advisor to the emperor), Alexander Penhaligon (senator and high cleric) or Domitius Aenobarbus (advisor to the emperor).

Klarmont 25, AC 1017: The Battle of the Epphinx Forest.

Location: Epphinx Forest, between Kingdom of Chevalle and Territories of Tcheltar, Confederacy of Klagorst. WB

Description: As expected, the Klagorst army enters the Epphinx Forest in pursuit of the Vrancean and varkhan soldiers. The fight begins at dawn and lasts all through the day into dusk. During the night, several Vranceans turn into werecreatures, who then unleash more than their share of havoc.

Then, the forest begins to burn. The Vrancean army flees, burning the forest to cover their retreat, while cutting the Klagorst army's advance forces from their reserves. While the Stygians use their magic to conjure rain, the Vranceans manage to deal with the front ranks of their enemies and at the same time leave the area.

Hours later, the coming dawn illuminates the still-smoking forest once more, with the Vranceans and varkhas having won the

battle, having killed a large number of their enemies. However, their number has been greatly reduced. (*See Kl. 22, Kl. 23; Fe. 2, Fe. 5.*)

What This Means: Approximately 4,000 men from Klagorst have been killed in this battle. Only 2,000 have been killed on the other side... but now, there are still 5,000 Klagorst soldiers remaining and not more than 2,000 among the Vranceans. Nhorg and Dvorcic hoped that they would kill more. Now things look bad for them.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are on either side, they could alter the outcome of the battle significantly.

Klarmont 27, AC 1017: Nayce Battle Plan Presented.

Location: City of Ionace, Ionace Island, Nayce. AS

Description: A military committee presents to the Nayce Council a planned campaign to eradicate the ghoulish threat. The officers propose to defend existing facilities, both above and below the waves. Any offensives should be based on small specially-equipped units operating out of the existing *submersibles*. They stress that Nayce should discover the source of these attacks and deal with it directly with their available underwater-equipped units. Key to this plan will be the sea races and their natural abilities in fighting under the waves.

This plan is not well received by the council or by witnessing aristocrats, who want an instantaneous and conclusive campaign. Several call for Aquas and the aquatic races of Underocean to fight this war. Aquas's expertise in living underwater is renowned, if any Nayce kingdom can effectively address the undead it is they. Underocean has been a strong and vocal opponent of undead, especially the undead inhabitants of Bluenose; they are well motivated and such involvement would help in "verifying" their worthiness in being allowed to join Nayce.

The war committee counters that Nayce does not possess the underwater capabilities to mount and properly support an

underwater campaign of total war. Even Aquas and Underocean, despite their experience in underwater matters, cannot and should not be tasked with fighting this war alone. Their resources are already stressed in several areas. Likewise Nayce lacks the resources to build such a force quickly enough to do anything for at least a year. The time needed to create new *submersibles* and enchant weapons and armors for aquatic-based troops takes time and gold. They add that even Alphatia would have had a difficult time assembling the required forces.

While they admit that Underocean's participation would be focal to any underwater conflict, such a new member of Nayce should not be expected to shoulder the bulk of the responsibility of such a war; it is a Naycese matter not an Underocean matter. There are too many unknowns involved—no one knows how large the undead threat is nor do they know if Underocean can reasonably meet it. They cite that there is a definite need for a *submersible* fleet; the undead threat making it more of a necessity.

This explanation does much to quell opposition to the plan. Though most still desire a quick resolution, the committee's plan will have to do. The council does decide that funding must be made available for an underwater-based force, one that is separate from Aquas and under Nayce's direct authority. Since Nayce is funding the new *Reaver Class submersibles* and the *Torpin*, these vessels will be focal to the new *submersible* fleet. The regular surface fleets and *skyship* fleets will also see continued funding, despite the great cost involved in expanding all these different types of fleets, as each are seen as equally important to securing the surface aspects of Nayce's sealandes.

The military eagerly accepts these promises of increased funding. However most are aware at just how financially stressed the Naycese budget is. So few expect sizable funding increases; most are just content that the council recognizes their military needs. (See *Kl. 19, Kl. 24; Fe. 3, Fe. 8.*)

What the PCs Can Do: With the mainstream military mostly acting in defensive roles, adventurers will be needed even more for risky sorties out into the sunken continent. With Nayce committed, they may be more easily paid and even aided by magical assistance.

Klarmont 27, AC 1017: Intrigue in Norchester.

Location: City of Norchester, Earldom of Penwick, Kingdom of Bellayne. SC

Description: The magistrate of Norchester is contacted by the king's agents, with a view to entering into a conspiracy to capture the town on behalf of the king. The magistrate will see to it that the Norchester militia's weapons are locked away on a set date, giving the king's men some time to secure the town before violence gets out of hand.

Unfortunately for the magistrate, a company of the Sun Herald happened to observe the meeting and warned Lord Mortimer the Defiant, the parliamentary ruler of Penwick. (See *Kl. 7, Kl. 15; Fe. 3, Fe. 8.*)

What This Means: The king instigated this plot, knowing the royalist leanings of most of the nation's magistrates. If he could quickly take Norchester by force, any uprising by the parliament could be stopped before it even could properly begin. Sadly for the king, Lord Mortimer now knows of the plan and will doubtless ensure a warm welcome for the king when he arrives.

Klarmont 27, AC 1017: Back at Home.

Location: Yugatai Territories, Ethengar *Khanates*. OW

Description: Bakai and her brothers and sisters are back on the Sea of Grass. The most dangerous part of their journey lies behind them but due to the chaos in the *khanates* the danger is not yet over. (See *Kl. 10, Kl. 18; Fe. 3, Fe. 18.*)

What This Means: Urmahid Krinagar personally saw to it that the children made it

safely out of Glantri and that they left the principalities. Now that they are on their own once more, they opt to take the longer route to Xantha—where Manghai will have moved the Murkit tribe—through Yugatai territory. They are still wary of the Taijits, ever since the unexpected attack by that tribe.

Klarmont 27, AC 1017: Desertions in Minaea.

Location: City of Minaea, Confederated Kingdom of Minaea, Minaean Coast. SK

Description: After about two weeks of good sailing, the imperial expedition financed by Thyatian mercantile families, Minrothad's guilds and the imperial family to Skothar reaches the Minaean Coast and a few days later arrives at the city of Minaea itself. With translations provided by some Thyatians who picked up the Milenian tongue through contact with Kastelios, good relations are established. Merchants with the expedition hawk imperial goods in the markets of Minaea and make purchases of Minaean goods. After discussions with officials of the Kingdom of Minaea, the expedition's commander, Theodorian Metothemius, arranges an audience with King Korudon. The audience is fairly informal and the discussions mostly light—no talks of an alliance or anything. But information is exchanged, with the Thyatians and Minrothaddans providing news from Brun and of the inhabitants of Davania who speak the Milenian tongue. In return, Korudon has his officials provide the Thyatians with information about Skothar, including maps and charts. After some more serious discussions over the following days a trade agreement is reached giving merchants from the Thyatian Empire approval of the king to trade with Minaea and provision themselves in Minaean ports.

After a week in port, the expedition sets sail heading northwards along the coast. But two rakish adventures who had hired on with the expedition desert it. They made friends with a Minaean who knows the languages of the tribes of the interior near

the coast and decided to embark together with him on a grand adventure to make themselves kings over the uncivilized people of the Skotharan interior. Since they know Milenian, their Milenian partner will translate for them. They bring along with them a couple dozen repeating crossbows that they picked up in Ochalea. (*See Fl. 16, Ya. 5; Fe. 21, Fy. 15.*)

What This Means: The Thyatians have a trade agreement with Nayce as a result of last year's treaty and now imperial merchants will be trading in the ports of Minaea as well. Minaea will, in fact, become a main entrepôt of the Thyatians on Skothar, likely the country most friendly to the empire and therefore its best partner in the region. This is due in part to both powers' rivalries with the Alphatians (which are between them) and on account of the growing Milenian minority within Thyatis itself.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs could be the characters who desert the fleet in Minaea and go on their own to adventure in and by extension explore, the interior of Skothar. They will likely find the going harder than the characters in the event do, but might avoid the mistakes those opportunistic rogues make.

Klarmont 28, AC 1017: Birth of a Dragon Knight.

Location: Forest of Lothenar, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: During the trip back to Idris Tower, crossing through the Avien Plains and the Forest of Lothenar, Khel the dragon knight tells Dove some of the secrets about his kin. Intrigued by the news, Dove asks his guardian to show him the place where the dragon knights are born. After killing off the last accompanying soldier after reaching the Lothenar Forest, Khel fulfills Dove's request by taking him in a secret underground cave, deep in the heart of the dead woods. Here Dove, posing as a cultist, witnesses how the wizards of the Onyx Ring extract the heart and blood from living elves and transplant them into young draconic hatchlings, creating the horrible crossbreeds called the

Children of Idris (or dragon knights). Before being discovered, the duo leaves the secret cave and heads back towards Idris Tower. (See *Ya. 12, Ya. 14; Fe. 3, Fe. 7.*)

What This Means: Dove has finally discovered the secret of the dragon knights' spawning. It has also dawned on him the reason behind the massacre of the Lothenar elves and the enslaving of their brethren in Geffron: the Onyx Ring has used these elves as guinea pigs to further their dreadful experiments to create an unnatural race of superior warriors and reckless butchers. Dove begins to grasp the extent of the Idris cultists' madness and schemes and his fears for Wendar's elven population become even greater. What astounds him is also that his draconic companion, Khel, seems cold-blooded and efficient even at betraying his own kin.

What the PCs Can Do: Are the PCs trustworthy of the secret of the dragon knights? If the PCs have proved their worth, Khel will also entrust them with it; but if they haven't he will try to slaughter them along with any remaining soldier.

Events: Felmont

First Week

Felmont 1, AC 1017: Death of Cows.

Location: Town of Julinius, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: In the farms around the seaport of Julinius, a sudden disease strikes at cattle. Nearly half the cattle become infected and a quarter die over the next three days. The others recover, apparently with no lingering side-effects. Apart from the hardship this causes to the farmers, the cows also pose a hygiene problem, as the authorities struggle to dispose of the large number of animal corpses. The problem is solved by a local wizard, Apuleius Necrekis, who is highly regarded in the area and through the intercession of the imperial hospitaliers. Apuleius Necrekis and his apprentices quickly preserve the carcasses. The imperial hospitaliers then inspect the meat to make sure it is safe for human consumption, casting *purify food and drink* and *prevent disease* to make sure it is safe to eat. (See *Fe. 13, Am. 7.*)

What This Means: The Thyatians, now better prepared, are able to ensure that a replay of the Thothian mummy rot episode, wherein Thothia's agents infected Thyatis's grain supply, causing disease and widespread death among the civilian population, will never occur again. The meat can now be sold instead, helping alleviate the hardship the farmers and ranchers experience from the loss of the livestock.

Felmont 1, AC 1017: Bettellyn Mobilizes.

Location: City of Citadel, Kingdom of Bettellyn, Floating Continent of Alpathia. HW

Description: After centuries of Randel raids and pseudo-wars, Randel's military and leadership is so eroded that Bettellyn feels that it can counterattack beyond simple border raids. Junna's diplomatic and

domestic ventures testify to her incompetence and total misunderstanding of the situation that Randel and Bettelwyn are in.

Ironically, Queen Llynara finds herself sympathizing with the Randel people. All that traditional militarism and military history are being compromised by one little woman and her putting Immortal faith over her heritage. In some ways, she sees this invasion as a merciful end to a worthy adversary; a fate much more deserving than the Randel merely sinking into the obscurity of pacifism at the behest of their weak ruler.

Wanting to seize the moment, Queen Llynara assembles her military leaders and puts the idea before them. Though Llynara initially asks for a series of retaliatory raids on several Randel towns, some of her officers press her for full mobilization and a concerted campaign of conquest to be waged against Randel. Others resist, citing that Bettelwyn forces are way under strength with many of their remaining front-line forces being integrated into the imperial units.

Other officers interject that Randel is also suffering from their own front-line troops being integrated into imperial units, to a far greater extent than their own forces are. They add that Junna's decrees have also eroded the remaining troops down to poorer quality. They feel that Bettelwyn is quite capable of supplementing its current forces to initiate a campaign of conquest against the Randel. They insist that aside from a few crudely-equipped units; they should only be opposed by old men and young boys.

Llynara is hesitant but is swayed by the argument. The possibility of removing Randel as a threat is too great to pass up. She orders her officers to make preparations for a campaign of conquest. She authorizes the mobilization of regular and militia units. She wants a quick and decisive victory. If need be, her officers are to bolster the ranks by recruitment and even conscription. (*See Fl. 8, Kl. 21; Fe. 8, Fe. 14.*)

What the PCs Can Do: PCs can be mobilized by their kingdom, or hired as

additional mercenary forces (though obviously not if they are Randel mercenaries).

Felmont 1, AC 1017: Five Shires Requests Aid.

Location: City of Darokin, Republic of Darokin and City of Mirros, Kingdom of Karameikos. OW

Description: The Five Shires sends envoys to Darokin and Karameikos, the other coastal nations of the Western Defense League, requesting naval aid against the recent Thyatian attacks on his ships. The governments of those countries will have to decide what aid to give, if any. (*See Fl. 23, Kl. 22; Fe. 10, Fy. 6.*)

What This Means: The hin don't like being defeated at sea, so they are trying to get help from the other league nations.

What the PCs Can Do: Hin PCs could be the ones sent to either Karameikos or Darokin to request aid.

Felmont 2, AC 1017: The Host Gathers.

Location: Villages of Seelitz and Nordberg, Territory of Heldland, Heldannic Empire. NW

Description: Following *Oberherr* Wulf von Klagendorf's orders to muster forces to purge Finsterwald of Helmut Jaschke's presence, a force of almost 1,000 knights and soldiers gathers outside the settlements of Seelitz and Nordberg, awaiting orders to move on their enemy. (*See Kl. 12; Fe. 4, Fe. 7.*)

What This Means: Exactly what it implies; the Heldannic Order is preparing once more to try to crush Helmut's forces and attain total domination over Heldland.

What the PCs Can Do: Low-level PCs can be introduced to the Heldannic Territories as mercenaries (if they are from other lands), or regular soldiers, in this force. Alternatively, they could be working for Helmut, in which case they could spy on the armies' positions and gauge their tactics. Higher-level PCs on either side would most

likely be commanding small- or medium-sized detachments of soldiers.

Felmont 2, AC 1017: An Iron Agreement.

Location: Village of Krakov, Kingdom of Karameikos. OW

Description: Shady visitors enter the tiny village of Krakov, a coastal settlement along the Eastron Road west of Rugalov. There, they meet with the village's new ruler, Lord Basileios Zarides, to discuss a mutual arrangement. The visitors are representatives of the Iron Ring. They wish to make Krakov a center for new operations and their understanding is that Lord Zarides might be open to such an arrangement. He is, for he wishes to expand his holding beyond the mere fief it currently is. A dark deal is concluded.

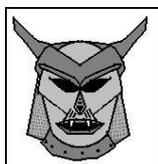
What This Means: Basileios Zarides lost a lot of prestige and power when he had to flee Thyatis in AC 1013—something he despises Emperor Eusebius for—and managed to cajole King Stefan into giving him the village of Krakov as his fief. He is supposed to build it into a viable trade route along the Eastron Road, but Zarides is impatient and sees the advantages of an agreement with the Iron Ring. In exchange for use of Krakov as a base to ship slaves out of the country, he will reap immediate profits to expand his territories.

What the PCs Can Do: The Iron Ring always spells trouble for PCs—either they capture friends and family of the PCs to enslave them, prompting a rescue effort; or else they go after the PCs themselves, which has its own dilemmas.

Felmont 2, AC 1017: Battle of Castle Aknar.

Location: Castle Aknar, Duchy of Vrancea, Confederacy of Klagorst. WB

Description: One week passed with only minor skirmishes between the two armies. Nhorg and Dvorcic led their army, now consisting



of only 2,000 men, to Vrancea, hoping to bring their enemies to Castle Aknar, where they could make a final attempt at defeating their enemies from a strategically defensible position. Finally, on Felmont 1, they stopped there and prepared to hold back the advance of the Klagorst army. However, the Klagorst rulers, knowing what happened to the centaurs near Lake Szwanski, asked the Stygian clergy to prepare spells and other measures to counter the possible surprises that Nhorg could have.

The battle begins during the night: from the surrounding hills, suddenly, a group of ten undead treants storms the Klagorst camp. The Stygians are not good with fire magic, so they are not able to help their allies significantly. After one hour of strenuous fighting, the Klagorst army is able to kill most of the treants, but two pull back. Soon after that, the Reptile Knights charge, leading 1,300 varkhas, while there seems to be no trace of the remaining 600-700 Vranceans.

The varkhas pierce at the center of the Klagorst army, but wisely retreat every time the superior number of their opponents could surround them. Then, the Vranceans enter the fight, about two hours after the first varkhan incursion. They are led by an iron golem, who spreads death among the Klagorst soldiers. At the same time and surprisingly, about 30 troglodytes, accompanied by a roughly equal number of hellhounds, enter the fight on Nhorg's side—they are dissident troglodytes, members of the Horned Skull (followers of the Arch-Devil Charun, enemy of Yeg Shuta).

The battle is very hard, but, in the end, it is a victory for the Klagorst army. Nhorg is captured, having been seriously injured in a personal fight with Archduke Xagash, while Dvorcic manages to flee with the few survivors, among whom are 20 Reptile Knights and some of the Horned Skull troglodytes. The victorious generals enter Castle Aknar and there they find evidence of horrendous experiments carried out in the lower levels of the dungeons. (*See Kl. 23, Kl. 25; Fe. 5, Fe. 8.*)

What This Means: It seems that Nhorg has been trying to breed lizard races and mammals together, using dark magic to create hybrids. Many of them are wretched creatures, incapable of anything but crawling on the floor of their dark cells, grunting and whining for food; others are far more dangerous. The Stygians, along with other clerics, the few wizards of the Klagorst and some experienced adventurers, spend the entire night dealing with them and clean Mystara of their foul presence.

Felmont 3, AC 1017: Orders Honored in Abbashan.

Location: Emirate of Abbashan, Emirates of Ylaruam. OW

Description: The five military orders of the army of Ylaruam are honored in a ceremony in the streets of Abbashan. The Orders of the Pike, Arrow, Mace, Lance and Spell parade through the streets in full military regalia and put on a display for the citizens of the capitol. The Order of the Spell receives special commendations for their help in the war efforts of the last few years and for their use of “good” magicks on behalf of the nation.

What This Means: Members of the Order of the Spell—a unit of mounted wizards—complained to the sultan about their treatment in recent years. Strong anti-wizardly sentiment has been running high ever since the Great War and the Alphatian invasion years ago. The order felt that their efforts and loyalty on behalf of the nation was being dismissed simply because of their use of arcane magicks—even though their magicks were not of the fire-based or necromantic sort (those being the only types expressly forbidden by edict of the Eternal Truth). The sultan arranged this show both to appease them, as well as to demonstrate the might of the armies of Ylaruam and raise the morale of his people. Though this display will surely not completely erase the taint of anti-wizardly sentiment, it may at least raise the faith of the people in their wizards.

Felmont 3, AC 1017: Mykonos Founded.

Location: Island of Mykonos, City-State of Kastelios, Thanegioth Archipelago, Sea of Dread. OW

Description: After over one month of clearing land and quarrying local stone from a nearby rock face, the Kastelian expedition has managed to erect a number of simple stone structures—sufficient to provide protection from the elements. Cleared fields have also been turned over to subsistence agriculture, to allow those who will remain behind to sustain themselves while the ships return to Kastelios for more supplies.

Pleased with the progress made over the past weeks, Adonai officially christens the new settlement Mykonos and orders detailed maps to be drawn up of the current colony, plus the regions of the island (which Adonai decided should bear the same name as the village) which will be settled first. He then makes plans to return to Kastelios. (*See Fl. 13, Fl. 26; Fe. 7, Fe. 18.*)

What This Means: The establishment of a Kastelian presence in the Thanegioth Archipelago has been successful. Now, the main concern is to return to Kastelios with the news that a waystation has been founded.

Felmont 3, AC 1017: King James Seeks Aid.

Location: City of Louvines, Domaine Royal, Kingdom of Renardie. SC

Description: King James, finding it difficult to equip his army and with funds running low, visits neighboring Renardie in an effort to bring in some more money. King Louis gives James a cool reception. After much haggling, King James manages to extract a loan from Louis, though at a most unfavorable rate. (*See Kl. 15, Kl. 27; Fe. 8, Fe. 11.*)

What This Means: King Louis has been watching Bellayne for some time with a great deal of concern. Renardie has had its own dissenters in the past and Louis is acutely aware of the possibility of similar things

happening in his own kingdom. Thus, he is inclined to help James, if only to defend the institution of the monarchy—but on the other hand, the rakasta are age-old rivals, leading Louis to strike a hard bargain.

What the PCs Can Do: Characters who have good reputations in Renardie may be sent as the king’s representatives to negotiate on his behalf.

Felmont 3, AC 1017: Of Matters Undead.

Location: City of Ionace, Ionace Island, Nayce. AS

Description: The council convenes to discuss a rather overlooked aspect: the status of the undead at Bluenose. Several point out the Feyos incident and the sighting of the undead recently spotted near Torenal Site. They assess them a probable threat, perhaps even linked to the ghoul threat. The representative from Underocean is highly vocal in her people’s stance that all types of undead are a threat to the living.

Still, the undead do have some supporters. These individuals are adamant that the true status of the undead in Bluenose is still unknown. With their obvious Alphetian ties, it may even be possible to invite them into the Naycese fold, who knows. They cite that if they prove friendly and trustworthy the undead could be a vital asset in Nayce securing the sunken continent. More scholarly individuals cite a need to study them for their uniqueness.

This line of argument draws heavy criticism, especially from the Underocean representative, who calls for an immediate exterminatory attack on Bluenose. Though few will even comprehend creating an undead kingdom, fewer still are so extreme and the prospect of their acting as guardians is intriguing. For this matter the undead at Bluenose are given a temporary reprieve until their true nature and potential role in Nayce is determined.

The council decides to continue study on them. They decide that since Pidimigd is already in the area and has voiced interest in them, he can be more easily redirected to

study the Bluenose undead. Since he has yet to uncover any secrets on the reported *Phylactery of Agmas* the change in focus may take better advantage of his expertise. They decide that he should be able to study both the ghouls and the Bluenose undead, especially if they are connected. The council issues the change of orders and grants the necromancer certain authority in establishing his research capabilities. (*See Kl. 24, Kl. 27; Fe. 8, Fe. 22.*)

What This Means: As for the study of the *Phylactery of Agmas*, there are other wizened mages that can do that. One such mage has already voiced interest in the matter and discovered a vague reference to the item in the collected works in Krakatos and has requested to be charged with its study. Since Master Terari wrote the request, the council takes it quite seriously. Still, many wonder why Terari is so interested in the matter.

The truth is that Master Terari has been told of the *Phylactery of Agmas* and has taken a particular interest in it. Since he is undergoing the Path of the Epic Hero to achieve Immortality, he sees the phylactery as possibly being part of his quest. This possibility stems from the part of his quest that deals with the discovery and destruction of an artifact of Entropy. Terari will research the matter before actually journeying to Nayce lands to investigate the matter personally.

Felmont 3, AC 1017: Ambushed Again!

Location: Yugatai Territories, Ethengar *Khanates*. OW

Description: As they begin to cross into Kaerut territories on the Sea of Grass, the children of the *khan* are attacked once more. This time it is a full-scale assault by evil spirits and a fierce battle begins. It is only through the magicks of Akmad ibn Yussef that the evil spirits are finally driven away.

The battle comes at great cost: Moglai *Khan*’s youngest son, Hurkati, is slain, along with many of the group’s bodyguards. His eldest daughter, Bakai, whom the spirits

seemed to single out, has been severely injured. (*See Kl. 18, Kl. 27; Fe. 18, Fy. 10.*)

What This Means: Jaku the Render has stepped up his attempts to secure his reign. He has given up relying on mortal pawns and resorted to calling in allies from the Spirit World in his assassination attempts. Though unsuccessful, he has come closer to eliminating his opponents this time than he has previously.

Felmont 3, AC 1017: Back into the Dragon's Lair!

Location: Idris Tower, Forest of Lothenar, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: Christopher Dove returns to the Tower of Idris, where he is again taken into custody by the local guards and imprisoned in the lower dungeons to finish writing the summary of his voyages, to be later sent to the *Mystaran Almanac*. Khel stays at the tower to receive further instructions, while Dove gets again in touch with the wizard Vespen and begins to explain him his escape plan. (*See Ya. 14, Kl. 28; Fe. 7, Fe. 10.*)

What This Means: Dove knew that his disappearance would have alerted the high priestess and thought best to return to Idris Tower to avoid suspicions. Also, he wants to free Vespen because he hopes the wizard's power will help him bypass the magical wards in the Nameless Tower. This way he will be able to fully read the history of Idris as written in the inscriptions inside that tower and unmask the lies behind Idris's true identity. Obviously, Khel the dragon knight will be pivotal in his escape plan.

What the PCs Can Do: If they remained with Dove, the PCs will return to their dungeon as well, there to plan new ways to escape along with Dove and Vespen. In that case they should be the true agents of their escape, rather than any of the NPCs—the NPCs count on the PCs to get them out!

Felmont 4, AC 1017: A Glorious Advance, to Find... Nothing?

Location: Eastern Finsterwald, Territory of Heldland, Heldannic Empire. NW

Description: The massed soldiers and knights of the Heldannic Order deployed to this region of Heldland begin their advance into the Finsterwald during the night of Felmont 3 and continue it well into the next day. At first moving cautiously, expecting ambushes in every clearing, the force soon becomes perplexed: not only has no resistance been encountered, but no settlements—or evidence thereof—have been found. Puzzled, the armies' commanders dispatch scouts further ahead, to determine what is going on. (*See Kl. 12, Fe. 2; Fe. 7, Fe. 8.*)

What the PCs Can Do: Needless to say, scouting duty sounds like a job for PCs.

Felmont 4, AC 1017: Dissension in the Ranks.

Location: Town of Polakatsikes, Dominion of Polakatsikes, Heldannic Empire, Meghala Kimata Plains. DV

Description: The uneasy calm of Polakatsikes is shaken when one of Governor Wolfgang Stemmel's officers loudly demands that a meeting be arranged with the Mivosians, in order to discuss terms of surrender. Shocked and angered, by such a demand, Wolfgang confronts the man and orders him to suggest his reasons and to explain why he should not be executed for treason on the spot.

The officer, Horst Kleinmann, informs the governor that, as supplies are beginning to run low and no *warbird* has visited the town since the second drop-off of reinforcements, the Mivosians are in an eminently more advantageous position and could conceivably lay siege to Polakatsikes into the next year. The fact that the granaries have been attacked and a well poisoned, indicate the potential reach of the Mivosians; not even walls can hold them back. Rather than fighting a war of attrition they cannot possibly win, it might be easier on the men to surrender, possibly withdraw from Polakatsikes and at least leave the area with their lives.

Wolfgang considers what Horst has said and then orders that he be relieved of

command and placed in the dungeon. (*See Ya. 2, Ya. 26; Fe. 6, Fe. 8.*)

What This Means: The strain of the siege is beginning to show on the Heldannic garrison, as well as the townsfolk. Already, some people are talking about approaching the Mivosians to discuss the terms for a surrender. Although he is the Governor of Polakatsikes, Wolfgang is first and foremost a Heldannic Knight and he will not tolerate any such defeatist thinking, or allow himself to be seen to be tolerating it. He knows he must do something to defuse the tension and soon...

Felmont 4, AC 1017: The Art of War By Other Means.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Representatives of the Darokinian Diplomatic Corps, acting on behalf of the Western Defense League nations, begin negotiations with their Thyatian counterparts in the Foreign Office today in the City of Thyatis. They hope to resolve the growing trade conflict before it does lasting damage to commerce—and to international relations in the region. They seek compensation for the attacks on House Linton that began it all, but their foremost aim is simply to end the confrontation in an acceptable manner, so trade will flow more freely again. (*See Kl. 10, Kl. 22; Fe. 11.*)

What This Means: The Darokinians hope to remove some of the barriers to their trade that the Thyatians have imposed recently, as well as to get some concessions that will allow House Linton to recover—hopefully at the expense of the Minrothad Guilds.

What the PCs Can Do: Characters can conduct the negotiations, or try and dig up dirt that will help their side get an advantage.

Felmont 5, AC 1017: Stalemate.

Location: Duchy of Vrancea, Confederacy of Klagorst. WB

Description: Warlord Naarn Dvorcic talks with the few surviving members of his

army and decides to offer Klagorst peace. He considers offering Vrancea in exchange of peace plus the freedom of Nhorg, who will be brought to Gournzee along with the humans who refuse to accept the outcome of the war. The varkhan warlord sends envoys to the Klagorst army, bearing these proposals. (*See Kl. 25, Fe. 2; Fe. 8, Fe. 14.*)

What This Means: Naarn is not a fool; he knows the war is lost. He hopes that the Klagorst army will not try to carry the war into Gournzee, even though he thinks that, in his homeland, he would win.

What the PCs Can Do: They could either be among the ones sent to Klagorst, or try to convince the survivors that it is still possible to win the war, if they were fighting against Klagorst.

Felmont 6, AC 1017: They Fight Like Turtles.

Location: City of Raven Scarp, *Exarchate* of Davania Superior, Hinterlands, Thyatian Empire. DV

Description: Siobhan daughter of Maeve has advanced her forces to the outskirts of Raven Scarp, laying siege to it. But the warriors of the Raven Clan, once the most enthusiastic participants in the war, are now reluctant and half-hearted. Also, the Thratians of the Hinterlands are unskilled in the construction of siege machinery and with the Thyatians controlling the waters around Raven Scarp for the most part (in spite of the Twaelar), they are unable to starve out the defenders. Today, with her warriors already tiring of the ineffective siege, she decides to withdraw and try and think of a new strategy for victory. (*See Kl. 1, Kl. 5; Fy. 9, Fy. 25.*)

What This Means: The initial strategy might have worked—if the victory in the field could have been followed up by a quick strike while the Thyatians were disorganized, the Thratians might have seized Raven Scarp. Siobhan's back up plan was to hope that sympathetic Hinterlanders living in Raven Scarp would open a way for her forces to enter the city. But the Thyatians managed to foil that and her agents inside

the city have disappeared (they were captured and executed). With little recourse, Siobhan hopes to draw out the Thyatians again. But rifts between her and the Raven Clan, a key component of her hoped-for alliance to expel the Thyatians, but always hard to cooperate with due to their traditional rivalry with her Leopard Clan, are beginning to affect things. They are no longer as enthusiastic in support of the war and her alliance of clans is beginning to unravel.

What the PCs Can Do: Characters sympathetic to the Thyatians might find some means of helping them overcome the defenses of Raven Scarp. The attackers will then face fierce fighting from the city's inhabitants and the further obstacle of the main Thyatian citadel, Fire-Height and an influx of imperial reinforcements.

Felmont 6, AC 1017: Raid on Tehuacan.

Location: Town of Tehuacan, Azcan Empire. HW

Description: Pegleg Took, captain of the sloop Makai Pearl, arrives off the coast of Tehuacan after sailing from Arana. Took toys with some panicking Azcan fishing boats before sending a raiding party ashore. Pegleg, a wizard, startles the Azcans by flying above them, while his crew runs amok through the town, looting whatever they can find and having a grand time doing it. Pegleg spies a large patrol approaching and recalls the crew. They beat a hasty retreat back to the ship and sail away with a significant take of Tehuacan's wealth. (*See Fl. 7, Fl. 17; Fy. 15, Fy. 20.*)

What This Means: This is another typical pirate raid on an Azcan town, only by a different captain.

Felmont 6, AC 1017: Wolfgang Has a Plan...

Location: Town of Polakatsikes, Dominion of Polakatsikes, Heldannic Empire, Meghala Kimata Plains. DV

Description: In a secret meeting with his most trusted officers, Governor Wolfgang

Stemmel discusses a potential means of breaking the siege, since it appears that the enemy shows no signs of letting up (as he and some of his officers had originally privately hoped). His idea is to send small squads of stealthy warriors outside the town during the night, who will then act quickly to sabotage any siege equipment they find and otherwise make things more difficult for the Mivosians. It would be understood that these soldiers would not likely be able to return to Polakatsikes and thus would have to flee the area and live off the land, or otherwise continue to harry the Mivosians from the outside. Also, these soldiers would have a very good chance of being killed.

His officers, seeing no other avenue worth trying at the moment, agree to the plan. Wolfgang asks them to nominate individuals whom they think would be suitable for such a mission, but cautions that secrecy is essential. (*See Ya. 26, Fe. 4; Fe. 8, Fe. 11.*)

What This Means: It has become obvious that the Mivosians have no intention of giving up, as shown by their attempts to sow dissent from within (the arson and poisoning incidents). Clearly, the time of waiting is over; either an effort should be made to break the siege and throw back the Mivosians, or the garrison should surrender.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs have been in Polakatsikes since the beginning of the siege, it is possible that they have already committed some acts of sabotage against the Mivosians. What is being proposed here is a larger-scale campaign, one which could involve many people, over a prolonged period, behind enemy lines. If the PCs managed to conduct successful raids in the past, they will be given full consideration for this mission (and possibly be asked by Wolfgang himself to undertake it).

Felmont 6, AC 1017: Kiligi Alp Arslan Swoops.

Location: Kingdom of Douzbakjian, Midlands. WB

Description: When Crown Prince Dmitry split his forces, leaving part of his army to

besiege Tashgoun while leading the rest of his forces forward deeper into Douzbakjian, this was exactly the opportunity Kiligi Alp Arslan was waiting for. He had his forces flee before the advancing Zuyevan forces, leading them deeper into Douzbakjian and farther from the forces at Tashgoun. Meanwhile, Kiligi Alp Arslan rallied nomadic forces to his side, raising an army equal in size to the advancing Zuyevan army. Today he catches the Zuyevan troops on the open steppes and brings them to battle. The crown prince draws his forces up in a laager-style formation, as the swift-charging horse archers of Kiligi Alp Arslan swarm all around them. Zuyevan troops charge out of their redoubt several times, driving the forces of Douzbakjian away with each charge. But they always return.

Gradually the forces of Zuyevo dwindle as the troops are shot down with deadly-accurate archery. The crown prince orders a withdrawal, which turns into a disordered rout as some troops simply drop their weapons and flee. Dmitry and his guards manage to rally atop a hill, but find themselves surrounded by the elite cavalry of Kiligi Alp Arslan, consisting of heavily armored Douzbakjiani troops. The fight is long and bloody, but eventually the crown prince himself is slain and his guards ridden down and slaughtered. (*See Fl. 11, Ya. 1; Fj. 19.*)

What This Means: Zuyevo has suffered a crippling defeat on the plains of Douzbakjian. The forces of Kiligi Alp Arslan pursue the fleeing Zuyevan troops over the next several days, capturing and killing many of them before they are ordered to rest and regroup. Word will eventually reach the forces besieging Tashgoun of this defeat.

Kiligi Alp Arslan has Dmitry's head stripped to the bone and the skull gilded, which he then uses as a drinking cup. When news of his son's death reaches the *tsar*, he will be furious and will likely order massive retaliation.

Felmont 6, AC 1017: Scandalous Hope.

Location: Makekei Territory, Neathar Lands. HW

Description: Makekei tribesmen witness seeing Zallon accompanying Tyana, a known Hatfei, in his home village. For the Makekei the pairing is viewed with mixed feelings, despite the apparent affection between the two. Some see it as imperfect timing with the trouble brewing. Others see it as true love that may bring peace to the tribes. Some feel it inappropriate to have a Hatfei in their midst during the troubles. Still others see it as a coup by a Makekei hunter in gaining a wife from a rival tribe. Despite these mixed feelings, the respect that Zallon has within the tribe keeps Tyana safe from more militant Makekei. (*See Fl. 2, Ya. 6; Fj. 13.*)

What This Means: Zallon's family is quite aware of what the two have done and they condone the pairing. They see that the two are genuinely in love. Likewise they despise the current conflicts with the Hatfei; it has disrupted hunting and threatens them with open warfare. In the coming days, the family will send out messengers to contact Tyana's family. Tyana's father is particularly open about his displeasure of the conflict and it is hoped that he will condone the marriage too. Both families will agree that the union will happen and each will hope that it will do much to bring the two tribes back into friendlier relations.

Felmont 7, AC 1017: Trouble on the High Seas!

Location: North of City of Helskir, Dominion of Helskir, Heldannic Empire, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: A Heldannic vessel, dispatched to the Heldannic Territories late last night in the hopes of gaining some supplies, limps back into Helskir early this morning, its sails scorched and its hull punctured in several places. As the surviving crewmembers disembark, they deliver a startling report to the Heldannic officers on duty—ships flying Naycese colors have established a naval blockade of Helskir.

Word is sent to *Ordensgeneral* Anna von Hendriks immediately. (See *Ya. 10*, *Ya. 28*; *Fe. 7*, *Fe. 19*.)

What This Means: In accordance with the agreement between Thyatis and Nayce concerning the Heldannic invasion of Heldun, the latter imperial power agreed to dispatch several ships to the region to cut off the occupying forces from any reinforcement or resupplying efforts by sea.

Felmont 7, AC 1017: Return to Kastelios.

Location: Village of Mykonos, Island of Mykonos, City-State of Kastelios, Thanegioth Archipelago, Sea of Dread. OW

Description: The Kastelian expedition raises anchor and heads southwards this morning, leaving behind 23 men to continue surveying the island and to carry out whatever tasks are necessary to further strengthen the nascent colony located here. (See *Fl. 26*, *Fe. 3*; *Fe. 18*, *Fy. 1*.)

Felmont 7, AC 1017: Treachery and Redemption.

Location: Idris Tower, Forest of Lothenar, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: Khel the dragon knight takes Dove into custody, explaining to the guards that the high priestess wants to meet the human sage in the upper halls to question him. Once out of his cell, Dove and Khel follow a lone rat in the lower part of the dungeons, where Vespen is being held prisoner. Here Khel confronts the mighty warden of the cells, a threatening knight and when the man refuses to let them pass, a fierce battle ensues. Dove manages to sneak past the two knights and, after locating Vespen's cell, he frees him. Vespen aids Khel in his fight and quickly dispatches the warden. Then with an illusion he tricks the other guards (who have come to look after hearing the commotion) into believing everything is normal and once out of sight, the trio proceeds, *invisibly*, to the upper rooms. Dove insists they must leave the tower at once, but Vespen manages to

convince him that there is an item of great power they could use against Idris and Her minions in the high priestess's bedchamber, so they go straight for the top of the tower. Once inside the lady's private quarters, Dove and Vespen start to look for a golden horn with precious gems, but cannot find it. Suddenly, a group of robed priests burst into the room and start to throw spells at the party, with Vespen and Khel doing their best to repel them. When more cultists join their friends in the room, Vespen understands the situation is out of control, so he grasps an ominous black staff with inlaid black diamonds and uses it to bathe the whole room in darkness. Once the dark veil retreats, each person inside the chamber finds an exact undead replica of himself standing in front of him or her, grinning. Vespen—the only one without an undead twin—orders the undead clones to attack their twins and chaos engulfs the room. After killing his own undead self, Dove reaches Vespen asking for an explanation, while Khel is also busy fending off his clone. Unexpectedly, Vespen turns to face Dove with a malign glee in his eyes and shows his true identity when his visage becomes that of a rotting corpse with blood red pinpoints glowing in his empty eye sockets. Realizing he has helped the Shadow Lord escape the dungeons, Dove falls helpless to the ground, waiting for the necromancer to take his life. But before the Shadow Lord can strike, Khel shields Dove with his body and engages both the necromancer and his own undead clone into combat, urging the archaeologist to flee. Blinded by fear, Dove stumbles upon a small pad wrapped in a cloth and left in a corner of the room, touching some of the exposed runes. The air begins to fizzle around him and suddenly the scene disappears before his eyes.

When he stares around himself once again, he is standing in a darkened different room all-alone. Venturing out and looking for an exit, he strides down a long narrow hallway, which brings back memories of a place he visited in the past. His thoughts are suddenly interrupted when a group of armed men with the insignia of the Shadow Army

intercepts him and takes him prisoner. When he refuses to reveal his identity and the way he entered the keep, he is taken into the keep's cell, awaiting further interrogation. There he meets other prisoners, mostly elves and discovers he has magically been transported to the dreaded Drax Tallen. Broken and hopeless, Dove cries silently in his cell. (See *Kl. 28 Fe. 3; Fe. 10, Fe. 11.*)

What This Means: Dove planned his escape quite thoroughly, but he didn't expect the wizard's treachery. The Shadow Lord, who had been imprisoned in the dungeons of Idris Tower since Eirmont of AC 1016 (after staging a failed coup against the high priestess), had contacted the archaeologist hoping to use him to gain the opportunity to escape Idris's clutches. So he pretended to be a former member of the Onyx Ring punished for his "good deeds" against the Church of Idris and revealed Dove many secrets of the cult to befriend him and to betray Idris, whom he has always served with contempt. When the opportunity finally arose, he persuaded Dove to go straight into the high priestess's chambers instead of fleeing the tower, because he hoped to find his phylactery there—the object where his soul is stored and which has always been used by the High Priestess of Idris to control his actions. The Shadow Lord is in fact a vassalich created by the Church of Idris, not a necromancer and needs his phylactery back to gain freedom and full lichdom. Unfortunately, the phylactery wasn't located in the high priestess's quarters and when cornered by the cultists, he chose to use the *Black Staff* of the carnifex (which he had retrieved last year to use against the high priestess, failing miserably) against them. Only by sheer luck and thanks to the final sacrifice of Khel did Dove escape the desperate situation, only to be plunged into another inferno once again.

What the PCs Can Do: Free themselves, free Dove, dodge or fight the warden, free Vespen, search the priestess's quarters, fight the priests and the undead clones; their adventures are those written here. After Dove accidentally escaped, they may find

themselves facing the Shadow Lord and the priests and the undead clones!

Felmont 7, AC 1017: Losses in the South.

Location: City of Helskir, Dominion of Helskir, Heldannic Empire, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: While pondering the problems posed by the blockade by Naycese ships north of Helskir, Anna von Hendriks receives word that attacks against patrols in the southern occupied territories are increasing. Preliminary reports indicate that the assaults have been conducted by Thyatian forces based in Westroucke. Sensing that the Heldannic position in Heldun will soon become far more perilous, Anna orders all remaining patrols to withdraw towards Helskir. Also, she demands that construction of the outer wall and fortresses be accelerated. (See *Ya. 28, Fe. 7; Fe. 19, Fe. 23.*)

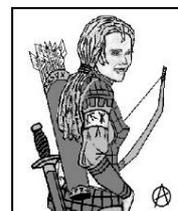
What This Means: Being blockaded while having to do without reinforcements is one thing; being attacked on top of that is another. Knowing that both empires could bring considerable magical and military might against Heldannic positions, should they wish to do so, Anna has decided to devote her limited resources to the retention of Helskir.

The Heldannic forces' southern flank will be placed under increasing pressure over the upcoming weeks by a combined force of imperial auxiliaries (Westroucke) and two units of the army of Westroucke—a reserve force mobilized earlier this year to protect the frontier.

Felmont 7, AC 1017: We're Not Alone.

Location: Eastern Finsterwald, Territory of Heldland, Heldannic Empire. NW

Description: The slow, but steady, westward march of the Heldannic forces in the Finsterwald is halted by a gruesome discovery. In a large clearing, staked into the



ground, are the bodies of a large number of the scouts who were sent deeper into the forest only a few days earlier. Upon seeing this grim sign, almost 100 soldiers break ranks and flee eastwards, disappearing swiftly into the surrounding brush. The commanders order their archers to fire a volley at the retreating men, to punish them for their cowardice, but only a few arrows hit their marks. Otherwise undeterred, they order their soldiers to press on. (*See Fe. 2, Fe. 4; Fe. 8, Fe. 10.*)

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are Heldannic scouts and were dispatched on Felmont 4, they would have encountered some of Helmut's warriors—low- to mid-level elves and humans intent on killing any scouts they find. Assuming they were able to report back to their leaders, they might be able to better inform the Heldannic force as to what is going on and change the course of future events considerably.

Felmont 7, AC 1017: Evil Robots for a Better Tomorrow.

Location: Small Island of the Thanegioth Archipelago, Sea of Dread. OW

Description: A band of Thyatian adventurers exploring one of the islands of the Thanegioth Archipelago discovers a cave mouth leading to an extensive warren of caverns. The adventurers face and defeat large numbers of monsters, especially a tribe of troglodytes. Deep in the caverns, they find what appears to be a blocked passage, which they decide to clear, hoping to find booty on the other side. When they clear the passage, they discover what appears to be an ancient complex tunneled deliberately, with smooth stone walls and slate floors. The complex has a large number of rooms with odd objects that they can't identify and which seem to have no function, as well as large amounts of dust. They start to despair of finding anything of value when they locate a burnished metal door, next to which is a pad with two buttons. Their attempts to force the door prove fruitless, so they try the buttons. The button mechanism seems corroded, very difficult to operate, but

eventually they manage to depress the right one and the door slides open.

At the inside of the doorframe is a small switch, which the adventurers throw, causing a pale illumination to flood the room from the ceiling above. Beyond they see a large room, with two long counters running down its center, upon which are various corroded objects and what appears to be a gauntlet and a helmet, both of unusual make—odd, smooth metal, with a very hard translucent visor over the eyes of the helmet. In each of the room's corners stands what appears to be a suit of full plate armor, also of odd construction with strange material at the joints, very hard but seemingly flexible. Each of the suits appears to hold a strange polearm in a ceremonial position. Though the suits of armor don't detect as magical, their unusual make and apparent antique age—but perfect condition—cause the adventurers to rejoice. They feel they'll be able to sell them to wealthy warriors or collectors in the city of Thyatis for a healthy profit. But they find them unusually difficult to move, each being attached to the wall with a strong metal hook. On the back wall of the chamber they locate a lever behind a hidden panel and decide to try that, hoping it will release the suits. As they switch the lever, the metal hooks release the suits. At the same time an eerie red gleam appears in the visors of each, where eyes might be and the suits spring into sudden action, aim their polearms at the adventurers and a bright beam shoots forth from each, cutting into the Thyatians. The armored fiends make short work of the party, then stalk out of the chamber and towards the surface. (*See Fe. 20, Fj. 7.*)

What This Means: The adventurers stumbled upon a lost facility dating back to the Blackmoor era. The complex was a hidden lab of a deranged, anti-social Blackmoorian scientist, who created the robots for his own fiendish (and now unknown) plots. The robots themselves are somewhat deranged as a result of both their programming and their long inactivity and will begin a far-ranging crime spree.

What the PCs Can Do: Characters can be the adventurers that stumble upon the complex and face four ruthless, insane and unspeakably powerful ancient robots.

Felmont 7, AC 1017: Wherefore art thou, Feldian?

Location: Tower of Linden, Principality of Bergdhoven, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: There is a great commotion outside the doors of the home of Princess Juliana Vlaardoen. While he was serving with the army, tracking down pockets of Ethengar nomads in the hills and wilds of Glantri, Feldian Lehenard had heard rumors that his beloved had taken up with the Black Eagle Baron. Disbelieving such stories, knowing that his love would never fall for such a notorious villain, he determined to find out the truth.

Now he finds himself turned away at the very doors of the princess's home, as if he were some common thief. Worse, the princess will not even deign to speak with him, instead sending her servants to usher him on his way. Just as Feldian is on the verge of forcing his way inside the manor, he is approached by Juliana's uncle, Anton Vlaardoen. The two are seen to talk for some time outside and then a reluctant Feldian retires with Anton to another residence on the estate. Several hours later, Feldian is observed riding off on his white steed, a fiery look in his eyes. (*See Fy. 16, Am. 24.*)

What This Means: Feldian was betrothed to Juliana, despite the wishes of her uncle Anton, several years ago. He left to serve his country's army during the war with Ethengar (hoping to win the respect of the military-minded Anton) and has only recently completed his tour of duty. In the meantime, the sinister Black Eagle Baron, Ludwig von Hendriks, has taken up with the princess.

Feldian is disheartened, but his talk with her uncle has spurred him on with a desire to win his love back. Though he disapproved of Feldian previously (no man would be good enough for Juliana in

Anton's overprotective eyes), Anton has come to see that the Black Eagle is far more insidious and unsuitable than Feldian ever was. Anton has now enlisted Feldian's aid in winning back the affections of the increasingly distant Princess Juliana.

Second Week

Felmont 8, AC 1017: Newshire Founded.

Location: Barony of Newshire, Colony of Davania Inferior, Hinterlands, Thyatian Empire. DV

Description: Early today, after coming ashore from the River Torion and marching several miles eastwards to a row of forested hills, a fair-sized group of him begins clearing away the surrounding brush with gusto. Hours later and amid much fanfare, Rickert Littlelaugh, surrounded by many cousins and friends, breaks the soil for his new home, in the recently-granted dominion of Newshire. (*See Fl. 13.*)

What This Means: As with Baron Demetrios Chianossos of Neapolis, Rickert served Eusebius during the Crown War. He headed a small volunteer battalion of him, a Thyatis City branch of the large Littlelaugh clan. His valor was recognized by the imperial family and he jumped at the chance to found his own dominion—even in the Hinterlands. Now, accompanied by a large number of friends and cousins, Rickert is building his home—soon to be the center of a hin barony in Davania Inferior.

What the PCs Can Do: As with Demetrios Chianossos, Rickert faces the same requirements and will need the same kind of assistance—surveying land, clearing out monsters and so on.

Felmont 8, AC 1017: Dogrel Summoned.

Location: City of Andaire, Kingdom of Alphas'ar, Floating Continent of Alpathia, Alpathian Empire. HW

Description: Deputy Commander Dogrel,

now serving with the imperial forces, is summoned to meet with Empress Eriadna. Since Dogrel originally hails from Randel, the empress asks him if he thought that the Randel military would ever rise up against their monarch. Dogrel responds that normally they would avoid such action if at all possible. However, given the current change in attitude that Junna has promoted, the Randel military may just do that.

Eriadna is surprised that he is aware of the problems. Dogrel tells her that news of the unrest is running rampant through the imperial units, the news being quite alarming to the Randel nationals serving in the imperial divisions. Because of the Great War, the Randel armed forces are horribly undermanned and under-financed. Junna has done very little to rebuild them to their former selves; instead promoting the pacifist and artistic doctrines encouraged by her Immortal, Alphatia.

In its weakened condition, the troops are worried that Randel's neighbors may take advantage of the situation and strike. He specifically mentions the Kingdom of Bettelwyn and the long-standing animosity that the two kingdoms have for each other. Dogrel cites that if such aggressions occur, it is expected that most Randel-born imperial troops will not merely stand by and watch. He adds that the Randel troops have a good number of allies within the imperial forces, allies that may join them.

Eriadna contemplates what Dogrel has just said. After a few moments, she orders Dogrel to assemble an imperial force to go to Randel to offer a show of imperial resolve. She offers Dogrel the use of one imperial man-of-war and two smaller *skyships*. Though each vessel will retain their present crew complements, Dogrel is given free reign in choosing his imperial marines and boltmen. Eriadna instructs him not to get involved in any of the political troubles, but merely be in the kingdom as a visual deterrent to any aggressions from outside forces. Officially, Dogrel's forces will be undergoing training maneuvers.

Dogrel accepts the command and is

dismissed to begin making his preparations. By day's end he has dispatched a number of orders requesting specific platoons. Most of his manpower requests are to come from nearby units, thus shortening their deployment time. The *skyships* are being supplied and made ready to sail. Dogrel expects to leave in but a few short days. (*See Th. 21, Fe. 1; Fy. 1, Am. 7.*)

What This Means: The rumblings of discontent that have so prevailed in Randel have reached Eriadna's ears. The matter is a very difficult one for her to resolve. Unlike most Alphatian kingdoms, Randel has traditionally been very solid domestically. Though undesirable to herself and most of Alphatia, Randel's militarist attitude has also been a valued commodity to protecting imperial interests when the empire needed it.

Though the Alphatians have yet to fully understand the powers of the *Spell of Preservation*, Eriadna doubts that Junna's doctrines will prevail. The militarist mindset is far too ingrained in the Randel people and their society to be removed with a few decrees. She feels that eventually the military will have had enough and lead the populace to rise up against Junna. Though Eriadna is sympathetic to her plight, she does not want to have to interfere with a local matter. To do so would draw criticism from other kingdom rulers that could see such actions as the imperial throne imposing its will upon the individual kingdoms.

Eriadna's biggest concern is the state of Randel's armed forces. In their current state, most of the regular forces have either been integrated into imperial divisions or are stranded out on the Outer World. There is no basis to rebuild their losses, thus leaving a void in part of the empire's defenses. Likewise she has to think about Randel's security. Nothing prevents Alphatian kingdoms from warring with each other. The traditional rivalry and animosity with Bettelwyn has survived their transplanting to the Hollow World. If any kingdom uses Randel's demise to their situation it would have to be Bettelwyn, who has reportedly been mobilizing troops.

If Bettelwyn invades Randel, it is quite possible that the current Randel defenses will fail. The conflict could spread as Randel's allies mobilize to the kingdom's defense; Stonewall and Eadrin are the most likely candidates. There is also the very possible response from the imperial armed forces: there is a sizable Randel presence in them ; same thing for Stonewall and Eadrin. Also, the empire's military has strong ties to Randel, many trained there or served alongside them. It is very possible that war could lead to a destabilization of the imperial forces and throw the southeastern portion of the continent into turmoil.

Eriadna probably could influence Queen Llynara to avoid conflict with Randel. However such displays of favoritism would reflect badly upon Eriadna and offer her opponents fodder to accuse her of imposing on the private lives of Alphatians. To do so would be almost as bad as sending in imperial troops to handle the matter. To quell this problem she will have to use guile and restraint.

The empress has opted to send Dogrel to Randel with a small detachment of troops. She hopes that their presence will act as a deterrent to any thoughts of Bettelwyn aggression. Since Dogrel is from Randel, he should realize the full ramifications of the situation and act accordingly to Randel's best interests. Likewise, his Randel background should limit the possibilities of the military acting against him or his troops. If he fails, he can be made a scapegoat; if he succeeds, he does so in the name of the *imperium*—she wins either way.

For his part, Dogrel is quite interested in the assignment. For Randel, the safety of the kingdom is a priority. Likewise, he sees the venture as a potential boon to his career. Though his orders are explicit, he contemplates his possible involvement if it will remedy the domestic situation. Likewise, he will probably involve his troops if Bettelwyn does choose to invade. To bolster his own strength, Dogrel has specifically requested imperial troops that come from Randel or have strong ties to it.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs sympathetic to Randel causes may find themselves hired by Dogrel to accompany his forces into Randel. There, they could be used as specialized troops or even used to execute Dogrel's wishes without directly involving imperial troops. Or the PCs could be hired by Eriadna to accompany Dogrel to keep an eye on his actions, in case he unilaterally sides with Randel.

Felmont 8, AC 1017: A Necromancer Usurped.

Location: Torenal Site, Sunken Arogansa Nayce. AS

Description: The necromancer Pidimigd is summoned to appear before Commander Deltart and his staff to report on his progress with the ghoul threat. Pidimigd cites little progress in the matter of the ghoul's tale of the *Phylactery of Agmas*. He requests additional funding and personnel to expand his search for knowledge on the phylactery.

Deltart tells the necromancer that additional support would be difficult to gain. He asks Pidimigd what he has managed to uncover so far. All Pidimigd can offer is that the item was possessed by an Alphatian mage named Talerad. He cites that the mage kept the item under close guard and never revealed any of its secrets to posterity.

Though disheartened by this minuscule amount of information, Deltart nods approvingly to the report and produces a document bearing the seal of the Nayce Council. He hands it to the necromancer to read. Its contents reveal the official orders commanding Deltart to recommit Pidimigd to the ghoul threat if he has yet to uncover any information. The matter of the phylactery will be assumed by other unnamed mages for the time being.

Surprisingly, Pidimigd is apparently unconcerned about this change. He apologizes to Deltart for his inability to provide the answers needed in the council's time frame. He accepts his change with enthusiasm, even citing that focusing on the ghouls should take priority. The

necromancer requests that he be allowed to invite several of his colleagues to assist him, citing their assistance would hasten the discovery of a solution. Pidimigd also requests that he be deployed away from Torenal Site, where he may conduct his researches without alarming others. He suggests that he go to Bluenose to establish a facility there. That would also allow him to study the undead living there. Deltart agrees to the requests and the necromancer leaves to prepare dispatches to contact these colleagues. (*See Kl. 27, Fe. 3; Fe. 22, Fe. 27.*)

What This Means: With an official realization that the ghouls are indeed a threat, the council has made resolving the undead presence a priority. With Pidimigd already on hand, they have ordered his expertise redirected back to the ghouls; what he was brought there to deal with in the first place.

Pidimigd really is unconcerned about the transition of duties. He has exhausted his own resources with little added information coming forth on the *Phylactery of Agmas*. He still desires to study the item, but feels that it is definitely connected to the ghouls. Magely pride also causes him to resent Terari's intrusion; however, he knows that Terari is too powerful to oppose, either politically or in magic. If Terari wants to assume the project then so be it.

Pidimigd seeks redemption in the undead at Bluenose. He reconciles that they are far more interesting than the simple ghouls and mythical phylactery. He even has his doubts as to the artifact actually existing. Gaining an understanding of the strange undead would be more prestigious. Gaining control of them would increase his personal power immensely.

What the PCs Can Do: Terari will need the service of PCs to act as his proxies and report to him any findings they make that may be important to his quest. Terari cannot conduct all the investigations about the *Phylactery of Agmas* himself, busy as he is, but if the PCs find anything important he will come to meet the PCs face to face and gather from them whatever they have

discovered and possibly lead or send them into further (more dangerous, maybe) artifact research. This is a good opportunity for the PCs to get involved in Terari's quest, even though they may not at first be aware of the importance of their investigation, or even of the real name of their patron. Helping Terari on his quest may also give Companion to Master level PCs their first clues as to what lies ahead and how they might reach Immortality themselves.

Felmont 8, AC 1017: The Defeat of Los Matónes.

Location: Town of Ciudad Real, *Baronía de Gargoña*. SC

Description: The Narvaezan forces of *Barón* Hugo have been defeated now in two minor battles in western Gargoña by the Saragón/Guadalante alliance during the last six weeks of skirmishing between the two sides. His forces have been pushed all the way back to Gargoña's capital, Ciudad Real. The elite Narvaezan troops known as the Los Matónes draw up in front of the town in order to allow the main Narvaezan troops time to cross the *Río Copos* which will give them a better defensive position. Armed with cannon, Los Matónes hold fast against an assault by Guadalantan cavalry and Saragóner infantry. The Guadalantans begin taking heavy casualties from grapeshot when a party of Saragóner mages and archers, who have crept to the rear of Los Matónes, unveil a barrage of spells and arrows. Highly disciplined Torreóner mercenaries then charge the Narvaezan ranks and split the Los Matónes' line. Most manage to flee across the *Río Copos* while the remainder are slaughtered as the Saragón/Guadalante forces rally and continue their attack. (*See Ya. 14, Ya. 27; Fe. 11, Fe. 20.*)

What This Means: This is a major victory for Saragón and Guadalante. They have broken the morale of the Narvaezan soldiers who have seen their most elite unit defeated in battle and the majority of their newly constructed cannons captured. *Barón* Hugo is beginning to become desperate. He

fervently prays for divine intervention from his patron immortal Ixion.

Felmont 8, AC 1017: Infiltrator Caught!

Location: Town of Polakatsikes, Dominion of Polakatsikes, Heldannic Empire, Meghala Kimata Plains. DV

Description: Amid much fanfare, the Heldannic authorities of Polakatsikes announce that they have captured a Mivosian spy, who, after lengthy interrogation, has confessed to the attack on the granaries in Yarthmont, as well as the poisoning of the well—also in that month. He is paraded through the streets in chains, while Governor Wolfgang Stemmel announces to the townsfolk that his soldiers discovered the man’s whereabouts after a lengthy investigation and he is being shown to them as the vile criminal that he is. Some Polakatsikans, venting their frustrations that have built up over the past few months, throw garbage at the purported Mivosian spy, while others jeer.

After dragging the man through the main streets, his escort of Heldannic Knights marches him into the market, which has been converted into an execution square for the occasion. Wolfgang recites the man’s crimes in front of the assembled throng and then gives the order for the executioner to do his work. In short order, the prisoner is beheaded and his head is placed in a stake, which will be mounted atop one of the walls. As the head is taken away, Wolfgang gives a brief speech to the assembled townsfolk, telling them that justice has been served and that Vanya always watches over Her loyal followers, whoever they may be. (*See Fe. 4, Fe. 6; Fe. 11, Fe. 23.*)

What This Means: Wolfgang was well aware of the fact that the people of Polakatsikes desperately needed some good news, something to feel positive about, which would forestall any revolt due to the onerous conditions of the siege. The recent apprehension of the Mivosian in question proved to be a veritable godsend; the man did indeed carry out the attack on the granaries, though his “confession” of

poisoning the well was fabricated. Wolfgang felt that the capture of the man who performed both deeds would better soothe public anxieties; the truth need never be known.

Nevertheless, the execution of the saboteur will boost morale somewhat over the next few days and it is hoped that the placement of his head atop a stake, for the Mivosians to see, will send a message to them that their efforts at infiltration have been uncovered. In the meantime, Wolfgang has ordered some of his knights to follow up on other aspects of the man’s confessions, namely, the identities of other Mivosian saboteurs. In the weeks to come, the hunt will be on for these other people.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are with the Heldannic Knights, the PCs can try to hunt down the other infiltrators, but the task will not be easy, as these people will be disguised and they may have tried to change their identities by now. Also, the Mivosian spies will not be helpless; many are at least mid-level thieves and some of them are proficient fighters. If they are Mivosian infiltrators, the PCs will have to be especially careful to avoid capture.

Felmont 8, AC 1017: Clashes in the Kerothars.

Location: Kerothar Mountains, Kingdom of Frisland, Floating Continent of Alpathia, Alpathian Empire. HW

Description: The army from Stonewall is attacked by a white dragon. They suffer some casualties, but the dragon is eventually driven off. (*See Ya. 27, Kl. 11; Fe. 16, Fe. 22.*)

What This Means: The Kerothar Mountains that lie in Frisland are infested with lots of monsters; this attack is only the first. During the march, the army is likely to meet other monsters, such as griffons, giants, orc raiders, trolls and a wyvern or two. Actually, the army leaders will be slightly surprised that there are so many monsters—there are more than they expected and they are far more hostile, as they expected the monsters to leave such a large army alone.

What the PCs Can Do: These monsters are really a problem for the army, because the regular troops will take casualties with each attack. Any PCs would be assigned to an advance scouting party that functions as a monster-hunter group, whose goal it is to prevent the army from falling into an ambush and to kill hostile monsters before they can attack the army. Needless to say, this is excellent opportunity for monster bashing and perhaps the odd dungeon crawl in some larger monster's lair (such as a dragon's).

Felmont 8, AC 1017: Definitely Not Alone!

Location: Central Finsterwald, Territory of Heldland, Heldannic Empire. NW

Description: While continuing their invasion of the Finsterwald, the Heldannic force finally encounters Count Helmut Jaschke's men—from behind! Before the rear guard can react, they are cut down by lightly-armed warriors clad in leather armor. Meanwhile, the front ranks are hammered by waves of *magic missiles* and *bold person* spells, effectively sowing disarray among the ranks. Soon, the rear guard of the Heldannic force rallies and heavier arms and armor begin to wear away at the attackers—at least, those who are not too nimble to avoid the blows.

Soon, it becomes apparent that, although there do not appear to be very many attackers—no more than 300 or so—they know the terrain much better and are able to withdraw quickly if injured. The Heldannic force, meanwhile, has become bogged down, trying to maintain its position while staging an effective counterattack—something very difficult since they are less maneuverable. Nevertheless, the force is able to hold its ground and Helmut's warriors are forced to melt into the surrounding forests. (*See Fe. 4, Fe. 7; Fe. 10.*)

What This Means: Though this battle may seem to be major, it is not. Helmut wished to test the strength of the invaders and determine what strategies they would use when pressed. He knows that, with the support of many of the local villagers, his

forces can sustain themselves—and hide—for a long time if necessary, whereas the Heldannic soldiers must rely on their rations, hunt, or forage. In total, Helmut lost around 70 men today and his enemies lost almost 200.

What the PCs Can Do: As with many battles, this is a chance for individual PCs to distinguish themselves.

Felmont 8, AC 1017: Peace—a Beginning.

Location: Ruins of Castle Aknar, Duchy of Vrancea, Confederacy of Klagorst. WB

Description: Naarn's envoys reach the camp of the Klagorst army, which is now located near the ruins of Castle Aknar. When they make their proposal, the leaders of the army decide to have a meeting to decide on the matter. After hours of debate, they come to the conclusion that the peace, now, is the most desirable outcome, because they are in a position of clear advantage. If the war goes on and something goes wrong, they could lose all that they have gained up to this point. They tell the envoys that they want to meet the surviving leaders of the Vrancean-Gournzeean army. (*See Fe. 2, Fe. 5; Fe. 14, Fe. 15.*)

What This Means: There is also another problem and the Klagorst rulers are aware of this: most of the armies of the Klagorst states are not professional soldiers, they are all civilians, farmers, or city-dwellers. The main problem of this region is the fact that the frequent wars kill the civil population, damaging greatly the economy of all the states... and already a lot of men are dead. This was the deciding factor governing the Klagorst army's decision.

What the PCs Can Do: Carry on the war, if they are convincing enough to the Klagorst leaders.

Felmont 8, AC 1017: Defection in the Royal Navy.

Location: High Seas, Somewhere south of Kingdom of Bellayne. SC

Description: A royal navy flotilla of four

sloops, Magic, Mandate, Martial and Mystic, under the command of Commodore Bassetlaw, do not return from a routine patrol of the waters due south of Bellayne during a heavy squall. Investigation by other royal navy vessels reveals debris as if from a sunken vessel, but no sign of any bodies. It is assumed, after some time, that the ships were sunk in the storm.

In actual fact, the sloops defected from the king's forces in favor of the parliament. One ship was scuttled in an attempt to deceive investigation, the other three set sail for distant Porto Escorpião, to seek Vilaverdan sanctuary. (*See Kl. 27, Fe. 3; Fe. 11, Fe. 19.*)

What This Means: The parliament knows of Bassetlaw's defection, but at present can provide no support, lacking the required port facilities. Bassetlaw has thus decided to hide out in Porto Escorpião until he can do something more concrete to assist the parliament in the upcoming struggle.

Felmont 9, AC 1017: Thyatian Punitive Expedition Invades Dythestia.

Location: Emirate of Dythestia, Emirates of Ylaruam. OW

Description: The Imperial Senate of Thyatis issues a declaration of war against Ylaruam. Immediately, several thousand Thyatians, consisting of the Hespirian Tagmata, its baggage column and several hundred Thyatian brigands, march out of the pass of Biazzan and into Dythestia. The brigands spread out through the Emirate of Dythestia, looting and burning, while the main Thyatian column marches to Ctesiphon and puts it under siege. (*See Kl. 10; Fy. 5, Fy. 9.*)

What This Means: This is the beginning of the Thyatian campaign to punish Ylaruam for its previous attacks against Thyatis. The band of brigands, numbering around 300 persons, had been operating in the southern Altan Tepes for years. They were recently cornered by imperial troops and approached with a proposition: they could be killed and enslaved if they resisted, or they could move into Ylaruam to continue their thieving ways, with the support of the Thyatian army.

They chose the latter. The Thyatian forces will build a fortified camp outside Ctesiphon, set up siege artillery and begin to batter the walls with occasional pot-shots. They do not conduct any assaults and seem content to wait until the small town is starved into submission. Their camp is situated so as to allow easy supply and communication to and from Biazzan. In Ylaruam, when the sultan hears of the attack, he orders his troops to march to the relief of Ctesiphon.

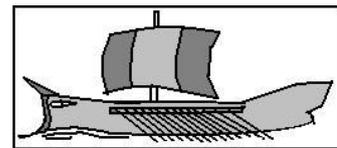
What the PCs Can Do: Characters can participate in the war on both sides, sabotaging the other side's efforts and attempting to advance their own cause.

Felmont 9, AC 1017: Bardeen Gets Allies.

Location: *Jarldom* of Nordenhafen, Great Bay. NW

Description:

At the end of the trial period for Baron Bardeen,



Overlord h'Caramore returns to the Isle of Nordenhafen to reprimand the *jarl* for his treacherous protection of the pirates (who haven't stopped their raiding) and to remove him from his seat of power. His intentions are backed by four Alphan war galleys, a small contingent of soldiers from Kameloth and he is accompanied by Duke Shuren of Kameloth. To the two warlords' great surprise, their expedition is halted out of Nordenhafen's harbor by four ships bearing the Ostlander royal flag, which demand an audience with the overlord. A royal ambassador of King Hordson then boards the Alphan flagship and announces that Nordenhafen is now an Ostlander protectorate and that if the Alphan troops invade its waters, it will be considered an act of war against Ostland. Also, the Ostlander ambassador publicly complains about the murder of King Hordson's most trusted advisor, Oberack, perpetrated by Duke Shuren and orders the Norwold lord to leave Nordenhafen immediately. Albeit

reluctantly, Lord h'Caramore must change the ships' course, directing them towards the near Bay of Kameloth, without engaging the treacherous Ostlanders. (*See Th. 20, Kl. 10; Fe. 23.*)

What This Means: After Ericall's ultimatum, Bardeen's position was desperately unstable. As a last resort, he asked the leader of the Ostlanders for a way to escape this situation and the pirate, Kleng Bloodhand (who once was Oberack's second in command) came up with a political solution. If Nordenhafen was formally under another nation's control, invading it would be a capital offense that could lead to war. For this reason he had Bardeen openly reveal his loyalty to the Ostlander crown and he acted as official Ostlander ambassador sealing the agreement using Oberack's royal seal. He will then send a longship to Ostland to inform King Hordson of the situation, hoping he will send more ships to protect Nordenhafen. In the meantime, he has gained precious time to organize a defense of the isle, should King Ericall attack it nonetheless.

What the PCs Can Do: To stop piracy yet not attack the new Ostlander protectorate, the overlord may hire the PCs to conduct either diplomatic or covert operations.

Felmont 9, AC 1017: Strangers on the Frontier.

Location: Territory of Thratia, Hinterlands, Thyatian Empire. DV

Description: A Thyatian outpost not far from the southern boundaries of Thratia is surprised by the approach of a band of almost a hundred ragged men, women and children from the surrounding jungle. After a moment's tenseness, the outpost commander realizes that the newcomers have no hostile intent and demands to know their business. He is surprised by one man's response, given in a language that is not Thyatian. The commander summons one of his mages, who, through the use of magic, manages to communicate with the newcomers, who identify themselves as

refugees from the village of Miletos, which lay several hundred miles to the south. The Miletans beg shelter from the Thyatians, saying that their homeland has been torn asunder by war and that they seek only safe lands in which to settle.

After pondering the foreigner's words, the commander lets the refugees into his compound, whereupon he orders his soldiers to provide what food and medical attention they can. (*See Fe. 27, Fy. 26.*)

What This Means: The people of Miletos, like many people of the northern Meghala Kimata Plains, were forced to abandon their homes due to the ongoing conflict between the Mivosian legions and the Heldannic Knights, the fallout of which has laid waste to many towns and villages. Feeling that the plains were no longer safe, the Miletans decided to head north, into the jungles, where it was rumored a great empire was said to exist. Although they found no sign of the empire, they were lucky enough to avoid the local Hinterlander tribes long enough to find this outpost.

The Miletans will stay here a few days in order to recuperate and in exchange for the hospitality they will provide the Thyatians with information about the Mivosians (who are well known to the Miletans) and the Heldannic Knights (who are more of a mystery). Afterwards, they will be escorted northwards to safer territory.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs stationed at this outpost could be assigned the task of escorting the refugees northwards, a mission sure to be fraught with peril as hostile Hinterlanders, monsters and other threats are likely to lie in their path. Alternatively, if the PCs are originally from one of the Milenian city-states, this encounter provides a means for them to enter the Hinterlands and from there to venture farther afield. If any of the PCs are Kastelian, they may be of use here, in that they may speak Thyatian as well—though the refugees speak a different dialect of Milenian, such PCs could act as translators.

Felmont 10, AC 1017: Free as a Dove.

Location: Keep of Drax Tallen, Forest of Geffron, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: After three days of interrogation and torture, Dove finally gives away the truth about his identity and the way he came to Drax Tallen to his captors. The commander of the keep, General Grumman, immediately sends forth a messenger to Idris Tower to report to the high priestess on the situation and Dove is returned to his cell.

Later in the night, however, great commotion is caused in the keep's parade ground by a stealth attack made by Sylarion's undead forces. While the soldiers are busy repelling the vampire elves, some other elves belonging to the army of Durifern and Beasthunter sneak into the dungeons using the hidden tunnels that run all the way below Drax Tallen's hill. They manage to free some of the prisoners before being discovered and retreating through those same tunnels the Shadow Army used to escape the elves' siege just the year before. Still unknown to them, one of the people rescued is an incredulous Christopher Dove. (*See Fe. 3, Fe. 7; Fe. 13, Fe. 18.*)

What This Means: This time it isn't just a question of luck for Dove. The attack had been planned for some weeks by Sylarion and Durifern, but just the night before the Grunalf clanmaster got a really vivid dream that told him of assaulting the keep the day after. Being a person that believes in omens, Durifern ordered the attack just as the dream instructed him and it turned out to be more successful than he expected. In fact, the Korrigans (the nine eleven protectors of Wendar and the northern elves) sent the dream omen to Durifern, urging him to act before Dove was killed or moved to another location. The Korrigans have allied with Diamond and are using Dove to give the elves in Denagoth more information on their enemy, Idris, hoping they will be able to resist Her armies and overthrow Her evil kingdom.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are with the elves they have an assault to participate in—they can fight the

Denagothians, or be sent as stealth scouts to free the captives, or assassinate key leaders, or prevent the defense from organizing itself too fast by any way they can. For imprisoned PCs, this is a chance to escape.

Felmont 10, AC 1017: Karameikos Refuses Request.

Location: City of Mirros, Kingdom of Karameikos. OW

Description: After some thinking, Stefan Karameikos reaches his decision quickly. He sends word to the Five Shires that the Karameikan navy will certainly assist any legitimate hin vessels against attacks on the high seas. At the same time, he recommends that the hin simply cease piratical attacks against Thyatian vessels; surely Thyatis will then also stop. When the hin learn of Stefan's reply, they react with anger and disappointment. (*See Fl. 23, Fe. 1; Fy. 6, Fy. 8.*)

What This Means: Stefan just got official recognition from Thyatis and doesn't want to spoil good relations by helping hin pirates. The hin, for their part, will be will be disappointed in the king, especially after they helped him oust Ludwig von Hendriks.

Felmont 10, AC 1017: Selenican Tensions Ease.

Location: City of Selenica, Republic of Darokin. OW

Description: A celebration is held in honor of the al-Azrad merchant house, for all of the good works they have accomplished on behalf of Selenica and the republic in the 150+ years since its founding by Ylari traders.

What This Means: With the reopening of Ylari borders, tensions between True Believers and non-Ylari in Selenica ease somewhat. DDC agents have been working overtime to help facilitate goodwill throughout the city. This holiday is held to demonstrate what the unity of Darokinian and Ylari peoples in Selenica has brought. For a time, at least, all ill will is forgotten.

Felmont 10, AC 1017: All's Calm....And Then the Storm!

Location: Central Finsterwald, Territory of Heldland, Heldannic Empire. NW

Description: The Heldannic invasion force, having recovered from their skirmish with Count Helmut Jaschke's men, happen upon a small settlement nestled within a clearing by a small river. After the scouts report no inhabitants, the remainder of the force moves into the village, finding that, interestingly enough, the original inhabitants appear to have left no more than a few hours previously—some of them even left food on the table. After restocking their supplies with goods taken from the handful of homes scattered throughout the clearing they prepare to resume their march... only to find the village surrounded by leather-clad men and elves, along with a handful of what appear to be Heldannic Knights!

At first thinking the newcomers are fellow knights and local allies, one of the force's commanders makes his way to meet them, only to be driven away by a near miss from a *lightning bolt*. Shocked, he demands angrily to know what is going on and is answered coolly by one of the knights, who introduces himself as Count Helmut Jaschke. He calmly informs the Heldannic force that they are not welcome in the Finsterwald and while he would like to avoid excessive violence, he would not be above killing every one of them if they so much as raise a weapon. He tells them as well that he has the knights surrounded and that should he be injured or killed, no one will be spared. He then makes the invaders an offer: if they hand over their weapons, they will be escorted, unharmed, out of the Finsterwald. The commander seems to think on the matter and with a quick hand signal orders his crossbowmen to open fire—surprising the other commanders!

The ensuing battle is quick, but decisive. Although heavily wounded by the volley, Helmut manages to slay the commander, while the bulk of the Heldannic force is cut down by several arrow volleys. Before the invaders can recover from the first

counterattack, many are knocked out by *sleep* and *cloudkill* spells and much of the remainder, seeing what has happened, flee through what breaks in the enemy ranks they can find and seek shelter in the forest. (See *Fe. 7, Fe. 8.*)

What This Means: Helmut's forces tested the invading Heldannic soldiers' strengths during the previous skirmish and he decided to bring the bulk of his force to bear and eliminate them as soon as possible. He was fortunate in that there was little communication at that time amongst the Heldannic commanders, otherwise they might have recovered from the shock of the counterattack. Nonetheless, this battle has been a victory for Helmut's warriors; less than 200 of the invaders fled into the forest and few of those will return home.

What the PCs Can Do: If they were serving with the Heldannic force, try to survive!

Felmont 10, AC 1017: Ghost Ship near Maelstrom.

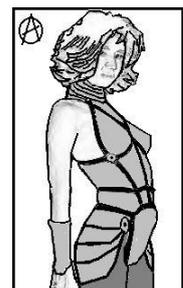
Location: Sundsvall Maelstrom, Nayce. AS

Description: A Naycese naval patrol near the Sundsvall Maelstrom report sighting of an unidentified ship with torn riggings and half-broken mast. The patrol tries to close and board, but the mysterious ship evades their approach every time. Any later attempts at locating the ghost ship fail. (See *Ya. 12; Fy. 16, Sv. 23.*)

Felmont 11, AC 1017: I Thought You Said They Couldn't Touch Us...

Location: Town of Polakatsikes, Dominion of Polakatsikes, Heldannic Empire, Meghala Kimata Plains. DV

Description: The Mivosian camp is thrown into disarray as, during the night, several catapults are set on fire, their crews apparently killed in their sleep. As soldiers attempt to put out the fires, more chaos erupts towards



the rear of the camp, as a number of supply tents are ransacked, with their guards killed before they can raise an alarm. The Mivosian commander, furious over suffering such an attack, orders 200 men into the surrounding countryside, with explicit instructions to search every possible hiding place for the attackers. (See *Fe. 6, Fe. 8; Fe. 23, Fe. 26.*)

What This Means: Wolfgang Stemmel's plan to sow chaos in the Mivosian plan appears to have worked. During the night, a group of 20 Heldannic soldiers (some of them thieves) climbed down a shadowed portion of the wall, sneaked into the enemy camp and commenced their work. These people are now on the loose and thanks to their acquisition of some Mivosian supplies, they will be able to continue their operations for some time.

What the PCs Can Do: Presumably, the PCs could be among the Heldannic raiders.

Felmont 11, AC 1017: Richard Croft Arms the People.

Location: Town of Blackheath, Bishopric of Kittings, Kingdom of Bellayne. SC

Description: Richard Croft, prominent Belbionite parliamentary member, puts forward a motion in the parliament that his home town of Blackheath should be authorized to raise regiments for the parliament—and forwards money, augmented by his own personal wealth, to accomplish this. (See *Fe. 3, Fe. 8; Fe. 19, Fy. 2.*)

What This Means: The parliament's army continues to swell with new recruits. The king is having much more difficulty in western Bellayne to arouse the peasantry.

Felmont 11, AC 1017: Knife Fodder.

Location: Village of Oziloco, Azcan Empire. HW

Description: The village of Oziloco is ruthlessly attacked by a warband. Valuables that can be taken are stolen, especially grain and the rest burned. The villagers, mostly farmers and hunters, are taken into captivity. (See *Va. 8; Fy. 18, Am. 24.*)

What This Means: The band are followers of Atzanteotl, who now acquire their sacrificial victims from raids, within or outside of the Azcan Empire. Events such as this one will happen frequently throughout the empire and beyond its borders.

What the PCs Can Do: Small parties like the PCs may be attacked by followers of Atzanteotl while traveling in or near the Azcan Empire. Their tactics are to subdue and capture the PCs, so that they can later be sacrificed, rather than killing them outright; if the PCs appear to be a match for them, they will not hesitate to hit to kill, though.

Felmont 11, AC 1017: Grim Discoveries.

Location: Nameless Tower, Eastern Forest of Geffron, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: The Shadow Lord manages to locate the Nameless Tower after a few days of searching the northern area of Geffron. After breaching the lower levels of the tower and confronting a few minor guardians, Landryn must however stop before gaining access to the third and upper stories. He has recognized one of the warding glyphs posed at the entrance of the third level as being a distance alarm: he knows that if he bypasses it without *dispelling* it, it may warn the high priestess that somebody is entering these chambers. However, another nearby glyph works as anti-*dispelling* device, rendering all *dispelling* in the area useless. Scorned and angered at his inability to proceed further, he decides to exit the tower and *teleports* away. (See *Fe. 3, Fe. 7; Fe. 13, Fe. 14.*)

What This Means: After escaping Idris's dungeons, the Shadow Lord planned on storming the Nameless Tower to search for his phylactery there. In fact, based on Professor Dove's information, the Shadow Lord has determined that the high priestess must be in control of that tower and that if the phylactery wasn't hidden in her private chambers in Idris Tower, then it must be hidden somewhere in a most secret and safer

place: the Nameless Tower (whose existence he wasn't even aware of until Dove's tales!). The fact the place is so well protected is frustrating to him, so he has decided to postpone the recovery of his phylactery until he gets a good idea.

Felmont 11, AC 1017: The Measure of Diplomacy.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: DDC negotiators and Thyatian officials reach an agreement that they both hope will resolve the trade difficulties. Both sides agree to have their customs officials return to business as usual—no more inordinate delays and too-strict inspections of each other's commerce. Thyatis agrees to lower its currency exchange rate from 10% to 5%. They also agree to a two-year exception for trade conducted by House Linton from the excise fee that was passed in Thyatis earlier this year.

The Darokinian negotiators bring up the subject of trade in the Old World in general. Over the last decade, many trade avenues have been cut off as places grew more dangerous or closed to outsiders. Since the expansion and recovery of trade is important to both the Western Defense League nations and the Thyatian Empire, they propose that all the parties send representatives to Darokin City to discuss ways of encouraging the recovery of trade in the region. The Thyatians agree to send such representatives and participate in the talks. The league also formally recognizes Minrothad as a part of the Thyatian Empire. Everyone agrees to cooperate on achieving open trade within the liberated areas of Sind, to help that area recover. (*See Kl. 22, Fe. 4; Fy. 6.*)

What This Means: This agreement puts an end to the growing trade war, though some frictions will still continue. The DDC wanted the Thyatians to eliminate the excise fee, but when they couldn't get that they pushed for a reduction in currency conversion rates and the Thyatians agreed. Piracy, especially, will go on however,

because officially neither side acknowledges that there is any piracy being conducted by their side. In fact, the governments couldn't do that much about the pirates if they had agreed to curb it, because their influence over the pirates is limited at best. The best they could hope would be to cooperate in fighting them, but neither side is prepared to go that far yet.

This deal will benefit House Linton, eventually restoring its position in the hierarchy of Darokin's Ruling Houses. But much of the growth of House Linton will end up coming at the expense of other non-Thyatian trade enterprises. This is due to the fact that the empire will continue to support the resurgence of its own merchants by a variety of means (including the loan program, insurance syndicates and the like). The expansion of House Linton largely at the expense of fellow league-based traders will cause a bit of dissension within their ranks. This will not be too severe, however, because as a result of this agreement trade in general will begin to recover and grow. Thus, everyone stands to profit in the end.

Though all the nations agreed on open trade in Sind, each hopes to dominate that market in the areas that have been liberated from Hulean occupation. Right now, Darokin and the rest of the Western Defense League definitely have the advantage, though. And they plan to keep it.

What the PCs Can Do: Characters engaging in trade will find things a bit less difficult now.

Felmont 11, AC 1017: The Rise of the Dead.

Location: Town of Ciudad de Maticán, *Baronía de Saragón*. SC

Description: Terrified peasants flood into the capital of Saragón this evening, fleeing a horrible menace. *Don Luis de Manzanas*, acting as regent while *Barón Balthazar* is fighting in Gargoña, spies a man he knows in the crowd of refugees and questions him about the horror that they are fleeing from. The man, *Varez de Dragao*, a former retainer of *Don Claudio de Tolón*, tells

Manzanas that an army of undead appeared from the swampy *Bosque de las Sombras* (the creepy forest that lies on Saragón's western border) two days ago and has been ravaging the countryside ever since. What is worse, though, is that the undead are led by none other than *Don Claudio* himself—who now appears to be a lich. Every attempt made by local priests to turn the undead have failed and now the army of the dead bears down on Ciudad Matacán! Manzanas immediately orders his troops to man the walls of the city and to assist refugees in moving north to his personal dominion where he feels they will be safer. (See *Ya. 27, Fe. 8; Fe. 20, Fe. 22.*)

What This Means: The army of the dead is indeed led by *Don Claudio*. When he was alive, *Don Claudio* was Baronet of Montejo, a dominion in the south of Saragón. However, he disappeared at the beginning of last year with his hunting party on the edge of the *bosque*. The undead that now comprise his army are mainly soldiers from conflicts inside the *bosque* that have taken place over the centuries. They have been animated and are now controlled by a very powerful necromancer who is in the service of higher beings himself—perhaps Thanatos or even worse. Luis de Manzanas is in a bad position and he knows it. Most of Saragón's army is in Gargoña fighting Narvaez and he knows that Guadalante has few new forces to send. His only hope is to send heroes to try and find a way to repel or deflect the invading horde.

What the PCs Can Do: Characters can be the agents sent to deal with *Don Claudio*. Luis de Manzanas wants to get the characters to find a way to end the threat to Saragón. At the instigation of an agent of Hule, they're to try and re-direct the menace into the depths of western Brun. The rationale used for this is because in its present defenseless state, it is not believed that Saragón can defeat the invaders. The Hulean agent, however, has also influenced the baronials with a fear for expanding Zuyevo.

Felmont 13, AC 1017: Expedition to the East.

Location: Town of Julinius, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Ennius Necrekis, son of the wizard Apuleius, leaves the port of Julinius, heading eastward. The purpose of the mission is not revealed to anyone, but curious people watch him leave and notice that he has with him some well-known archaeologists and adventuring scholars. (See *Fe. 1; Am. 7, Ei. 12.*)

What This Means: Simplicius Galea, a renowned archaeologist and adventurer, discovered last year a Thothian document in a library in Dunadale that suggests the existence of pro-Alphatian communities of Thyatians who left the mainland after the revolt of BC 2. Galea has contacted Ennius, who has organized an archaeological expedition to the Isle of Dawn. However, he has decided to keep it secret for various reasons (nationalists, the theft of the document from Dunadale and desire to reveal everything when he is sure of the authenticity of the claims).

What the PCs Can Do: Player characters interested in ancient history could well be part of the expedition.

Felmont 13, AC 1017: Return of the Shadow Lord.

Location: Aeleris Pits, Forest of Geffron, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: During his nightly inspection of the grounds around the pits, Sylarion is surprised by the sudden appearance of his former master, the Shadow Lord. Resisting the temptation to flee to a safer location, Sylarion tries to hide his fear and confronts the necromancer's accusations without flinching. When questioned upon his deeds and his current loyalty, the vampire elf calmly explains that he doesn't serve the elves nor Idris and that he has never served the Shadow Lord either. Surprised and intrigued by the elf's reply, Landryn agrees to locate a more private place to parlay and to discuss the future of

Sylarion and his troops. (*See Fe. 7, Fe. 11; Fe. 14, Fe. 16.*)

What This Means: After escaping from Idris Tower with the *Black Staff* of the carnifex and his vain attempt to breach the defenses of the Nameless Tower, the Shadow Lord stopped briefly in a secret hideout near Drax Tallen to lick his wounds and assess the current situation in Denagoth. Once news of the betrayal of Sylarion came to him, he decided to seek him out and confront him with his treachery, to understand what kind of game the vampire elf is playing now. Impressed by the boldness in the vampire's words, Landryn has agreed to hear Sylarion's explanations for his actions, hoping to find a powerful ally to use against the Church of Idris, to overthrow its yoke over Denagoth once and for all... to be replaced by his unchallenged mastery, obviously.

Felmont 14, AC 1017: Trade Depot Created.

Location: Southeastern coast of the Isle of Dawn, at the base of the Great Escarpment. SD

Description: Using a creative interpretation of the Treaty of Dawn, the Thyatians lay claim to the southeastern coast of the Isle of Dawn, at the base of the Great Escarpment. They send government and trade agents to establish a settlement in a convenient cove along the shore, which lays just north of the eastern tip of the island of Aeria. This becomes a stopover and supplying point for traders venturing into Naycese waters or beyond, to the Minaean Coast and Skothar. (*See Sv.4.*)

What This Means: The Thothian and Alphatian negotiators and interpreters of the Treaty of Dawn were thinking of the southern Shadow Coast region on the southwestern coast when the provision ceding control of the southern coast of the Isle of Dawn at the base of the Great Escarpment to Thyatis. However, the treaty was vaguely drafted and the Thyatians are using it to stake a claim to the southeastern coast as well. As usual the Alphatians will

gnash their teeth about Thyatians breaking a treaty, but the Thyatians are merely following the letter of its terms to their own advantage, exploiting a loophole.

What the PCs Can Do: Though the southeastern coast of the Isle of Dawn at the base of the Great Escarpment is narrow (usually only a dozen or so miles wide, at most), its wonders and dangers are largely unexplored. Anything from ancient Nithian ruins to newly established corsair bases might be found here.

Felmont 14, AC 1017: War Plans Presented and Approved.

Location: City of Citadel, Kingdom of Bettelwyn, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: Queen Llynara meets with her military commanders to go over their proposed campaign to conquer Randel. The plan is simple and quite blunt but should prove effective. The Bettelwyn forces will marshal at their own fortresses along the border. From there, they will attack the Randel fortresses and use them as forward staging areas. They will sweep into Randel, aiming to go all the way to the Randel River. This done, the Randel support structure should be in utter shambles, with their remaining forces holed up in the various towns and cities. Divided and lacking their logistical support lines, they should be fairly easy to overcome one at a time. Some of the generals propose that the forces be concentrated in a main thrust, with the garrisons at the Bettelwyn fortresses used to tie down and neutralize the troops of the Randel fortresses across the border. They believe a force could take Dmireton and the fortress nearest to it quickly, allowing an army to thrust into Randel decisively. But the queen overrules them and insists upon implementing her plan. (*See Fe. 1, Fe. 8; Fj. 1, Am. 7.*)

What This Means: It is a rather ambitious plan and most feel that a complete victory would be achievable if the invasion force was concentrated, but instead the forces are divided up in many small attacks,

which has the effect of insuring that little is likely to be accomplished. Llynara strictly orders that the Bettelyn forces are not to get too carried away and overextend themselves beyond their logistical support. If that does happen, she will simply negotiate a truce with Junna and try to negate as much of the kingdom's war-making capability as she can. Besides, she can always reinstate conflicts when her kingdom has recovered; after all truces and treaties are only as good as the paper they are written on and last only as long as one of the participants needs it.

Felmont 14, AC 1017: Treaty? Treaty!

Location: Village of Noycestadt, County of Gask, Confederacy of Klagorst. WB

Description: The meeting among leaders of the two conflicting armies in the Klagorst region begun on Felmont 12 in the village of Noycestadt. This village was sacked and occupied by the varkhas when they descended from Gournzee to help Nhorg.

Here, they decided the terms of the peace and in the end, two days later, they sign the Treaty of Noycestadt. (*See Fe. 5, Fe. 8; Fe. 15, Fy. 4.*)

What This Means: Here are the conditions of the treaty:

Vrancea rejoins the Confederacy of Klagorst, under the rule of a new duke. The new duke will be chosen by the representatives of the Confederated Kingdoms in Gask.

Nhorg will be allowed to leave Klagorst, but will be exiled permanently. If he ever is caught in Klagorst, he will be captured and executed.

Felmont 14, AC 1017: Sylarion Shows His Colors.

Location: Aeleris Pits, Forest of Geffron, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: After assessing the strength of Sylarion's troops, the Shadow Lord demands the vampire elf's immediate submission. This way, he will spare him and his followers of his wrath and will lead them to victory against the hated Church of Idris.

Sylarion refuses his order and instead affirms that he and his kin now serve only the Great Mother of Darkness and that She has plans for the Shadow Lord as well. Sylarion explains to the astounded and irate vassalich that their Immortal, Nyx, wants to create a dominion where the humans will be the undead's cattle and where the eternal night will hold sway forever. Nyx is willing to let the Shadow Lord join Her numbers, but he must submit to Her will and take Sylarion's troops to that promised land. The Shadow Lord is left to ponder the offer in his quarters. (*See Fe. 11, Fe. 13; Fe. 16, Fy. 12.*)

What This Means: Four days after his arrival in the Aeleris Pits, the Shadow Lord has been shown the extent of Sylarion's corrupting influence over the elves and the impressive army of corporeal and incorporeal undead the vampire has been able to muster. The Shadow Lord is deeply convinced with those soldiers he would be able to recapture Drax Tallen from the Church of Idris and that his claim to Denagoth's throne (to be made after he recovers his phylactery) would be backed by many of his old troops in the Shadow Army. However, Sylarion's refusal to lend him the troops completely wrecks his plans, causing his anger to rise. When he was about to *disintegrate* the elf, Sylarion made his counterproposal, as Nyx instructed him during their last mystical *communion*. Now the Shadow Lord must choose between helping another Immortal carve out Her own dominion (where he will probably be given a prominent place) or fight his way back to his former position of Overlord of Denagoth.

Third Week

Felmont 15, AC 1017: Betrothal.

Location: City of Tel Akbir, Duchy of Tel Akbir, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: On the Day of Valerias in Thyatis, Ettore Ottaviano and Jamila bint Nadir announce that they are engaged to marry. The marriage date is set for next spring, until then the two will court each

other (properly chaperoned, to avoid possible scandal in Tel Akbir). (See *Ya. 3, Ya. 6.*)

What This Means: Ettore and Jamila fell in love with each other earlier this year, during the upheavals in Tel Akbir. This announcement will mollify traditionalists, including Ralak Ahman al-Mustafa (who is asked in advance to perform the marriage ceremony when the time comes), who think that Jamila should have a husband to perform the job of ruling the duchy. What they don't know is that Ettore and Jamila plan on sharing the responsibilities for governing their lands.

What the PCs Can Do: Some, possibly Ylari agents, might try to disrupt this by attempting to kidnap one or both of the two lovers, or otherwise find a way to obstruct the marriage plans. Characters could either be involved in these machinations, or be in the wrong place at the right time to thwart such efforts.

Felmont 15, AC 1017: Let Us Make It Official.

Location: City of Blueside, Kingdom of Lagrius, Continent Bellissaria, Nayce. AS

Description: With the blessing of the Queen Siaron Lagrius, a group of local yachting enthusiasts announce the founding of an annual yachting regatta. They invite vessels from all over Nayce to travel to the kingdom for a series of races on the waters of Lake Lagrius. This regatta is set to take place on Ambyrmont 7. (See *Am. 7.*)

Felmont 15, AC 1017: Reptile Knights Never Surrender.

Location: Duchy of Vrancea, Klagorst Region. WB

Description: The 20 surviving Reptile Knights refuse to surrender and hide in the wilderness. (See *Fe. 8, Fe. 14; Fy. 4, Fy. 7.*)

What This Means: The Reptile Knights do not want to stop fighting and will continue to create problems, attacking caravans, raiding as bandits and performing

terrorist acts in Vrancea and the surrounding region.

What the PCs Can Do: Good opportunities exist on both sides: raid with the Reptile Knights, or try to stop them.

Felmont 15, AC 1017: Midsummer Night's Ball.

Location: City of Glantri, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: Princess Carnelia de Belcadiz decides to hold her summer season party this year on midsummer night, the day after the *Feria de Toros*, on what corresponds to the Day of Valerias in other Old World nations.

The ball is well attended, as are all of Princess Carnelia's parties, but the most intriguing of the guests are a mysterious raven-haired beauty calling herself *Doña Rosario*, clad in a seductive *vestida* adorned with roses and Belcadizan lace and a handsome debonair stranger of Ethengar lineage, dressed all in gold and identified only as Tabak. The two enchant all the guests with their great presence, especially when *Doña Rosario* and Tabak engage in a fiery and passionate dance. At the end of the dance, the two mysteriously disappear, in a flash of radiant golden light and a flurry of roses. (See *Fy. 3, Am. 22.*)

What This Means: Many believe that the two guests were actually the none-too-discreet mortal forms of the Immortals Ixion and Valerias. The reason for their presence in Glantri on Valerias's feast day is open to interpretations by the religious, the mystic and the skeptic. Some say they have merely engaged in the mortal pleasures in Glantri, where they would not likely be recognized. Some say Valerias is attempting to popularize her worship among the godless Glantrian wizards. Some say it is an auspicious sign for Glantri, others an omen of doom to come. Then there are those who say the whole event was an elaborate hoax, set up by Princess Carnelia, or her sycophantic allies, or her rivals trying to discredit her.

Felmont 16, AC 1017: Unexpected Allies.

Location: Town of Ceafem, Kingdom of Arkan, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: Since it has become clear that Stonewall is about to invade, Arkan has been preparing as large a force as they can. They have also hired mercenaries, but some adventurers have come to fight voluntarily. One such adventurer is a strange ranger from Foresthome who calls himself only Wolf-Hunter. He offers his services and suggests that Arkan use hit-and-run tactics to strike against the Stonewall army, as they can never hope to match Stonewall's military strength and this way they can hurt the morale of the invaders. The Arkan military commander, General Lotaran, agrees and lets Wolf-Hunter assemble his own team. Wolf-Hunter tells him that they can communicate through Wolf-Hunter's falcon, then chooses a group of adventurers, clearly based on stealth and sets out to spy on the approaching invaders. (*See Kl. 11, Fe. 8; Fe. 22, Fy. 3.*)

What This Means: Wolf-Hunter has spent most of his life in Foresthome, but he was born and raised in Arkan and he doesn't want to see his old homeland fall. Wolf-Hunter is a ranger, but he is not yet so experienced that he can cast spells, meaning that he is still a commoner in Alphatia. He is just below average height and quite agile and he typically wears a large hood so that few will see his slightly pointed ears, which definitely hint at an at least partially elven heritage.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs could be among the adventurers Wolf-Hunter chooses for his group. They could also set up their own group, or even command troops in Arkan's army if they have the skills for it.

Felmont 16, AC 1017: What News from Lothar?

Location: City of Tarthis, Nithian Empire. HW

Description: Guards stationed in the city of Tarthis are surprised to see a small floating barge settle outside the city walls, from which three Nithian soldiers disembark, bearing a rolled-up sheet of papyrus. After being questioned by the city guards stationed at the gates, they are led inside to the offices of one of the *pharaoh's* many bureaucrats and instructed to deliver their message.

There, they present the papyrus, which is a letter from Uart-neter Semsu to *Pharaoh* Ramose, discussing the successes and setbacks experienced in establishing a Nithian presence on the far end of the Sea of Yr. He also writes about the generally cooperative atmosphere which has developed—partly out of necessity—amongst the three groups living in Lothar, though he hints subtly to the *pharaoh* that a contingent of Nithian settlers would be most welcome.

Satisfied with the content of the report, the bureaucrat dismisses the soldiers, after informing them that the message will be relayed to the *pharaoh* “with all due haste and efficiency.” (*See Fl. 21, Ya. 4; Fy. 3, Am. 1.*)

What This Means: The journey back to Nithia was an arduous one for the messengers. Though they had initially made good progress, attacks by sea monsters on the Sea of Yr and hostile Jennites near the Bay of Laufea, damaged both their sailing vessel and the floating barge (which was hidden near the bay). Also, a surprise attack from a small party of Hiakrai Neathar (who were themselves on a hunt) left one of the Nithians dead, another severely wounded and damaged the barge still further. The messengers then limped their way through Jennite territory, giving settlements a wide berth, losing their way a number of times. It was only once they had entered Nithia proper, that they began to feel safe.

Unbeknownst to the messengers—and the *pharaoh* for that matter—the Heldannic Knights have betrayed Uart-neter Semsu and now Lothar has no means of communication with Nithia at all, with its

other seaworthy ship now in the possession of the zealous devotees of Vanya.

Felmont 16, AC 1017: Verdan Is No More.

Location: Former City of Faraway, former Province of Verdan, Esterhold Peninsula. SK

Description: After some heated debate, the allied Jennites decide on what they'll do with the conquered territory and the city of Faraway. The former Verdan will now be a part of the Lands of Jen. The free Jennites and many of the rebels want to burn the Alphatian city of Faraway to the ground, but most of the rebel Jennites object and argue that they should take control of the city themselves. The free Jennites respond by stating that Jennites aren't city-dwellers and that this is not the Jennite way, but Talin is eventually able to convince the other leaders that the city could turn out to be a good thing for them, so they decide to allow all rebel Jennites who desire it to take control of the city and settle it themselves. They then rename the city Draeh in honor of the rebel Jennite governor who declared Verdan's independence but was killed during an attack on the Alphatians last year. (*See Kl. 2, Kl. 15; Fe. 20, Fe. 25.*)

What This Means: This is the first clear sign that the united Jennites have a problem—most of the rebel Jennites are far too used to the more civilized way of life of the Alphatians to return to the much simpler, nomadic customs of the free Jennites; centuries of servitude to the Alphatians have changed them a great deal and after they lived alongside their brethren for several months some of them are now forced to acknowledge that fact. These rebel Jennites are very few at first, but as time passes the number steadily grows and as it does, some of the rebels will begin to see their free brethren as little more than primitive barbarians indeed—centuries of Alphatian influence finally showing despite their efforts to deny it.

What the PCs Can Do: There is little for the PCs to do here, except to become

painfully aware of the vast differences between the free Jennites and the rebel Jennites. The DM could stage a number of events to bring this to their attention, such as rebels who stop free Jennites from burning clothes or books, hurting themselves with the more evolved tools of the Alphatians, or destroying useful means of transportation such as boats or carts.

Felmont 16, AC 1017: The Mark of Nyx.

Location: Aeleris Pits, Forest of Geffron, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: After thinking about Sylarion's proposal, the Shadow Lord decides to join Nyx's side in Her quest to create a kingdom of undead and to become Her general. In a special ceremony conducted by Sylarion, Landryn is branded with the Mark of Nyx, which only the undead can see. Then the vampire lord explains the necromancer that they will start their march eastwards as soon as possible, to reach the small dominion of Two Lakes Vale in lower Norwold. There they will take the situation in their own hands, but not before dislodging the agents of Idris from the area. The Shadow Lord grins at the thought of bringing more harm to Idris's side and immediately starts to give orders for the exodus. (*See Fe. 13, Fe. 14; Fy. 12, Fy. 15.*)

What This Means: The Shadow Lord reasoned that it was too risky to openly challenge the Church of Idris, especially since the high priestess still has his phylactery in her hands. For this reason he has chosen to ally with Nyx, moving his area of interest for some time. However, he will not renounce his desire to return to Denagoth and make the High Priestess of Idris pay for his humiliation and plans on using both Sylarion and Nyx to further his goals.

Felmont 18, AC 1017: New Charges Filled.

Location: City of Glantri, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: The city of Glantri is a-buzz with anticipation of the entitlement of the new positions created by the council. A large crowd is gathered in Alexander Platz, awaiting the arrival of all the nobles at the parliament.

Chancellor Urmahid Krinagar and Prince Ralindi Virayana are the first to arrive, clearly involved in a heated discussion; it seems Urmahid is very dissatisfied with the business of the day. Prince Angus McGregor and Prince Kol, who are next to arrive, nearly bump into one another, so deeply involved in their own thoughts as they are.

Grand Master Harald Haaskinz, Princess Carlolina Erewan and Prince Morphail Gorevitch-Wozslany walk together in a procession from the Great School of Magic. All three seem also to be in a conspicuously good mood. Not so with Supreme Judge Dolores Hillsbury, who seems offended by a remark from the arriving Prince Malachie du Marais. Princesses Isidore d'Ambreville, Carnelia de Belcadiz and Juliana Vlaardoen arrive at nearly the same time.

The last one to arrive is *Prinz* Jaggar von Drachenfels, adorned in full military regalia and astride his pegasus. This, to most onlookers, is his crowning moment, for it is self-evident that he will soon be awarded the title of warden of the marches in official manner. After treating with the crowd for a while, he too enters the parliament building.

The spectacle outside cannot prepare anyone for the actual events of the council meeting. Before the official designation of the titles can be begun, *Prinz* Jaggar requests permission to address the council. In his speech, he withdraws himself from consideration of the position of warden of the marches and instead lends his vocal support to Malachie du Marais. After a moment of stunned silence, Chancellor Urmahid asks if there are any other prospective candidates. There is only one, Princess Carnelia de Belcadiz y Fedorias. A vote between the two results in a narrow victory for Malachie.

The council breaks for a short recess. (*See Kl. 20; Fe. 18, Am. 13.*)

What This Means: There is still much discord among many of the princes over the new charges. Urmahid Krinagar, in particular, sees the new charges as watering down the political influence of the existing charges. Decisions have been made, however and the princes will have to learn to live with them. In the meantime, the Jaggar-Malachie-Morphail alliance has gained somewhat in power and influence and the other princes and princesses will have to forge new alliances and power blocs to counter their opponents—particularly Dolores and her allies.

Felmont 18, AC 1017: Pirates!

Location: Southern Sea of Dread. DV

Description: While en route to Kastelios, Adonai Stephanos's small fleet encounters two much larger vessels, heading west. Although he initially pays them no heed, Adonai's mood turns to alarm once he notices that the ships are manned with rough-looking, armed men and the ships' masts are flying unrecognizable flags. He has enough time to order his men to arm themselves as best they can.

It is not long before the two strange vessels close in on the Kastelian ships and fire a number of ballista bolts at them. One ship, the *Marissa*, is hit hard and begins listing to port. Soon, one of the pirate vessels manages to grapple the ship occupied by Adonai, the *Helena*. Within moments, a small group of pirates crosses onto the Kastelian vessel and a ferocious melee ensues. Although the Kastelians are less proficient in combat, the presence of a number of hired adventurers tips the balance of power more evenly. Soon, it becomes apparent that the *Helena* will not be an easy prize and so the other pirate vessel redoubles its efforts on the damaged *Marissa*, from which pillars of smoke are soon evident as the pirates board the vessel and engage its crew in battle.

The battle continues longer still, until a victorious roar emerges from the now-sinking *Marissa*, as the pirates, laden with what treasure they can carry, return to their

own ship. The pirates doing battle on the *Helena*, witnessing the success of their companions, stage a fighting withdrawal and disengage their ship before any pursuit can be organized. Adonai orders his men to focus on rescuing the survivors of the *Marissa*, who are treading water amidst the floating debris. Once the total damage has been assessed, the Kastelians resume their journey home. (See *Fe. 3, Fe. 7; Fy. 1, Fy. 9.*)

What This Means: The pirates, sea reavers in the service of Hule, are among the remnants of the force sent against the Western Defense League a number of years ago. Since that time, they had received orders to pillage vulnerable ships and ports in order to sustain themselves and sow chaos amongst those nations who would oppose Hule's interests. This encounter is simply a function of the Kastelians being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

The Kastelian expedition itself was hit quite hard: the pillaging and sinking of the *Marissa* cost much in the way of essential supplies, as well as the lives of 20 men. The *Helena* has also suffered some damage, which, though not crippling, will make a swift return to Kastelios all the more important.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs sailing with Adonai can help repulse the pirate raid.

Felmont 18, AC 1017: Vanya's Grip Not So Tight After All.

Location: Region surrounding Dominion of Vanya's Rest, Aryptian Savannah, Heldannic Empire. DV

Description: After almost four months of relative peace, the construction sites around the fringes of Heldannic territory are raided sporadically by lightly-armed Meghaddaran warriors and vicious cat-men. Some raids are so successful that the surviving soldiers are driven away momentarily, caught totally unprepared by the attacks and once they return they find in most cases that the Meghaddaran prisoners have been freed. Castellan Heinz Kronenburg is mystified by the sudden appearance of these humanoids and thinks that they may be the divergans

that the soldiers of the Heldannic Order encountered last year. Fearing an attack from the southwest (which is known to the knights to be divergan territory), he orders construction efforts to be redoubled there and patrols bolstered, as he suspects the raids, concentrated primarily along the northern regions, are just a feint. (See *Kl. 20, Kl. 24; Fy. 3, Fy. 16.*)

What This Means: As the Shining Claw Clan continues to move into its new territory, more of its warriors are becoming available and are now actively cooperating with the Meghaddaran raiding parties. Although their aim is to hinder the ongoing construction efforts, they are taking every chance they can to free those Meghaddaran prisoners who are still laboring to build the defenses.

Complicating matters for the Heldannic Knights is the fact that Kronenburg will soon become convinced that the divergans are actively aiding the Meghaddara in their bid to push the knights out of the region. Accounts of the encounters with the divergans last year [see *AC 1015 almanac. Ed.*] are now widely known in Vanya's Rest, but because precise details concerning the physical description of the strange demihumans are lacking, the information Kronenburg receives regarding the rakasta will make them resemble the divergans, since both races are clawed and seemingly feline in certain ways (though the rakasta are more obviously so). This conviction on Kronenburg's part will hinder many attempts on the part of his executive staff to conduct effective investigative work and strategic planning.

What the PCs Can Do: Meghaddaran or rakasta PCs could take part in the raids.

Felmont 18, AC 1017: The Children Return.

Location: Camp of Chagon-Nah, Ethengar *Khanates*. OW

Description: Bakai and her siblings return to the camp of the great *khan*, under escort of Temur *Khan* of the Yugatais. The health of Bakai has not improved. Manghai *Khan*

commands his most experienced clerics to care for her. In a public speech he praises his siblings for this enormous feat. There is also a small ceremony for the fallen, including Manghai's youngest brother, Hurkati. (*See Kl. 27, Fe. 3; Fy. 10, Fy. 12.*)

What This Means: Temur *Khan* became aware of the expedition shortly after they entered his territory and sent his men to watch them. They did not find the expedition in time to help combat the evil spirits, but they did bring them back to Temur's camp afterwards. Temur *Khan* has been escorting them across the Sea of Grass since.

Unfortunately, the attack by the evil spirits set back the expedition by several days and by the time they arrived at Xantha, Manghai *Khan's* court had already moved here, to Chagon-Nah. In the meantime, Bakai has been steadily growing sicker, a victim of some mysterious spirit-born disease. Manghai (alias Jaku the Render) has no real interest in helping her get better, but under the guise of her brother, he cannot refuse her the services of his priests.

Felmont 18, AC 1017: What the Elves Need Now Is Dove, Wise Dove.

Location: Enoreth Shrine, Forest of Geffron, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: After being freed by the elven crusaders, Dove discovers there are still many of them fighting against the Shadow Army in Geffron. He immediately announces to his saviors he has important news to tell the elven generals and travels escorted to their secret hideout, now located at Enoreth Shrine, a holy site where the power of Idris and Her minions is weak. There Dove meets Durifern Widefarer of Clan Grunalf and Beasthunter of Clan Long Runner and tells them his story, as well as all the information he has gathered about Bensarian's true identity and the Nameless Tower's hidden secrets. Beasthunter immediately pushes for sending news of Bensarian's treachery to Wendar, hoping to clean his name in front of his kin and warn his wife, who stayed behind after his forced

exile. On the other hand, Dove is also concerned with the fact that he revealed to the Shadow Lord the existence of the Nameless Tower and he fears the lich could now take possession of it to use it for his schemes. Durifern concludes that if the Shadow Lord and Idris clash, this is just fine for him, because it helps the elves' ultimate goal of eradicating both threats from Denagoth. So he backs up Beasthunter's proposal to send word of Bensarian's condition to Coolhands (who migrated to Glantri in Sviftmont of AC 1016 to avoid the Wendarian prison camps for Alheimers) and to the Genalleth elves in Wendar, hoping they will find the evidences to unmask him before it is too late. (*See Fe. 7, Fe. 10; Am. 16, Ei. 25.*)

What This Means: Beasthunter finally rejoices when he discovers how he has been tricked by the Church of Idris. Now he has the proof needed to clear his name before the Alheim Clanmasters' eyes, but he knows he will need to show his bravery once more before being forgiven for his naïveté. Durifern on his part is happy to hear the Shadow Lord has reasons to fight against the Church of Idris and he is more than willing to let them clash and reduce their strengths. He has no intention of allying with either party and his new tactic will be to wait until the two enemies exhaust each other before striking back.

Felmont 18, AC 1017: Council Reconvenes.

Location: City of Glantri, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: The Council of Princes reconvenes to finish the selection of their new charges. Prince Ralindi Virayana is elected as royal merchant-mage and Prince Angus McGregor is selected as the new viceroy. Warden of the Marches du Marais proposes the route between Ylourgne and Sablestone to be the location of the new fort.

Finally, the council chooses around Taterhill as the location of the proposed new

duchy. Business concluded, the council disbands this session.

That night, at his favorite club in the city, Lord John Beaumarys-Moorkroft, Archduke of Westheath, was said to have lost consciousness, after hearing the news about the Duchy of Taterhill. (*See Kl. 20, Fe. 18; Am. 13, Sv. 12.*)

What This Means: There will be a lot more politicking going on in Glantri now among the lesser nobles as they compete for the title of duke and other positions that may open as a result. Things are far from settling down in the volatile nation.

Lord John Beaumarys-Moorkroft, who was rebuffed at his proposal of the Taterhill races, had recently sold his devalued Taterhill land at very low market prices. Now with Taterhill becoming a new dominion, the land prices are sure to rise again. With his advancing age and his failing health, this realization took its toll on the poor archduke.

Felmont 19, AC 1017: Committee Thrown Out of Glenswych.

Location: Town of Glenswych, Bishopric of Kittings, Kingdom of Bellayne. SC

Description: The Commons, feeling that affairs in Kittings are getting out of hand, sends a committee to Glenswych to directly let the authority of the parliament be felt. Upon their arrival, the committee immediately attempt to assert themselves, but are met with such hostility by both citizenry and town guard that they break up in the confusion and return to Leominster. (*See Fe. 8, Fe. 11; Fy. 2, Fy. 18.*)

What This Means: Glenswych remains an area where the parliament only tenuously maintains control. While the Bishop of Kittings and his Belbionite followers are parliamentarians, Glenswych has more than its fair share of outspoken royalists as well.

Felmont 19, AC 1017: Sjöfjord Retaken.

Location: Village of Sjöfjord, Dominion of Helskir, Heldannic Empire, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: Northward-marching Thyatian forces are joined by advance parties of the 1st division of the army of Heldun in their drive to eliminate occupying Heldannic forces from southern Heldun, just a few miles from the village of Sjöfjord. Heldannic scouts, seeing the massed force, notify elements of the 2nd regiment of Vanya's Loyal Heldannic Expeditionary Force, who then prepare for a pitched battle. As the Thyatian-Heldunian force proceeds to encircle the town, two groups of 30 medium cavalry storm out of the barricaded village and streak through their enemies, lancing and slashing as they go. While the allies are in a state of initial disarray, four squads of light infantry, each numbering 20 men, also join the fray, trying to drive back the opposing force.

Although caught initially off-guard, the Thyatian-Heldunian force rallies and manages to inflict heavy losses upon the cavalry as it returns for a second sweep. At the same time, crossbowmen near the rear of the force rake the Heldannic light infantry, while combat mages pelt them with *magic missiles* and *sleep* spells. Suffering heavy losses, the cavalry breaks ranks and flees north, while the defending infantrymen close ranks and stage a fighting withdrawal back to the village barricade. Before they are able to do so, however, an alarm is sounded from within Sjöfjord. Positions along the barricade have been overwhelmed and some villagers took the opportunity to aid the liberating force. With their enemies streaming into the village from several locations, the Heldannic force stationed there is pressed from too many sides to hold them off for long. (*See Fe. 7, Fe. 7; Fe. 23, Fy. 2.*)

What This Means: Sjöfjord was deemed important by Anna von Hendriks due to the fact that it is one of the larger settlements that lies on the route between Westrouрке and Helskir and it controls access to a bridge which spans a narrow, but deep, fjord which runs southwestwards into the Western Sea of Dawn. As such, about half of the 2nd regiment of Vanya's Loyal Heldannic Expeditionary Force was stationed here. The

Thyatian-Heldunian victory was partly due to numbers, but also because their soldiers were better-supplied and had higher morale. In the wake of this defeat, Anna will recall all other troops occupying other villages in the region—the better to consolidate her hold on Helskir.

What the PCs Can Do: Heldannic PCs could be part of the cavalry that managed to flee the battle, or if they remained, they might be able to make the invaders pay more dearly for their gain, but it is unlikely that the loss of the village can be avoided. If the PCs are with the Thyatians or Heldunians, they might have the chance to interrogate prisoners in order to learn more about Heldannic positions in the area.

Felmont 20, AC 1017: News Reaches Favian Vern and Nayce.

Location: City of Ionace, Ionace Island, Nayce. AS

Description: News of the fall of Verdan and its capital Faraway—now the free Jennite city of Draeh—and the Jennites' declaration of independence reach Favian Vern, who is still in the Naycese capital lobbying for support to restore order, as well as the members of the Nayce Council. An immediate meeting is called in which Vern repeats his request for assistance from Nayce, stating that this is now more important than ever since the lives of many Alphatians are at risk. However, he finds that many members are unwilling to listen to his requests and he is shocked, as are some other members of the council. The skeptics say that this really just suggests that his democracy in Esterhold has failed and that he wasn't even aware of the problems himself. The skeptics then move for a vote to remove him as President of the Esterhold Republic. A vote is taken which narrowly supports Favian Vern's position as president, but it was a close vote and it is obvious that Favian has been politically hurt. (See *Kl. 15, Fe. 16; Fe. 25, Fy. 12.*)

What This Means: Favian is both furious and sad about this. While he feels betrayed by the skeptics, he cannot fully deny their

claims of inability to see the trouble and he has received no promise of support to aid his republic. The Nayce Council will act, though, but only by sending ships to evacuate Alphatians from Esterhold—they will not decide on sending military support and so none will come; as the Jennites advance, the number of skeptics on the council will only grow, although they won't remove Favian Vern from his position.

What the PCs Can Do: While the PCs will not be able to change the council's mind, they may decide to offer Favian Vern their assistance themselves. If they are influential and experienced adventurers, Vern will be grateful to them and grant them authority to assemble forces in his name to stop the advance of the allied Jennites. In fact, Vern will extend such authority to most adventurers willing to fight for his cause, provided he considers them trustworthy!

Felmont 20, AC 1017: Narvaez Quits Field.

Location: *Baronía de Gargoña*. SC

Description: Narvaez realizes that for the moment its plans of conquest in the Savage Baronies have been put on hold. With the defeat of the Los Matónes and the untimely intervention of Torreóner mercenaries, *Barón* Hugo orders his troops to secure that part of Gargoña north of the *Río Copos* and he proposes to meet with *Barón* Balthazar. This he does later that day and a peace treaty is quickly concluded by both sides. *Barón* Balthazar wishes to move his troops back to fight the undead in Saragón as quickly as possible and *Barón* Hugo realizes that if he retains even a part of Gargoña he is lucky, especially with the machinations of the black bandit. *Barón* Balthazar puts southern Gargoña under a hasty interim administration until it can be returned to the Gargoñans and leaves with the major part of his force (along with the surviving Guadalantans) to rush back to Ciudad Matacán. (See *Fe. 8, Fe. 11; Fe. 22, Fy. 1.*)

What This Means: This is the most acceptable compromise for both sides. Neither is capable of pressing an advantage

this year and neither is capable of sustaining further large-scale conflict. The Gargoñans are left stateless in the meantime until Balthazar can organize southern Gargoña under the leadership of native Gargoñans.

Felmont 20, AC 1017: The Robots of Yesterday.

Location: Southwestern Sea of Dawn. SD

Description: The crew of a Minrothaddan merchant vessel sailing south to Ochalea spot what appear to be four heavily-armored figures flying above them, with fiery jets of flame shooting out of their backs. The figures spot the ship as well and dive towards it. The crewmen decide they are about to be attacked and ready the ship's weapons. Before the figures get within range of the vessel's armaments, they aim the odd staves they are carrying and fire them at the ship. Explosions wrack the vessel and crewmen are slashed in half by the beams. With the ship afire and sinking, the four figures swoop back up into the air and fly on eastwards, towards the Isle of Dawn. (*See Fe. 7; Fy. 7, Fy. 11.*)

What This Means: The figures were the four Blackmoor-era robots released by hapless Thyatian adventurers in the Thanegioth Archipelago a few weeks ago. When they spotted the primitive vessel, they decided it would have to go.

A handful of the crewmen survive the encounter and use one of the ship's lifeboats to reach Rialtos, the closest port. At first the Thyatians think the attack was conducted by rogue Alphatians using magical weapons, but they soon learn this is not the case.

What the PCs Can Do: If by chance the characters are sailing through the region at the time the robots are flying over it, they may face a similar encounter. It will be hard to do anything but try and survive—the robots open fire at exceptionally long range, out of range of all Mystaran weapons and virtually all spells and they fly unusually fast (60") and so are unlikely to be caught by anyone.

Felmont 20, AC 1017: Elven Intrigues.

Location: Tower of Ellerovyn, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: *Doña* Esmeralda Erewan, daughter-in-law and advisor to Princess Carlolina Erewan (and a spy for Princess Carnelia de Belcadiz), learns of increased mobilization of humanoid troops from the Great Crater Principality of New Kolland and of disturbing activities brewing among the shadow elves in Aengmor. From her own shadowelf spies, *Doña* Esmeralda has linked these two events together and traced both of them to one instigator: Princess Dolores Hillsbury of Fenswick. She informs Princess Carlolina of the troubling news—as well as arranges for Princess Carnelia to learn of this as well. (*See Ya. 16, Kl. 2; Fe. 18, Fy. 7.*)

What This Means: Synn (a.k.a. Princess Dolores Hillsbury) has not been able to keep her affairs secret, partly because of the suspicious nature of the Glantrians and partly because of the untrustworthiness of her shadowelf minions themselves.

Princess Carlolina Erewan, an ally of the shadow elves and an enemy of Princess Dolores, knows she does not have the political power to confront her enemy directly and lets this information pass on to Dolores's archenemy, Prince Malachie du Marais, who is now warden of the marches. Princess Carnelia does not get involved in this intrigue just yet.

What the PCs Can Do: This is a behind-the-scenes story of the D&D: *Shadow Over Mystara* plotline. PCs involved in Glantrian politics may be involved in passing—or hindering—information to any of the conspirators involved in this intrigue.

Felmont 21, AC 1017: Covert Smuggling in Skothar.

Location: Mouth of the river south of Esterhold, Steppes of Jen. SK

Description: After a brief stopover to trade in the town of Tresa, the Thyatian expedition to Skothar continued north. They make contact with some tribes of Jennites

known to be opposed to the Alphatians in Esterhold. A profitable sale of Thyatian weapons is arranged before the exploratory squadron sails on, skirting the coast of Esterhold. (*See Ya. 5, Kl. 27; Fy. 15, Sv. 10.*)

What This Means: The Thyatians are aware of the growing disaffection against Alphatian rule in Esterhold. A couple of Eusebius's agents have made contact with the region to gather information and the Minaeans provided some insight into which tribes to contact. The Thyatians aren't really picking a side in the conflict at the moment, though—they are just, in typical opportunistic Thyatian manner, using the conflict as a way to make a profit, selling arms to the Jennite side. The fact that the Alphatians are suspected of supplying the Twaelar did nothing to discourage the empire from returning the favor, of course. Arms sold will soon find their way into the hands of Jennite rebels who are dearly in need of them. As the expedition continues along the coastline of Esterhold, they will make similar transactions in secluded areas when they think they can get away with it without being spotted by the Alphatians. A couple Thyatian agents are also left behind with the Jennites as “military observers,” and will also provide them with advice in the best tactics for use in fighting the Alphatians.

As for the Jennites, they don't really like the Thyatians any more than the Alphatians, except that the Thyatians have never actually done anything to hurt them. But they view the Thyatian Empire as just another empire, no different really than the Alphatian Empire and given their experiences with the latter they have no love or trust for any empire. But they need weapons to arm themselves against the Alphatians and are willing to buy them from anyone who provides them.

What the PCs Can Do: Characters might try to convince the Jennites that the Thyatians are different and gain longer-term, more friendly contacts. Particularly idealistic characters might decide to adopt the Jennite cause as their own and stay to help them in their struggle for freedom, identifying

perhaps with the similar one the Thyatians themselves undertook over a millenium ago.

Fourth Week

Felmont 22, AC 1017: Sylvan Interlude.

Location: Spring of the Rainbow River, Kingdom of Frisland, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description:

Stonewall's army arrives at the spring of the Rainbow River. They immediately begin knocking down trees to build their river boats. A few ships, hired by Rogart and Amagast, have



already arrived from Shiell to resupply them and the army sets up a lumber camp, which they soon nickname Rainbow Spring. (*See Fe. 8, Fe. 16; Fy. 3, Fy. 13.*)

What This Means: Since the army needs about a hundred river boats, they are here for some time. Still, the spellcasters with the army can help speed up the process of making the river boats with their magic and the army has hired such folk for that purpose in addition to their own spellcasters and a few wizards from Randel, who were sent here to aid them and support the loose alliance between Stonewall and Randel.

What the PCs Can Do: Such a large camp, using so many trees, will not endear the Stonewall forces to any elves, druids, or rangers in the area and while these would not likely openly attack the army, they might still try to harass their presence here, trying to force them to leave. The army will doubtlessly need heroes to protect it from wandering monsters from the nearby border with Blackheart, too. On the other hand, the PCs could also be saboteurs sent here by Arkan to impede Stonewall's attempts to build boats, especially if there are fire-using

spellcasters among them, though other tactics may naturally also work, depending on their ingenuity.

Felmont 22, AC 1017: Undead Redirected.

Location: Town of Ciudad Matacán, *Baronía de Saragón*. SC

Description: The heroes sent by Luis de Manzanas return to Ciudad Matacán, having succeeded in recovering the *Barrier Mask* of Saragón. The undead had failed to make much headway into Saragón as a result of the restoration of the mask into Saragón's control, thus thwarting *Don Claudio*. Claudio is now approached by the same agent of Hule who advised Luis de Manzanas in the first place (and whom actually had the mask hidden himself, thus making its recovery easier).

He fills *Don Claudio*'s head with dreams of conquest in the heart of Brun, the control of a great empire and says that he can help the *don* gain allies among the humanoids of the Yazak Steppes. (See *Fe. 11, Fe. 20; Fy. 1, Am. 1.*)

What This Means: The Master of Hule sees the baronies as important in maintaining the balance of power in the region and sees the undead army as a cheap way to strike back at expansionistic Zuyevo. *Don Claudio*, for his part, defies the orders of his master the necromancer (through intervention by Bozdogan to break the necromancer's influence) and decides to seek personal power and glory. The necromancer is furious but this time powerless to alter this situation.

Felmont 22, AC 1017: In Absentia No More.

Location: Ten miles east of Bluenose Ruins, Sunken Arogansa, Nayce. AS

Description: A Naycese *submersible* carrying a group of Destroyers spots a group of ghouls assembled near a ruined country estate. Casting the required spells, drinking the needed potions and activating the required enchantments, the heroes depart

from the relative safety of their *submersible* to engage these undead. The battle is brief and conclusive. Riding high on adrenaline, the Destroyers decide to explore the estate ruins and hopefully uncover a few profitable trinkets.

After waiting nearly six hours, the *submersible* captain spots undead coming out from the estate buildings and orders the vessel to a higher depth, out of any hostile range. After loitering in the area for another hour, the anxious crew departs under the impression that the Destroyers are dead. (See *Fe. 3, Fe. 8; Fe. 27, Fy. 26.*)

What This Means: These Destroyers have stumbled upon an undead outpost. Their overcoming the sentries was fairly straightforward—it was only once they had entered the interiors that they discovered the full extent of the undead presence there. Inside and facing undead much more powerful than mere ghouls, the Destroyers are systematically cut down. The *submersible* crew did the right thing by leaving as the undead were preparing to assault the vessel. However it will take time and divination spells to determine that the captain acted in sound judgment.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs may find themselves involved in this as part of the Destroyer band. If they are, the DM should offer them a way to escape certain death. PCs not directly involved may find themselves drawn in as friends or comrades could have been involved in the party. The opportunity is ripe for a rescue mission of the DM's design.

Felmont 23, AC 1017: Another Raid.

Location: Town of Polakatsikes, Dominion of Polakatsikes, Heldannic Empire, Meghala Kimata Plains. DV

Description: While drilling his troops during a slow day of the siege, a Mivosian captain notices a commotion coming from the improvised stables, which house the mounts for the small, but effective, Mivosian cavalry. Before he can send some men to investigate, he and his troops are almost trampled by a small herd of spooked

horses—someone has freed the mounts and driven them into the camp! Losing no time, he orders his men to catch the horses and bring them back under control, while he sends word to the commander what has happened. (*See Fe. 8, Fe. 11; Fe. 26, Fy. 2.*)

What This Means: The Heldannic raiders have struck again, while eluding capture.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are on the Heldannic side, the PCs could have been involved in this act.

Felmont 23, AC 1017: Non Sequitur.

Location: City of Alpha, Kingdom of Alpha. NW

Description: Overlord h'Caramore reports to King Ericall the outcome of his expedition to Nordenhafen and the news about the Ostlanders' intervention on Bardeen's side. Pressing for a military solution to punish the treacherous baron, lord h'Caramore's ire is however cooled down by Madiera, Ericall's court mage and chief advisor, who advises her king to wait for the Ostlanders' move. Ericall then issues a formal request to the lords of Norwold, asking them to delay any offensive attempt against the Barony of Nordenhafen until the coming of spring. (*See Kl. 10, Fe. 9.*)

What This Means: Madiera, being cautious by nature, doesn't want to risk an international incident, even with as far and minor a kingdom as Ostland. She waits for Ostland's moves, to judge if Bardeen's new alliance is real or if it is just a fake the old pirate came up with to delay his downfall. For this reason she has given Ostland time to muster its forces and send them to the Great Bay, asking Ericall to issue the formal request of leaving Nordenhafen in peace till next spring. If by that time the King of Ostland has not sent troops, then it will be clear Bardeen is on his own and can be defeated easily.

Felmont 23, AC 1017: Orders Passed On to Vezhrya.

Location: City of Leominster, Bishopric of Leominster, Kingdom of Bellayne. SC

Description: Wizard-King Yahav IV contacts his agent Vezhrya, a.k.a. Philip Southwell, in the Bellaynish Parliament. The escalation of conflict in Bellayne has been at the forefront of his mind in recent months—and he has decided that the conflict can be used to further Herathian interests.

He urges Vezhrya to draw the war out as long as possible, to weaken Bellayne so that they can pose no threat to Herathian security in the near future. In the final days of Queen Catherine's reign, Bellayne was becoming almost aggressive in some areas—that must stop. (*See Nu. 5, Va. 23.*)

What This Means: Yahav wants Bellayne to bleed itself white in a civil war of attrition. Vezhrya himself is inclined to agree—but he sees his own opportunities. A lover of intrigue, he finds the machinations of the Bellaynish Parliament fascinating—and sees himself perhaps as a major player in the future. If so, he would not like to be a major player in an anaemic nation...

For now, however, he will obey his master's wishes.

What the PCs Can Do: Right now there are no obvious clues tying Vezhrya/Southwell to Herath, but over time the PCs could discover clues to the plot and become enmeshed in the intrigues of the araneas.

Felmont 23, AC 1017: Skirmishes East of Helskir.

Location: Tosti's Vale, East of City of Helskir, Dominion of Helskir, Heldannic Empire, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: The 2nd division of the army of Heldun, advancing westwards to Helskir, encounters the 3rd regiment of Vanya's Loyal Heldannic Expeditionary Force. The two forces ferociously engage each other in combat, but despite the better training of the Heldannic soldiers, the numerical superiority of the Heldunian force (who outnumber their enemies by a factor of two-to-one), as well as the presence of combat mages and crossbowmen, is decisive in securing a victory for Heldunian forces.

The defeated Heldannic force, wishing to avoid total destruction, withdraws further west. (*See Fe. 7, Fe. 19; Fy. 2, Fy. 9.*)

What This Means: With access to plentiful supplies and a larger population base, Heldun's army is bound to be in better shape, militarily, than the Heldannic force, despite its high level of training and other defensive advantages. This defeat is another symptom of the increasing insecurity of the Heldannic position in Heldun.

Felmont 25, AC 1017: United Jennites Advance.

Location: Countryside of Province of Anchorage, Republic of Esterhold, Nayce. SK

Description: The free Jennites and those rebel Jennites who did not decide to remain in Draeh, the former Faraway, advance beyond the borders of former Verdun and continue their campaign. They clash with many Alphatians and other obstacles along the way. It is fairly obvious what their next target is—the Alphatian port town of Anchorage! (*See Fe. 16, Fe. 20; Fy. 12, Fy. 26.*)

What This Means: The united Jennites fear that unless they drive all the Alphatians off the Esterhold Peninsula now, they will eventually regain their strength and try to regain the lost territory or, worse, Nayce might decide to intervene, so they push forward to crush the Alphatians while they can, thinking that if they can kill all the Alphatians now or force them to flee, then Nayce will be unlikely to send troops to recapture lost territories.

What the PCs Can Do: There is much opportunity for adventure here. Many skirmishes will take place and scouts will be sent out by both sides to determine what the enemy is doing. Since the Jennites will eventually march on Anchorage, the PCs can also begin to plan that siege, on either side!

Felmont 26, AC 1017: Assault Begins in Earnest.

Location: Town of Polakatsikes, Dominion of Polakatsikes, Heldannic Empire, Meghala Kimata Plains. DV

Description: The day begins with a heavy barrage of Mivosian artillery, something that has not happened for many weeks, followed by a massed attack on the walls, complete with siege towers and scaling ladders. The sheer force and suddenness of the attack catches the defenders, who had become used to the tedium of the waiting game entailed by the protracted siege, off guard, but they manage to rally in time to push back the scaling ladders. While the garrison holds off the assault, the townsfolk are put to work clearing debris resulting from the impacts of the catapult boulders.

Initially, the Heldannic forces are able to hold their own: all of the ladders are pushed back and a number of siege towers are destroyed through multiple applications of the *produce fire* and *flame strike* spells. Unfortunately, Mivosian battle mages, though few in number, manage to position themselves so as to rake the walls with a number of offensive spells, enough of which accomplish their intent: to kill off a large number of battle priests stationed atop the walls. While all this is going on, Heldannic crossbowmen fire volleys of bolts at their opponents, trying to hit as many mages as they can find, though many of the latter, through their protective enchantments, manage to shrug off the bulk of these attacks. Nonetheless, some bolts do find their mark.

By day's end, the Mivosians withdraw beyond crossbow range and prepare for the next assault. (*See Fe. 11, Fe. 23; Fy. 2, Fy. 3.*)

What This Means: Although the Mivosians suspected some form of Heldannic involvement was behind the raids conducted against their camp, the recent capture of one of the raiders confirmed this suspicion. Realizing that it is only a matter of time before the raids start doing some serious damage, the Mivosians opted to end

the waiting game and close in on their enemies to crush them once and for all.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs can be on either side of the battle.

Felmont 27, AC 1017: A Necromancer's Dream.

Location: Bluenose Ruins, Sunken Arogansa, Nayce. AS

Description: While awaiting the arrival of his necromancer colleagues, Pidimigd journeys to the Bluenose ruins to establish research facilities and living quarters. Traveling aboard the *Draeger*, a pre-war rowed *submersible* galley, Pidimigd convinces the others to forego subtlety and present themselves directly to the undead. Their *submersible* arrives over Bluenose and draws immediate attention from the undead inhabitants. Pidimigd and several adventurers disembark the craft and approach the gathering mass of undead. After a few tense moments, Pidimigd begins a friendly dialog with several and before long the Alphatians are sent to meet with the undead rulers.

Shown to the ruins of what had been a lavish hotel, they are brought before a trio that introduce themselves as Tarog, Zormyll and Sisrynn. Pidimigd explains their reason for being there and expresses their knowledge of the undead's own problems with the ghouls. He cites that he has been sent here with several servants by the Alphatian nation of Nayce to establish a research facility. Surprisingly, the undead respond that they have no accommodations for any air-breathers, nor do they appreciate his assumptions that he could simply walk into their city and assert a position. However, after a good deal of dialog the undead allow him to stay. They assert that he must prepare the facilities himself—they will only assist him for payment in information about the Alphatians or through magical casting to their designs.

Pidimigd is shown to an unused tower estate to use as a domicile. The crew of the *Draeger* move their vessel over to this building and begin off-loading supplies and

personnel. They will spend the next few days making the basic preparations to the buildings to make them waterproof and livable. (*See Fe. 8, Fe. 22; Fy. 26, Fy. 27.*)

What This Means: Under the guise of moving his dark researches away from Aquan society, Pidimigd finally manages to go to Bluenose. His arrival is not exactly what he had expected. Though his story about research omits the true extent of his research goals, the sentient undead themselves, his stay hangs precariously in the balance. The undead, though not threatening, are not as overjoyed to see him as he had hoped—for some reason he had expected his arrival would be warmly greeted. Still, the undead do allow him to remain. However, he will have to work more and be careful.

The undead are truly wary. Pidimigd's offer of help is too convenient and too timely. Though they have been aware of the Alphatians living in Aquas, Torenal Site and even nearby island settlements, they are wary and anxious about opening contact with them. As lightning zombies, they are the reanimated remains of Alphatian dead through exposure to *Radiance* energies. Though they retain their skills attained in life, they do not bear any memories of their past lives. However, they have managed to use the abundant reference sources found in the city to reasonably piece together what people they derive from. Some have even been able to ascertain their mortal identities.

Aware of their ties to the Alphatian people, the lightning zombies of Bluenose are intensely curious about them. However, they are also a bit anxious at what the Alphatian people are. There are too many puzzling references to draw upon and they really do not know what to make of them. Likewise they are nervous about themselves and what they will appear as in the Alphatians' eyes. For these reasons, Pidimigd's arrival is both welcome and unwelcome. Since he and his colleagues are here the undead will allow them to stay. However the lightning zombies be studying the Alphatians as much as Pidimigd is studying them.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs may be attached to Pidimigd's effort, either by him or by Deltart. Aside from an occasional ghoulish attack, the duty should be relatively light. The PCs should find the lightning zombies distant at first, yet intensely curious. As time goes by, they will approach the PCs, especially if they are of Alphatian heritage. Depending on the PCs' reactions, the undead will ask all manner of questions. Though there are bound to be some annoyances, good-natured PCs should be capable of taking the intrusions in good time. The PCs may even begin to suspect Pidimigd of having dark plans for the lightning zombies.

Felmont 27, AC 1017: First a Trickle...

Location: Territory of Thratia, Hinterlands, Thyatian Empire. DV

Description: A number of border forts and outpost along the southern fringes of Thratia report the arrival of what appear to be refugees from the south. None of them speak Thyatian and the refugees themselves seem to come from all walks of life, though many claim to be villagers or farmers when questioned through the use of magic. What interests the military authorities in Thratia is that the reason given by these people (who identify themselves according to city, town, or village—as opposed to nation) for their migration is ongoing hostilities between a very large city-state known as Mivosia and a strange force composed of heavily-armored warriors who appear to wield magic. When described, the strange warriors seem to resemble closely the Heldannic Knights in terms of appearance and tactics.

Interesting information aside, the commanders along the southern frontier soon realize that, in all likelihood, more such refugees are sure to follow. (*See Fe. 9; Fy. 26, Am. 9.*)

What This Means: As the conflict between Mivosia and the Heldannic Knights intensifies and spreads, more communities are being affected—directly or indirectly. For those settlements unfortunate enough to

become battlegrounds, the reasons for fleeing become obvious, but other people are also fleeing as news of the battles spreads and becomes more exaggerated with each telling.

What the PCs Can Do: Thyatian PCs could be assigned the task of guiding the Milenian refugees to the comparative safety of Davania Superior.

Felmont 27, AC 1017: Not So Super, Mario!

Location: Kingdom of Hillvale, Nayce, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: Mario's Marauders raid a village in the Hillvale region—the latest of several such strikes this past month. Before the villages underprepared defenders can respond, the marauders are off again, to vanish into the hills to the west.

Two days later, another sizable armed force marches into town. Though they bear Alphatian banners, the force bears a ragtag, worn-down look one normally associates with bandits. Their commander, William Hazard, states that they are looking for Mario's Marauders. After being pointed in their direction, the ragtag regiment heads off. (*See Am. 17, Sv. 13.*)

What This Means: William Hazard and his men might be slightly irregular in their etiquette, but they are nonetheless effective. It is for their experience and ability that they were brought together by Commander Broderick last year to track down Mario's Marauders. They have had several skirmishes with the rogue mercenary band in the months since, but have yet to have a decisive encounter. Mario's Marauders are on the run, though and it is only a matter of time before Hazard and his men bring them to justice.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are a part of Hazard's forces, they can join in the hunt. If not, Hazard is always looking for good men to join his command and having come up from the ranks himself, he can recognize hard-working military types.

Events: Fyrmont

First Week

Fyrmont 1, AC 1017: New Senate Convenes.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: The senate convenes with its newly elected members for the first time since the election.

Of the 112 elected senators, there are: 43 *Gens Zendrolian* (Eusebius's supporters), 11 *Gens Aemilia* (traditionalist aristocrats), 9 *Gens Aurelia* (clerical aristocrats), 7 *Gens Sergia* (moderate aristocrats), 4 Philosophers, 30 *Populares*, 2 Republicans, 6 *Liberales* (Free Thinkers). All in all, the Thyatian Senate has currently this composition: Total Senators: 228; *Gens Aemilia* 39, *Gens Zendrolian* 66, *Gens Aurelia* 30, *Gens Sergia* 24, Philosophers 12, *Populares* 45, Republicans 3, *Liberales* 8. (See *Ya. 27, Ya. 28.*)

Fyrmont 1, AC 1017: Torreón Prepares.

Location: *Baronía de Torreón*. SC

Description: *Baronesa* Isabel has been working at preparing Torreón for an extended campaign to take the Terra Vermelha. Many of the preparations are already made with the Torreóner army on schedule for the land grab (and the conflict with Texeiras and Vilaverde that it will inevitably cause) early next year. The *baronesa* has built herself up a skilled army of native Torreóner soldiers along with an elite force of afflicted with powerful legacies as well as a substantial force of artillery including cannons. All that remains is to train her army up to a high standard over the next six months. In doing so, she hopes to extend Torreón's control not only over Terra Vermelha and its *cinnabryl* and gold mines, but also over Texeiras and Vilaverde if possible. (See *Fe. 20, Fe. 22; Am. 1, Am. 6.*)

What This Means: Torreón's lack of involvement in the Narvaezan wars has a reason and this is it. There is no end in sight for the conflicts that are raging up and down

the Savage Baronies. Isabel's plans ensure that this state of affairs will continue well into the next year.

Fyrmont 1, AC 1017: Adonai Returns to Kastelios.

Location: City-State of Kastelios, Serpent Coast. DV

Description: Adonai Stephanos's vessel, the *Helena*, reaches Kastelios and docks. Amid some fanfare, Adonai reports the success of the expedition to all present and then makes his way to the assembly to relate all information concerning Mykonos to his fellow political representatives. (See *Fe. 7, Fe. 18; Fy. 9, Fy. 22.*)

What This Means: Adonai has made it back to Kastelios and will share what he has learned with his associates. He hopes to obtain more political (and financial) support for his venture.

Fyrmont 1, AC 1017: Fly Loudly and Carry a Big Catapult.

Location: The Randel Line, Kingdom of Randel, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: Having arrived at the Grey Mountains, Dogrel opts to fly over the fortified border that separates Randel and Bettelilyn. As they travel down the border, they pass over several groups of troops on the Bettelilyn side. At spotting the approaching *skyships*, the land-bound troops take cover. However, Dogrel does not attack them, instead he passes over them low enough so that the Bettelilyn troops can clearly see the imperial colors flying from the *skyships*' masts. Dogrel then has the fleet cross over into Randel's interior, using a Randel border fortress as a waypoint. He instructs his navigator to set a course for the coastal town of Dmireton. (See *Fe. 8, Fe. 14; Am. 7, Ka. 6.*)

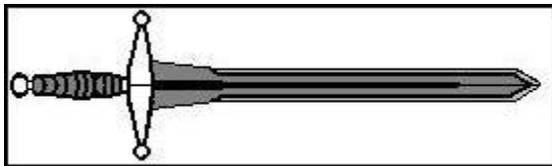
What This Means: Since being given this assignment, Dogrel has contemplated all manner of angles to use. He has decided to adhere to Eriadna's orders and act as a show of imperial force in Randel. However, the

sighting of the Bettelny troops has caused him to act. As feared, Bettelny has mobilized troops along the border; however, he has no idea if the Bettelny forces are positioned to defend or readying to attack. Dogrel hopes that by showing them the imperial forces in Randel, he will be able to make them hesitate.

Originally, Dogrel had planned on traveling straight to Rardish to make an appearance to the queen. However, the sighting of possible invasion troops have given him an opportunity to rethink things. By going to Dmireton he will be able to use that town's *skyship* facilities to service his own vessels. It will also put his fleet in a position to move should Bettelny invade. Also, by avoiding the Randel capital, he stays out of the local conflict and does not show any signs of sympathizing with the monarch.

Fyrmont 2, AC 1017: A Second Assault.

Location: Town of Polakatsikes, Dominion of Polakatsikes, Heldannic Empire, Meghala Kimata Plains. DV



Description: Mivosian forces launch a second assault upon Polakatsikes, this time throwing a large portion of their conscript armies at the main gates while relying on their archers to keep the Heldannic soldiers manning the walls occupied. This strategy seems to work, as before long the gates are battered down with few casualties and most of those fall to well-placed spells, rather than crossbow-fire. Taking over the attack, the Mivosian heavy infantry storms into the gatehouse, only to be greeted with boiling oil and crossbow bolts fired from murder-holes. Those who survive this counterattack attempt to batter down to inner gates, while catapults and archers still concentrate their fire on the town.

Within an hour and after suffering considerable casualties, the Mivosians manage to break through the inner gates and

the heavy infantry gears itself up for a rampage through the streets, only to be confronted with an unsettling spectacle. A number of the larger buildings in the town appear to have fortifications built on top of them, enough to shield archers and the like from counterattack while they fire upon intruders, as now appears to be the case. The archers of the Southern Legion of Vanya gaze grimly at the intruders and proceed to fire a volley into their ranks. Those that remain standing witness another unpleasant sight—a phalanx comprising the remainder of the legion, bearing spears and shields, barring any further progress into the town. Some of the Mivosians lose heart, but many maintain their resolve and advance against the phalanx, raising their shields against the archers.

As the Mivosians continue to take casualties, but nonetheless advance, more enemy soldiers pour into this part of Polakatsikes, most of them conscripts. These men are prodded into action by more Mivosian soldiers behind them and they fight with desperation, sandwiched between their overlords and their enemies. The situation remains unchanged for many tense moments, until a large column of Mivosian infantry smashes through the Heldannic phalanx, dispersing quickly throughout the town and attacking anyone they see. Seizing the opportunity, more Mivosian soldiers force their way through the breach, but these are blocked by Heldannic infantry, who, dressed in full plate armor and wielding bastard swords, cut deeply into the intruders and manage to hold the line.

Again the situation looks like it will hold, until a great boulder, no doubt launched by a catapult outside of the town, smashes in the midst of the melee, sending rock fragments flying everywhere. The invaders try to capitalize on the disarray of the defenders and force their conscripts into action once more, this time pitting them against the remnants of the Heldannic infantry and the legion phalanx, which manage to reform themselves in time to hold back the worst of the assault. Suddenly, a number of the leading conscripts fall to the ground, their

eyes blinded with *light* spells. Following up on this turn of events, a squad of Heldannic battle priests moves into position, casting *bold* spells at the more heavily-armed Mivosians. Soon, the invaders are pushed back into the gatehouse, where boiling oil and crossbow bolts inflict their deadly toll once more.

Seeing that no headway will be made this day, the Mivosian commander orders a strategic withdrawal. (*See Fe. 23, Fe. 26; Fy. 3, Fy. 4.*)

What This Means: The second Mivosian assault upon Polakatsikes has proven unsuccessful, though they did manage to force their way into the town. Unlike the previous battles, casualties were quite high for the invaders—almost 180 conscripts died (with another 17 taken captive) and almost 100 Mivosians suffered the same fate. At the same time, the defenders lost about 140 men, though had it not been for the sheer strength of the fortifications, the enhancements on some of the interior buildings (such as the interior battlements) ordered by Governor Wolfgang Stemmel and the discipline of the Southern Legion of Vanya, many more people would have died. Even so, though the Mivosians have been repulsed once again, a number of them did manage to break through the defenses and run rampant.

What the PCs Can Do: Those Mivosians who managed to enter Polakatsikes are still on the loose; the skills of the PCs will certainly come in handy in hunting them down.

Fyrmont 2, AC 1017: Parliament Builds Naval Base.

Location: Village of Chansea, Bishopric of Leominster, Kingdom of Bellayne. SC

Description: Laborers work around the clock to expand the port facilities offered by the small town of Chansea on the south coast. Artillery is brought down from Leominster and secreted in the cliffs around the town in an effort to better defend the strategic site, while three Vilaverdan-built frigates drop anchor in the harbor flying the

parliamentary colors, having been purchased with the new taxes recently raised. All are equipped with a small number of bombards provided by Torreón, via the parliament's Vilaverdan trading partner.

Philip Southwell, in his capacity as parliamentary magist, weaves a number of illusions over the naval works in an effort to conceal them from rudimentary inspection. (*See Fe. 11, Fe. 19; Fy. 18, Fy. 27.*)

What This Means: As the only coastal site available to the parliament, Chansea will be turned into a naval yard as rapidly as possible by parliament order. Even at the breakneck pace set by the workers it will be some time before the place is finished. Nevertheless, the embryonic parliamentary navy is set to commence operations immediately.

Fyrmont 2, AC 1017: Outer Fortresses Complete.

Location: City of Helskir, Dominion of Helskir, Heldannic Empire, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: *Ordensgeneral* Anna von Hendriks's mood improves slightly with the news from one of her messengers that the line of motte and bailey fortresses has been completed. She then takes the time to write up detailed orders, in which she assigns skeleton crews to man each fortress, while the remainder of the expeditionary force is to return to Helskir. (*See Fe. 19, Fe. 23; Fy. 9, Fy. 16.*)

What This Means: Anna, having reviewed the reports that have made their way to her desk over the past several weeks, has come to the realization that, unless reinforcements arrive from the Heldannic Territories, her forces will not be able to hold out for very long against a concerted assault by the Thyatian and Heldunian armies. By utilizing her defenses as much as possible, she hopes to maximize the chance that Helskir, at least, will remain under Heldannic control.

Fyrmont 3, AC 1017: Assassination Attempt

Location: Camp of Rainbow Spring, Kingdom of Frisland, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: At night, a small group of assassins enter the Stonewall camp preparing their river boats and try to kill General Selcomad while he sleeps. A few adventurers with the army notice and manage to stop them before Selcomad is slain, however. A few of the assassins are killed, but the rest manage to escape. (See *Fe. 16, Fe. 22; Fy. 13, Fy. 25.*)

What This Means: Stonewall will doubtlessly suspect the assassins to be from Arkan or at least be hired by Arkan's leaders. Since the assassins all died or escaped, there is no way to easily confirm or deny the theory, however, as magical means are best used elsewhere.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs can foil the plan if they are with Stonewall and thus rescue Selcomad. However, the PCs could also be the assassins themselves! If they are the assassins, then they were recently hired somewhere by a mysterious stranger who claimed to be trying to protect Arkan from the Stonewall invasion. This stranger never revealed his name, but appealed to the PCs by drawing a grim picture of all the innocent people in Arkan who would die if the Stonewall army was not stopped. This person also admitted that while assassination was a bad thing, the PCs should also remember that Selcomad and his forces are the aggressors here and that Arkan has to do things like this to just stay alive. After the assassination attempt, however, the PCs will not be able to make contact with this mysterious stranger again.

Fyrmont 3, AC 1017: Colonists Will Be Sent... Eventually.

Location: City of Tarthis, Nithian Empire. HW

Description: The three soldiers dispatched by Uart-neter Semsu to deliver the status report to the *pharaoh* are summoned once more to the offices of the

pharaoh's bureaucracy, where they are told to relay an official response back to their superior in Lothar. The official tells them that the sealed papyrus scroll states simply that the *pharaoh* is in favor is dispatching colonists to Lothar at the earliest possible opportunity and will notify Uart-neter Semsu when arrangements have been made. (See *Ya. 4, Fe. 16; Am. 1, Am. 4.*)

What This Means: Although the soldiers will likely trust the word of the official, what they do not know is that, as with many nations boasting a considerable bureaucracy, many decisions are made which do not even reach the attention of the *pharaoh*; instead, they are decided by anonymous officials according to their own, occasionally competing, agendas. This is just one such occurrence—the *pharaoh* was very busy with his efforts to bolster domestic support and to show that he was in control of Nithia and many senior officials deemed that Lothar was far too insignificant a matter to bring to his attention, given how distant it was and how far more pressing concerns existed. As a result, the Lothar matter was decided by a handful of officials who had likely never even heard of the place and figured that addressing it would not help their careers. The *pharaoh* will not be happy, if he ever finds out.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs were entrusted with the task of conveying the status report to Nithia, they may be a little nonplussed at the response. PCs who know the *pharaoh* and his interest in Lothar will likely find such a response uncharacteristic and may be tempted to investigate. They may embroil themselves in the background politicking present within the Nithian bureaucracy and though they may not uncover the truth, they will likely make enemies if they ask too many questions, or threaten the wrong people.

Fyrmont 3, AC 1017: Disorder in the Ranks.

Location: Town of Polakatsikes, Dominion of Polakatsikes, Heldannic Empire, Meghala Kimata Plains. DV

Description: While preparing for what the commander hopes will be a final, decisive assault on Polakatsikes, a cry of alarm is sounded towards the fringes of the Mivosian camp. It soon becomes clear that a number of conscripts have risen in revolt and are now attacking any nearby Mivosians. Without giving the matter a second thought, the commander orders a couple of infantry platoons to put down the revolt and kill anyone who stands in their way. Soon, the battle is joined, as the conscripts are forced to fight for their lives.

The Heldannic forces observe the disturbances with interest and soon deduce what is going on. With their enemy's attention drawn elsewhere, they decide the time is right to send out a raiding party of their own and send out 25 cavalry, accompanied by the remaining archers of the Southern Legion of Vanya and 80 heavy infantry. With some of the Mivosians' attention drawn elsewhere, the Heldannic soldiers manage to make some headway, cutting a swath through those enemies they encounter and driving even more away with focused flights of arrows. Some of the revolting conscripts notice the Heldannic counterattack and their resolve hardens somewhat, allowing them to hold out against a charge by Mivosian heavy infantry.

The tide begins to turn against the Mivosians once a squad of Heldannic battle priests—in fact, the only remaining ones in Polakatsikes—ride to the battlefield, cutting down anyone standing in their way. Once they arrive, they cast a series of *flame strike* spells, which destroy the enemy heavy infantry who were bearing down on the Heldannic archers. Even when Mivosian archers begin to fire at the clerics, they ignore the danger to themselves and *bless* all the Heldannic soldiers close to them and *fear* at any nearby enemies. Soon, the fields become littered with corpses and the fields initially cultivated by the Mivosian army months earlier is put to the torch.

By evening, it becomes clear to the commander that his forces cannot hold their positions for much longer; a partial withdrawal will be necessary. He orders his

runners to relay his orders to his officers: the army is to fight defensively, take any portable goods and retreat to Treminius and Doleria. This the army does in short order, disengaging itself from its battles with the now-former conscripts and the Heldannic forces and staging a fighting withdrawal until they take up positions along a line of hills roughly half a mile north of Polakatsikes, from which they will head for the villages. Their enemies opt not to pursue them. (*See Fe. 26, Fy. 2; Fy. 4, Fy. 10.*)

What This Means: The accumulated pressure inherent in a long siege, as well as the obvious use of the conscripts as expendable soldiers, finally pushed a number of them over the edge. They realized that there would be no hope of becoming free again, so long as the Mivosians continued winning; their empire would just expand ever more and they would continue exploiting their conscripts until every last one of them was dead. This became apparent to them when the Mivosian army finally entered Polakatsikes: their overlords were literally throwing them at the Heldannic forces, sacrificing them in order to tie up more of the defenders. With nothing left to lose, many of the conscripts revolted, though they paid heavily for doing so.

The remaining Heldannic raiders helped them in this, providing a distraction while the conscripts organized a rough plan. Unbeknownst to either side, a handful of these men have managed to evade capture over the past few weeks and have continued their acts of sabotage, as well as meeting with some of the conscripts to let them know that they were willing to help, since they had a common enemy.

The Heldannic army, for its part, did not wish to risk missing an opportunity to inflict a few more casualties on the enemy and saw the counterstrike as the last chance to break the siege. With the main gates still damaged, little could have been done to hold back another concerted Mivosian assault. Although the gamble worked, it was a costly one: fewer than five senior battle-priests remain alive and the dependable Heldannic

cavalry is only a shadow of what it once was. The archers of the Southern Legion of Vanya, despite suffering heavy casualties, performed especially admirably, continuing to fire volley after volley of arrows into enemy formations and the heavy infantry nearly spent itself protecting the archers. As a whole, the Heldannic garrison threw about half of its strength against the Mivosians, keeping the remainder in reserve should the strike fail and Polakatsikes find itself invaded once more.

The Mivosians did not expect their conscripts to revolt, thinking that they had managed to bring them to heel. Nonetheless, the stresses arising from the sporadic sabotage of the raiders and the two-front battle which was just fought, has diminished their resolve somewhat. Their withdrawal is an acknowledgment that Polakatsikes was far more difficult to attack than had been anticipated, but their resolve to push the Heldannic Knights out of the region remains; there will be other battles and they have learned that the foreign knights are not invulnerable by any means. The siege is effectively broken—for now.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are serving with the Heldannic Knights, this counterstrike presents an opportunity to serve gloriously in battle. They will be surrounded by enemies and face the very real prospect of death, but the DM should play this out as the climax of the long siege. Mivosian PCs may also try to win glory for their growing empire, by trying to eliminate the Heldannic battle-priests, or by holding off the counterattack long enough to allow for an orderly withdrawal.

Fyrmont 3, AC 1017: Clerics Visit Glantri.

Location: City of Glantri, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: Clerics from the Temple of Valerias in Darokin come to Glantri City, bringing healing salves, love potions and charms. Many Glantrians are actually amused by the quaint customs of these Darokinian clerics and innocently believe

that love trinkets and semi-religious icons will be the latest fads among the glitterati of Glantri. The more serious Glantrians are wary of their moves, especially when rumors circulate of the clerics asking audience with Princess Carnelia de Belcadiz. (*See Fe. 15; Am. 22, Ka. 26.*)

What This Means: The Temple of Valerias is intrigued by the rumors circulating of the manifestation of their Immortal Patroness in this heathen city and have sent a couple of their brethren to investigate. When word gets out of their presence and their reasons for being in Glantri, there will be many among the nobility who are less than pleased.

Fyrmont 3, AC 1017: Raids Continue.

Location: Dominion of Vanya's Rest, Aryptian Savannah, Heldannic Empire. DV

Description: For the past two weeks, the raids being conducted by the Meghaddara and their "divergan" allies against the construction sites has continued sporadically. Despite the advice provided by his aides, Castellan Heinz Kronenburg is convinced that a large-scale attack from the south or southwest is imminent and that the divergans are actively aiding the Meghaddara. When news comes of the overpowering and abduction of the Heldannic patrol near the northern frontier, Kronenburg explodes in anger, ordering his subordinates to round up a force of knights to press into Meghaddaran lands and to "teach those barbarians to fear the might of Vanya." (*See Kl. 24, Fe. 18; Fy. 16, Fy. 18.*)

What This Means: Kronenburg's actions are simply evidence of long-term isolation, coupled with developing delusions of grandeur. He has ruled Vanya's Rest, undisturbed, for many years and has not returned to Heldann since his arrival here. Having almost complete control over the lives of the soldiers stationed here, with no one save the leaders of the Heldannic Order to countermand him (and this has not happened yet due to his efficiency), he has come to see himself as the absolute ruler of Vanya's Rest—someone who has no time

for disagreement and whose word is law. Hence, Kronenburg has developed a tendency to ignore the advice of his subordinates, since it is obvious to him that he alone knows how to deal with any crisis facing Vanya's Rest. Furthermore, due to the dominion's isolated location, there is little to relieve the tedium of patrolling and guarding the remains of Vanya, save for the occasional raid—all this despite the prestige of being posted to Vanya's Rest—and almost every person here realizes that, if trouble arises, help will not arrive for many weeks. Some people are capable of working well under such conditions for prolonged periods, Kronenburg may not be one of them.

In response to his outburst, Kronenburg's aides calmly respond that soldiers will be dispatched as soon as possible and that he will be apprised of their progress. In reality, no such force will be sent and any reports received by the castellan will be falsified, since the advisors know that following such orders, when the full extent of the current threat is not known and especially when the castellan is not in a rational frame of mind, might be inadvisable.

What the PCs Can Do: Meghaddaran or rakasta PCs can take part in the raids.

Fyrmont 4, AC 1017: New Faith in Thyatis.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: A Ceremony of Invitation is held in Thyatis, a ritual act that gives to a church or cult the permit to build a temple in mainland Thyatis's territory and is performed every time an authorization for a cult who previously did not have a temple in Thyatis is approved. The ritual is formally the adoption of the Immortal(s) or ideal of the cult among those of the Thyatians. This time, the church is the Temple of the Starlit Knowledge, a pantheist philosophy that professes to learn from all the Immortals how each of Them can enlighten one's knowledge of the world. (*See Fy. 16, Am. 19*)

What This Means: Ceremonies of Invitation are not frequent but neither totally uncommon in Thyatis; however it is about 10 years since the last one was held. Some begin to wonder if this faith has anything to do with the Justiciar Foundation, which has recently come to people's attention. Others suggest it could have some connection with the followers of Gareth, although their faith has not arrived in the empire yet.

Fyrmont 4, AC 1017: A Time of Thanks... and Planning.

Location: Town of Polakatsikes, Dominion of Polakatsikes, Heldannic Empire, Meghala Kimata Plains. DV

Description: Governor Wolfgang Stommel, bearing a number of wounds from yesterday's battle, meets with the leaders of the former conscripts. Both parties thank each other for fighting hard the previous day and securing a victory against the Mivosians. The discussion is businesslike; both parties present know that their common enemy remains in the area and at most they have won a respite. The main topic is the scope for cooperation between the two forces: the Heldannic garrison has suffered considerable casualties, with an uncertain prospect of reinforcements, given the lack of news from Vanya's Rest. The former conscripts (who have begun to call themselves the Army of Meghala) number about 250 men and are not in great shape either. Everyone present agrees, for now, to cooperate against the Mivosians and the Army of Meghala will shelter in Polakatsikes until a decisive counterattack of some form is launched. (*See Fy. 2, Fy. 3; Fy. 10, Fy. 13.*)

What This Means: Both forces are following that age-old adage: "the enemy of my enemy is my friend." Although it has no love for the Heldannic Knights (who, to many people of the Meghala Kimata Plains, are little better than the Mivosians in terms of their philosophy and tactics), the Army of Meghala realizes that, if it wishes to see its members' city-states liberated, it will have to cooperate with these foreigners, whose skill in battle is considerable. Wolfgang sees the

Army of Meghala as a rag-tag band of rebels, but he, too, knows that he will have to depend on them—at least until he can obtain more reinforcements. In the coming days, numerous plans will be drawn up concerning how to push back the Mivosian army.

In the meantime, the remaining Heldannic clerics will use their healing magic to assist the critically-injured of both forces and the damage sustained by Polakatsikes's fortifications will be assessed. Also, the conscripts who were captured during the Mivosian assault on the town will be freed.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs skilled in tactics can help in the planning.

Fyrmont 4, AC 1017: Magistrate Sells Out.

Location: Republic of Darokin. OW

Description: The ruling magistrate of one of the borderland regions east of Selenica signs away his title for a generous sum of money. The republic thanks him for his patriotism and sends him on his way. His lands are absorbed into the heartland of the republic and placed under the temporary administration of Selenica, until a representative can be voted by the region's citizens. (*See Th. 26, Fl. 10; Kl. 15.*)

What This Means: The Council of Darokin has decided it needs to gain more direct control over some of its border regions, in case of imperialistic aggression by Thyatis. They will attempt to buy out magistrates rather than simply confiscate the lands or appoint their own magistrates.

What the PCs Can Do: If they have dominions of their own in border regions, they may be put under considerable pressure to sell out to the council. If not, but they still have political ambitions, they can attempt to run for the position of representative.

Fyrmont 4, AC 1017: Nhorg Reaches Gournzee.

Location: Duchy of Gournzee. WB

Description: Former Duke of Vrancea, Nhorg Alexander Dmochowsky, is escorted

to the boundaries between the Klagorst Confederacy and the Duchy of Gournzee. There, the Klagorst escort is replaced by a group of varkhan guards, who bring the exiled ex-duke to the capital of the duchy, where he is met as a friend by Warlord Naarn Dvorcic. (*See Fe. 14, Fe. 15; Fy. 7, Am. 27.*)

Fyrmont 4, AC 1017: A Tribute for All to See.

Location: City of Menkara, Empire of Nithia. HW

Description: After many weeks of work, the object of so many workers' toil is unveiled to assembled dignitaries, plus the Selhomarrian ambassador, by the *nomarch* of Menkara,



Djemun. In a carefully crafted speech, she reviews the tribulations faced by the people of the Delta Kingdom under the rule of Senkha and her sympathizers and how the rightful rule of *Pharaoh* Ramose was restored once more. She thanks everyone present for their loyalty to the true ruler of Nithia and expresses the gratitude of the *pharaoh* and his family for the efforts of the Selhomarrian armies in their efforts to help free northern Nithia from Senkha's rule.

She concludes her speech with a gesture and workers uncover the new structure, which is revealed to be an archway leading from the port into the city proper. On one side stands a Nithian warrior, his *kehopesb* sword raised high and on the other stands a Selhomarrian soldier, his own short sword upraised. The two swords meet midway above the street, thus closing the arch. (*See Th. 20, Fl. 18.*)

What This Means: This is the way in which the ruler of Menkara is choosing to show her appreciation for the efforts undertaken by the Selhomarrians to liberate the city, which fell to Senkha's forces in 1015 and was occupied for roughly a year. Many residents of the city had no love for

the Senkhites' rule and were happy to see them go; they were even happier when, after conquering Menkara, the Selhomarrians helped them form a provisional government under a clerical coalition, instead of occupying it for a prolonged period. This, plus the aid the soldiers rendered in maintaining order and assisting in repairs to the city walls, made the Nithians see the Selhomarrians in a rather positive light. This archway, whose figures look out to sea, is symbolic of that partnership which developed.

Fyrmont 5, AC 1017: The Tribes Are Joined.

Location: Kitma Tribal Lands, Tanagoro Plains. HW

Description: High General Shazula Shazeke announces that he formally intends to take the woman Miopi as his wife. To solidify the proposal, Shazula personally leads a party of warriors and servants to travel to Kitma lands to present to the Kitma Chief Xalmak his offering of twenty prized aurochs, numerous pelts and an assortment of crafted goods and weaponry. Xalmak graciously accepts the offering and offers both his approval and best wishes for the couple. (*See Ya. 10, Kl. 3.*)

What This Means: Shazula has pretty much discounted the prophecy. He feels that if there is any truth to it, it has been completely misinterpreted by the old hag, Izala. He rationalizes that the vision actually was a prophecy foretelling his meeting Miopi, the warrior women being the motivation. Though he cannot explain all the details he feels that he has made the wisest choice.

Fyrmont 5, AC 1017: Sultan's Armies Reach Ctesiphon.

Location: Town of Ctesiphon, Emirate of Dythestia, Emirates of Ylaruam. OW

Description: Sultan Hassam al-Kalim leads several thousand Ylari warriors marching to the relief of Ctesiphon. When they get within a few miles of the town, the

Thyatian troops hastily withdraw back towards Biazzan, burning their own siege engines rather than taking the time to bring them along. The sultan leads his troops through town quickly, to the cheers of the townsfolk and orders the Emir of Ctesiphon to have the Thyatian campsite dismantled. The sultan then leads his troops in pursuit of the retreating Thyatian forces. (*See Kl. 10, Fe. 9; Fy. 9, Fy. 10.*)

What This Means: The Ylari have cleared the Thyatian troops from Dythestia, but the brigands that came with them scatter into the hills. They will plague the area for some time.

Fyrmont 6, AC 1017: Darokin Does Little.

Location: City of Darokin, Republic of Darokin. OW

Description: After over a month, the Darokin Council issues a formal protest against naval attacks against the Five Shires, but votes against actual military aid. Although Elissa Pennydown does her best to persuade the council to send help, she is left in the minority this time. (*See Fe. 10, Fe. 11; Fy. 8, Fy. 13.*)

What This Means: Though his assistance was probably not necessary in influencing the negotiation-minded Darokin Council, the Master of Hule nevertheless exerts all available influence in the vote. He does not want open warfare between Darokin and Thyatis yet—first he needs to create tensions between the Western Defense League countries. So he has Greenleaf Vickers argue against providing help to Five Shires, with the side effect that Vickers does not appear to be supporting any single faction consistently, thus eliminating suspicions that he might have some kind of ulterior plan. The Master's plot is working—the hin will be extremely disappointed with their fellow league members.

Fyrmont 7, AC 1017: New Ruler for Vrancea.

Location: Duchy of Vrancea, Confederacy of Klagorst. WB

Description: On this day, it is decided by the Klagorst Confederated Assembly in Gask that Lord Jozef Drulovic of Nerkul will become the new Duke of Vrancea. (*See Fe. 15, Fy. 4; Am. 27, Sv. 1.*)

What This Mean: Lord Jozef is a nobleman from Tcheltar and he was not involved in the recent war. This is the main reason why he has been chosen; the confederacy does not want to upset the Vranceans by choosing a noble who had fought against them in the war. Lord Drulovic has represented Tcheltar more than once in the assembly and has also served as an ambassador of Klagorst to Brasov, so he is not a puppet, but rather a diplomat and a potential ruler, who is, however, fully loyal to the confederacy.

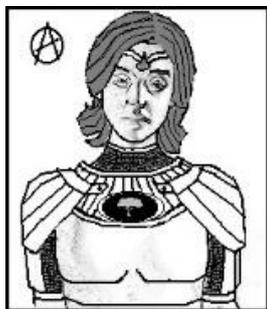
What the PCs Can Do: If one of the PCs has considerable status in the Klagorst Assembly and is an experienced politician of the region and has not been involved directly in the war... well, it could be his or her time to become a ruler!

Fyrmont 7, AC 1017: They Convene Again... This Time To Act.

Location: Town of Kedy, Kingdom of Randel, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: In a private back room of a tavern, several Randel military officers meet to discuss the domestic situation. This time Administrator

Alphatar, the magist Karatnora, Sister Marigara of the Razud Order in Randel, Brother Swertigon of the Alphatian Order of Stonewall and several adventurers are on hand. The meeting begins with a brief introduction of the participants.



Brother Swertigon offers that the Order of Alphatia will condone any actions taken against the clerics, citing that they have been told by their Immortal that the majority of the clerics have been corrupted and no longer share the graces of the Immortal Alphatia. Sister Marigara likewise offers the support of the Orders of Razud, both in Randel and in Stonewall in any move against Junna and her clerical advisors. Both clerics cite that their orders will testify to the justification of the actions and limit adverse reactions from the empire's clerical followings. Both cite their preference that as many as possible of the clerics be taken alive to allow a proper investigation of their motives and status in the whole matter. In particular, Brother Swertigon wants Sister Riddlynn arrested and is adamant about leading any assault on the temple.

Alphatar and Karatnora both reluctantly condone any actions taken against the clerics and any moves to remove Junna from power. However, they do press their will that Junna not be harmed, as it is unclear if she is corrupted or is merely guilty of following the advice of her clerical advisors. Karatnora announces that she will assume the reins of power and appoint Alphatar as her chief advisor. Since they have knowledge of the palace, they will assist in the admittance of any forces sent there, particularly in lessening resistance from the palace guards.

Colonel Kattesh informs them that his commander, Army General Brikstrist, is poised to assist the conspirators in any reasonable role. However, the involvement of the military will have to be limited due to recent developments. Kattesh reports that border units at the Randel Line have been monitoring Bettelyn troop buildups along the border. They suspect that Bettelyn may be using the situation in Randel to mount an assault. As such, Brikstrist has mobilized Randel's limited forces into position to meet any invasion.

Kattesh also makes mention of the sighting of the three imperial *skyships* and their presence in Randel lands. The colonel reports that Randel agents have discovered

that the fleet is commanded by Dogrel and is in Randel to monitor the situation and to offer a visual deterrent to Bettelyn. This news is a boost to the conspirators as some had feared that Eriadna may have sent them to intervene on Junna's behalf. That the vessels failed to respond to magical communiqués only heightened the mystery. (See *Kl. 21, Fy. 1; Fy. 8, Am. 14.*)

What This Means: The Randel military and people have had all that they can take of Junna's reign. As such, the various sects have come together to plan her overthrow. The approval of the Razud and Alphatia Orders does much to bolster their cause. With Karatnora's offer of assuming the throne, the matter of a replacement is a non-factor. Most see past the facade that she will actually rule, but act as a figurehead for Alphatar. Regardless, the move technically fills the traditional requirements so they do not oppose it.

The matter of Dogrel's *skyships* has also been troublesome. Few think that Eriadna would take sides in the local troubles or even in any conflicts between kingdoms. Randel agents have managed to uncover some of the details of the expedition and have concluded that the *skyships* will not hamper their coup. It really does not matter as the coup would have been initiated anyway, the support of the Alphatia and Razud Orders being primary allies in the matter. Their nonparticipation just makes it a bit easier.

What the PCs Can Do: Obviously the PCs can be the ones tasked with the temple or the palace. If need be they can participate in both. As a two-part adventure designed for a small window of opportunity, the PCs can split their numbers and attend to the objectives simultaneously. If need be, their numbers can be supplemented by NPCs. Care must be taken in regards to the temple and with Junna—irreparable harm to either will sour any appreciation for success. As further insurance for Junna's sake, Alphatar gives the PCs a symbol that they are allied to the family and not simple burglars.

Fyrmont 7, AC 1017: Fire in Trintan.

Location: Village of Trintan, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: A fire breaks out in the southeastern border village of Trintan, spreading quickly through the houses and threatening to engulf the villagers. To make matters worse, bands of humanoids are sighted at the vicinity of the blaze, harassing fleeing villagers and looting the burning houses. News of this disaster reaches the nearby Fort Monteleone, as well as a strange report of a humanoid-driven war machine, which may have started the blaze. (See *Fe. 18, Fe. 20; Am. 3, Am. 14.*)

What This Means: Though roving humanoids are not uncommon in Trintan due to its proximity to the Broken Lands, these goblins and gnolls are armed and organized. The war machine, made from a wooden cart, the skull of a dragon, chain spears and a fire-spewing dwarven furnace, did start the fire. By instruction of the new warden of the marches, Prince Malachie du Marais, the authorities of Fort Monteleone are already on the alert for trouble involving humanoids or shadow elves and will be hardly surprised by such an event.

What the PCs Can Do: The adventure arcade game D&D: *Shadow Over Mystara* actually begins with this scenario. The PCs will be involved in confronting the humanoids invading Trintan, who started the blaze and operate the war machine (one of the bosses in the arcade game!). The next part of the plot leads the PCs to Fort Monteleone, where they are then referred to Prince Malachie in Glantri City. The warden of the marches sends the PCs on a *skyship* to Aengmor to investigate the trouble with the shadow elves—and ultimately, to foil Synn's plot!

Fyrmont 7, AC 1017: Not Exactly the Future We Envisioned.

Location: Village of Latveii, Province of Septentriona, Thyatian Empire. SD

Description: The robots reach the Isle of Dawn and find themselves flying near a small settlement apparently inhabited by

backwards rustics. They consider buzzing the hamlet, but decide to take a leisurely stroll through it first before picking some suitable mayhem to unleash. When they arrive, they get mistaken for a group of knights-errant, their automatic translators giving them facility with the locals' crude speech. They decide to play along for now with what appears to them to be some sort of live-action drama about early Blackmoorian history.

They make acquaintances with a small group of itinerants who seem to be playing the parts of heroes and who say they are intent on exploring a nearby ruin, slaying the creatures they find within and taking whatever treasure they might find. Though they find the robots aloof and taciturn, the party nevertheless entreats the "knights-errant" to join them on this escapade. The group leaves town, headed up the Doloma River towards the ruins of Fjellstue.

The following morning a local family is found dead in their *domus*, each apparently killed by precise burns that passed completely through them. The family is known for its team of horses, which seem to be missing. (See Fe. 7, Fe. 20; Fy. 11.)

What This Means: The robots are psychotic, dangerous and unpredictable—classic Chaotic Evil types. They killed the family that night in order to take the horses, so they could "better play their parts." Eventually they plan on killing the party, taking the treasure for themselves and switching roles to play the part of black knights and evil warlords, a role they think they'll be good at.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are in town, they might be the party the robots latch on to. Even if they don't end up inviting them, the robots will feel it is their role to involve themselves in the activities of the characters and will follow them.

Second Week

Fyrmont 8, AC 1017: Junna Deposed.

Location: City of Rardish, Kingdom of Randel, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: While the majority of the capital sleeps, adventurers enter the Temple of Alphatia and the royal palace, going about their business of removing the despised elements. Junna is beaten and subdued and Karatnora placed upon the throne. Without their spells, the clerics fall apart at the attack of the conspirators. Unfortunately, Sister Riddlyn is slain by Brother Swertigon in the temple. However, many of the clerics surrender after her death. The main threats come from the doppelgangers, which use their innate abilities to wreak havoc among the attackers.

With the palace and temple secured, the conspirators are told by one of the captured clerics that Brother Paxxel is missing. Curious, they press the cleric for more information. The cleric points them towards the chambers that lay beneath the temple, saying that the brother and several of his fellows used them for their quarters. The conspirators make haste for the chambers but find that Brother Paxxel and his allies have disappeared from there by means of a freshly excavated tunnel that links in with the city's sewer system. They do find their quarters, which are morbidly placed in an empty crypt. Also found are several freshly drained corpses. When asked about these corpses, the clerics respond that those were part of Paxxel's bizarre practices; they themselves show signs where they have been fed upon.

Outside Randel troops move into position to quell any possible problems. The troops stationed at the Randel Line, the Randel Wall and in Alpira go on full alert in case their neighbors decide to take advantage of any chaos within the kingdom. Surprisingly, the transfer of power unfolds without too many incidents. Quite to the contrary, the news of the ascension of Karatnora and its validity in the imperial court are met with a

sense of relief. For the rest of the day both the temple and palace are filled with activity as troops, officers, mages and clerics come and go with great frequency. (See *Fy. 1, Fy. 8; Am. 14, Sv. 1.*)

What This Means: The plotters have initiated a coup against Queen Junna's reign. Its execution was relatively smooth, being limited to the temple and the palace. Civil unrest was at a minimal due to the popular tone of the coup and the confined nature of it. Junna is forced to sign an abdication against her will and then is secured within the palace under watchful guard. Though the adventurers' tasks are done, there are still questions to be answered. The scenes of the coup are filled with investigating parties trying to sort through the evidence to piece together what had all transpired.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs directly involved in the temple and palace actions may find themselves being hailed as heroes, depending on their manner in performing the duty. They will be fully debriefed on the matter to aid in the investigations. Likewise they may find themselves participating in the evaluation of the evidence.

Fyrmont 8, AC 1017: Houses Organize Volunteers.

Location: City of Darokin, Republic of Darokin. OW

Description: Not content with the council's decision, Elissa Pennydown and Corwyn Linton start gathering volunteers to help the hin fight Thyatian and Minrothaddan attacks. The Darokin Council does not oppose this, but makes it clear that the volunteers will not have any official status or support. (See *Fe. 11, Fy. 6; Fy. 13.*)

What This Means: There is nothing hidden in this event. Certain Darokinians still want to help the Five Shires and Pennydown and Linton will organize them.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs could join the volunteers to help the Shires.

Fyrmont 8, AC 1017: Torpin Fallout... and Explanation.

Location: City of Ionace, Ionace Island, Nayce. AS

Description: Xerathis, Tredrignon and Dlanor are furious as the limiting of the *Torpin* Class *submersible*. They arrive at Ionace to protest the decision and lobby for their project to be expanded to more than one example. Before they reach the council hall, they are intercepted by several military officials who tell them why the *Torpin* is to be unique. They cite its overly large size, high cost, low maneuverability and limited offensive capability. For the cost of two *Torpins*, Nayce could finance a sizable *submersible* fleet; one that would better suit the expansive region that needed patrolling. With all of the island bases being brought online, the need for long range *submersibles* like the *Torpin* Class are not as pressing—smaller, higher performance *submersibles* can use the bases to maintain their logistical needs.

The officers do tell the project leaders that the *Torpin* would continue, but in a slightly different role and as a singular vessel. It would still be a military vessel but would also act in an exploratory capacity. The officials stress that the *Torpin* Class is not officially dead and that the future of the class will depend upon the performance of the *Torpin*. For their part the project leaders reluctantly accept the decision and explanation. They reconcile themselves that at least they will be able to manifest their mentor Brodicim's dream by creating the *Torpin* and possibly being paramount in the production of the *Reaver* Class *submersible*. Promises of the use of their massive *submersible* works to fill the fleets also presses the point. (See *Ya. 23, Kl. 24; Fy. 22, Fy. 24.*)

Fyrmont 9, AC 1017: Ylari Enter Biazzan... Almost.

Location: Fort Nicos, County of Biazzan, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: The Ylari forces pursuing the retreating Thyatians enter the pass of Biazzan. As the vanguard approaches Fort

Nicos, rockfall traps are activated, raining down on the main column of Ylari troops. Dozens are crushed to death and the Ylari vanguard is trapped on the Thyatian side of the blockage, while the main body is cut off on the other side. As the vanguard is milling about, several thousand Thyatian troops, members of the Hesperian Tagmata Regiment and the garrison of Nicos, begin to advance. Some Ylari attempt to escape back over the rubble blocking the pass, while others try to spur their mounts up the rocky slopes on both sides of the valley, hoping to escape. Others attempt to sell their lives as dearly as possible, while still more simply recognize the futility of the situation and surrender.

At the north side of the blockage the sultan is told it will take a day or longer to clear the rubble sufficiently to allow his armies to get through to the other side. His mages and clerics use their magic to hasten the process, but it is still nightfall before they are able to break through to the other side. By then, the battle is already over on the other side of the pass. The sultan's engineers notice there are several more such rock traps lining the canyon walls and that advancing under these conditions would be dangerous. Sultan al-Kalim orders his forces to withdraw a mile up the pass and encamp for the night, while he and his council discuss what to do. The next morning they receive word, via magic, that Tameronikas has been attacked. (*See Fe. 9, Fy. 5; Fy. 10, Fy. 12.*)

What This Means: The Thyatian forces at Fort Nicos are more prepared and alert than they were when the Ylari raiders attacked during the Great War. Full use is made of the rock traps, which the Ylari did not suspect existed because they had not previously been utilized. The sultan's forces have been caught out of position by the Thyatian attack on Tameronikas and now the sultan will have to decide whether to abandon the pass and attempt to relieve Tameronikas, or to press forward. After considering the situation and consulting with his advisors, Hassam decides to return to Ylaruam and have his troops march as

swiftly as possible. He hopes to reach Tameronikas before it falls.

Fyrmont 9, AC 1017: Beset on All Sides.

Location: City of Helskir, Dominion of Helskir, Heldannic Empire, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: The long-anticipated day arrives: the combined force of Thyatian and Heldunian soldiers has massed around the perimeter of Helskir, several hundred feet from the protective ring of motte-and-bailey fortresses. The attacking force sends out a few patrols to probe the defenses and many of these suffer moderate casualties. Seeing that no retaliatory strikes are in evidence, the Thyatian-Heldunian force entrenches itself. (*See Fe. 23, Fy. 2; Fy. 16, Fy. 18.*)

What This Means: With a chokehold on all of the territory surrounding Helskir and the Naycese blockade at sea, the Heldannic forces are effectively trapped. Lacking the troop strength—they have roughly 1,500 soldiers left—to stage a major offensive, Anna von Hendriks and her advisors concluded that, so long as they remain ensconced within Helskir, the enemy must come to them and try to break through the numerous defenses that have been erected.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are part of the Heldannic forces, the PCs might be ordered to sneak behind enemy lines to determine the attacking force's strengths and weaknesses and possibly carry out an act of sabotage or two. If they are part of the Thyatian-Heldunian force, they could perform similar missions against the Heldannic forces—and possibly even infiltrate Helskir itself to obtain vital military secrets. Definitely an opportunity for good espionage activities.

Fyrmont 9, AC 1017: Mykonos to Receive More Support.

Location: City-State of Kastelios, Serpent Coast. DV

Description: In a unanimous decision, the Assembly of Kastelios agrees to provide the nascent colony of Mykonos with more financial support, in the form of investment

to go towards making it more self-sufficient and providing incentives to encourage a small number of Kastelians to settle there. Pleased with the decision, Adonai Stephanos immediately begins to draw up plans for a second voyage to the island. (*See Fe. 18, Fy. 1; Fy. 22, Am. 20.*)

What This Means: The evident success in establishing Mykonos has won political points for Adonai, something of which he is well aware. The development of Mykonos is actually quite timely: the arrival of hundreds of Milenian refugees from the Meghala Kimata Plains has begun to tax the resources of the city-state and some members of the assembly see the island as a potential place to offload the newcomers. This and the apparent richness of Mykonos, makes the whole arrangement seem entirely beneficial to Kastelios.

Fyrmont 9, AC 1017: Østmark Besieged!

Location: Town of Østmark, Kingdom of Qeodhar, Nayce. AS

Description: As grim news continues to trickle in concerning the reversal of the Antalians' fortunes in central Qeodhar, the inhabitants of Østmark are shocked to see ships, flying Qeodharan colors, sailing towards the not-too-distant coast. The townsfolk grow alarmed at the implications. Hastily, defenses are erected and arms prepared, for the conflict that is sure to come.

Within hours, the ships drop anchor not far from the coast and soldiers are rowed ashore. A force of roughly 200 men marches up to the wooden palisade surrounding Østmark and from its ranks comes a heavily armored man, who demands the unconditional surrender of the town. Without hesitation, the inhabitants refuse and the Qeodharans commence the siege. (*See Th. 16, Ya. 4; Fy. 15, Am. 1.*)

What This Means: Morale among the Antalians is already beginning to ebb. Since the defeat at Almisford, the "liberated" territories have steadily been whittled away by concerted Qeodharan-Alphatian assaults.

While this campaign has been occupying the Antalian *jarls'* attention, Norlan has secretly been sending soldiers and ships to Icehop Island, which lies off the eastern coast of Qeodhar, for the past several months. Sparsely inhabited by Antalians, control was secured quickly before any word of the second invasion spread and a long-disused naval base has been pressed into service once more. From this base, an assault has been launched along the eastern coast of Qeodhar, with the aim of cutting off the Antalians' access to the sea, thus trapping them between two forces. Østmark is one of several landing points.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are working with the attackers, the PCs could find themselves engaged in reconnaissance missions to determine the strength of the town's defenses. Alternatively, if they are working with the Antalians, they might be asked to carry messages to other defenders in the region, in order to coordinate a counterattack to relieve Østmark; or they might be asked to interfere with the besiegers' plans (either through sabotaging their equipment or assassinating key figures).

Fyrmont 9, AC 1017: Foiled by Turtles and Ants.

Location: Hinterlands, Thyatian Empire. DV

Description: Siobhan daughter of Maeve renews the strategy of raiding seemingly vulnerable Thyatian settlements, hoping to undermine their strength in the region and get them to give up the Hinterlands as too costly and unprofitable. But key areas prove tougher than they used to, with increased (if improvised in many cases) fortifications and better-equipped and organized defenders. The raids are more difficult and less successful than they were earlier in the year. Furthermore, few members of the Raven Clan participate and even the members of the Jackal and Rhino Clans seem reluctant to wage a campaign of destruction in their own lands. So the burden of fighting falls mainly on the Leopard Clan. (*See Kl. 5, Fe. 6; Fy. 25, Sv. 14.*)

What This Means: At Leilah ben Nadir's command, the inhabitants loyal to Thyatis (both settlers and Thyatianized natives) have been organized into militias and given good equipment (including surplus equipment from mainland Thyatis sent as forces there re-organized and downsized). Outlying farmsteads have been converted into fortified villas and communities, able to better resist attack. With more forces, Leilah has organized her troops into fast reaction forces under several commanders, able to respond quickly to raids.

What the PCs Can Do: As the war grinds on there are many small skirmishes the characters can be involved in.

Fyrmont 10, AC 1017: Assassination Attempt on Bakai.

Location: Camp of Chagon-Nah, Ethengar *Khanates*. OW

Description: In the night, one of Bakai's attending priests attempts to poison her as she sleeps. The attempt is foiled by a Bortak *bratak*—one of the bodyguards assigned Bakai by her husband Batu *Khan*. The priest is brought before Manghai *Khan* and is sentenced to immediate death. In the morning, Manghai *Khan* apologizes to the Bortak bodyguards and Bakai and explains that the priest was a radical who wished to see Manghai succeed his father at all costs. (See *Fe. 3, Fe. 18; Fy. 12, Fy. 15.*)

What This Means: Manghai/Jaku's explanations are truthful—he did not commission the priest to murder Bakai. The man was simply an extremist who hoped (like Manghai does) that in slaying the eldest daughter of the Golden *Khan*, he would secure his lord's succession. Despite the coincidence, the repeated attempts on Bakai's life will set many to begin their own investigations—notably Akmad ibn Yussef.

Fyrmont 10, AC 1017: Reconstruction.

Location: Town of Polakatsikes, Dominion of Polakatsikes, Heldannic Empire, Meghala Kimata Plains. DV

Description: Under Governor Wolfgang Stemmel's orders, Heldannic field engineers, assisted by local masons and other craftsmen, begin the process of repairing the town's damaged fortifications. (See *Fy. 3, Fy. 4; Fy. 13, Fy. 15.*)

What This Means: The recent siege showed where the weaknesses in Polakatsikes's fortifications, though still largely intact, were located. This work will take a few months, but it is something that cannot be ignored, especially if the town could be attacked again.

Fyrmont 10, AC 1017: Ierendi Steps Up Patrols.

Location: Kingdom of Ierendi. OW

Description: Naval patrols in the Sea of Dread are stepped up in numerical strength and frequency. Ierendi's powerful sea forces are on particular lookout for piratical activities and raids—notably those carried out by Thyatian and Minrothaddan vessels. Merchant ships from the Five Shires are given special escort through Sea of Dread waters. (See *Fy. 4, Fy. 8; Sv. 3.*)

What This Means: Ierendi has been very concerned about the increasing Thyatian interest in the Sea of Dread region since the annexation of Minrothad last year. In response to the call for aid by the hin of the Shires last month, Ierendi has sent its navies out in force, to ensure that the Sea of Dread stays safe and to attempt to keep a check on Thyatian and Minrothaddan activity.

What the PCs Can Do: Sea-oriented PCs can find a lot of action in the Sea of Dread—either working with the Ierendi navy, or working with any of the various other factions in conflict in the region.

Fyrmont 10, AC 1017: Thyatis Attacks Tameronikas.

Location: Town of Tameronikas, Emirate of Nicostenia, Emirates of Ylaruam. OW

Description: When he learned from his commander at Ctesiphon that the Ylari were pursuing them, Eusebius personally led the main Thyatian forces up the coast to

Tameronikas. There are over 4,500 troops with this force (consisting of the Hetaereia Augustiana, the Anatolian Tagmatic Regiment, the 2nd Marine Expeditionary Force and the 6th Imperial Battle Fleet). With them also are a few hundred unenthusiastic Ylari volunteers, under the command of a fringe member of the Preceptor faction who happens to be a prominent native of Tameronikas.

When the Thyatians arrive, the land troops construct a fortified camp outside the walls of Tameronikas while the ships bombard the town from the sea. The Ylari garrison and townsfolk attempt to hastily repair the seaward defenses of the town to prevent it from being captured immediately. (*See Fy. 5, Fy. 9; Fy. 12, Fy. 14.*)

What This Means: These are the steel jaws of Eusebius's trap snapping shut on Ylaruam. With the sultan's main army far to the west, the Thyatians can attack Tameronikas with relative impunity; it will be a few days at least until the sultan's forces can arrive. By then, Eusebius hopes to have Tameronikas under Thyatian control. The Ylari troops accompanying the Thyatians consist of some of the men captured by Thyatis last year and this year, plus some Ylari sellswords, all of whom are more or less supporters of the cause of the Preceptors, but none of which are enthusiastic about fighting on behalf of Thyatis.

Fyrmont 10, AC 1017: Thyatian Emissaries Reach Twaelar Capital.

Location: Twaelar Merrow Empire, Sea of Dread. OW

Description: Emissaries representing the Thyatian Empire, including several Seahome elves, reach the capital of the Twaelar Merrow Empire under a banner of truce. They inform the Twaelar that they are empowered to negotiate peace between the Twaelar and Thyatis. The Twaelar, themselves also growing weary of a costly war with no apparent benefits and no victory for either side in sight, agree to

discuss an end of the conflict. (*See Tb. 13, Ya. 16; Fy. 19.*)

What This Means: The war has gone on for two years with no resolution. Though in the beginning things went well for the Twaelar, battles have become more difficult and costly as the war has worn on and the Thyatians learned how to fight back. Thyatian ships, including airships, carrying frogmen equipped with armed diving sleds, have been conducting strikes against Twaelar bases and settlements while just as the Twaelar have been conducting raids against the Thyatians. Now both sides are growing tired of a war that seems like it could go on indefinitely without a negotiated settlement.

Eusebius also uses this as an opportunity to learn more about the Twaelar Empire.

What the PCs Can Do: Characters might be dispatched to negotiate, or as guards for the envoys. They will then witness firsthand the extent of the Twaelar Merrow Empire and face whatever challenges the DM chooses to put before them.

Fyrmont 11, AC 1017: The Role of an Aeon.

Location: Ruins of Fjellstue, Province of Septentriona, Thyatian Empire. SD

Description: The adventurers and the "knights-errant" delve into the ruins of Fjellstue. The robots help the party through a couple of encounters with monsters before they decide their charade is getting tedious. They then turn on their "comrades" in the next encounter, cutting them down quickly. After that, they begin the long process of intimidating the local monster population into submission, the first act in their new career as evil warlords. (*See Fe. 20, Fy. 7.*)

What This Means: The robots will face competition with the other monstrous leaders in the region before they can succeed in their quest to become menacing warlords. The Thyatians will soon discover, based on similarities between the descriptions provided by surviving crewmen of the figures that attacked their ship and the "knights-errant" described by the inhabitants

of Latveii (and who are now the prime suspects in the murder of a local family), that they apparently have a new problem on their hands.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs were the ones the robots accompanied, they'll face a sudden and possibly surprising attack just when they're engaged with some tough monsters and somewhat drained as a result of previous encounters.

Fyrmont 12, AC 1017: Preceptor Defects!

Location: Town of Tameronikas, Emirate of Nicostenia, Emirates of Ylaruam. OW

Description: The Thyatian forces wake up to discover the banner of the Preceptor who had been commanding their Ylari auxiliaries flying over the gatehouse of Tameronikas. The Ylari volunteers had set up camp north of the main Thyatian camp and it is now abandoned—all of them appear to have joined the defenders of Tameronikas. (*See Fy. 9, Fy. 10; Fy. 14, Fy. 26.*)

What This Means: The Ylari sneaked out in the dead of night, having made contact with the troops within the walls and convinced them of their desire to abandon the Thyatians—if the town would declare its support for the Preceptor faction and reject the rule of Sultan Hassam. Somewhat out of desperation, they agreed.

Fyrmont 12, AC 1017: Alphatians Retreat.

Location: Countryside of Province of Anchorage, Republic of Esterhold, Nayce. SK

Description: With the recent advances of the united Jennites, those Alphatians who do not live in the coastal towns have begun to move to the city of Skyfyr and the towns of Port Marlin and Rock Harbor and Anchorage of course. Few stay in Anchorage, though, but soon continue on toward Skyfyr. However, some determined Alphatians decide to stay in Anchorage and

fight to the bitter end. (*See Fe. 20, Fe. 25; Fy. 26, Am. 23.*)

What This Means: The recent Jennite advance has most Alphatians on the run. Alphatian encounters with the enemy have not gone well, so few are hopeful that the Jennites will be stopped anytime soon.

What the PCs Can Do: Alphatian PCs can help organize the retreat and escort the refugees, while Jennite PCs can spy on the refugees and stage attacks on Alphatian positions.

Fyrmont 12, AC 1017: Suspicions Confirmed.

Location: Camp of Chagon-Nah, Ethengar *Khanates*. OW

Description: The wizard Akmad ibn Yussef receives a visitor in his *yurt*, a young Ethengar shaman named Trungpa. After a lengthy discussion, the two arrive at the conclusion that Manghai *Khan* is under a powerful possession. Unfortunately, the knowledge alone is not enough to solve the problem—even if they were to dispel the spirit from Manghai's body, the young *khan's* soul would still be missing. They must somehow locate Manghai's soul. Trungpa believes it to be in the Spirit World and the two begin to make plans to retrieve it. (*See Fe. 18, Fy. 10; Fy. 15, Ei. 15.*)

What This Means: Trungpa received a warning from his spirit lord in Kaldmont of last year that things were not right in the Spirit World and the World *Yurt*. Over the course of the year, his investigations have led him to the truth—that an evil spirit is possessing Manghai *Khan*. Akmad, too, has begun to suspect Manghai of not being himself. The two will be very cautious about their plans, so as not to draw Manghai/Jaku's suspicions.

What the PCs Can Do: Trungpa will need adventurers to accompany him into the Spirit World to find Manghai's soul. They will have to be unimportant characters—people that the *khan* will not miss if they disappear for a time.

Fyrmont 12, AC 1017: Dead Travel Fast.

Location: Barony of Two Lakes Vale. NW

Description: Sylarion and the Shadow Lord stop at the border of the small barony of Two Lakes Vale and hide their undead troops (numbering some 1,500 creatures) in the caves of the hills. The vampire elf then *communes* with his Immortal, to receive new instructions. (See *Fe. 14, Fe. 16; Fy. 15, Fy. 17.*)

What This Means: Nyx ordered the exodus of the undead troops from Aeleris Pits (where Sylarion left a small garrison of 100 lesser undead under the wyrd Aeleris's command, however) to the Barony of Two Lakes Vale with the promise She'll have turned this vale into a veritable paradise for the undead race. However, Sylarion and the Shadow Lord don't know how this will happen exactly, so they are now waiting for precise orders from Nyx.

Fyrmont 13, AC 1017: Mauntea Warehouses Sacked.

Location: Shireton Port, Five Shires. OW

Description: Under the cover of the night, the warehouses of Mauntea House in Shireton Port are looted and burned by unknown vandals. The house makes an official complaint and the authorities conduct a short investigation, but the criminals are not found. (See *Fy. 6, Fy. 8.*)

What This Means: This is the hin anger against Darokin pouring out. And the hin authorities don't really want to investigate this either. So this crime and other similar ones, will remain unsolved.

What the PCs Can Do: Hin PCs could be the ones looting the warehouse.

Fyrmont 13, AC 1017: Taking the Battle to the Enemy's Door.

Location: Town of Polakatsikes, Dominion of Polakatsikes, Heldannic Empire, Meghala Kimata Plains. DV

Description: Both the Heldannic Knights and the Army of Meghala agree to send

small scouting parties into Mivosian-held territory, in order to find out how strong their grip on the surrounding lands happens to be and to initiate various acts of sabotage. Priority will also be placed on meeting with any resistance leaders they can find and providing whatever assistance to them can be given. (See *Fy. 4, Fy. 10; Fy. 15.*)

What This Means: Realizing that a frontal assault is out of the question, the allied Heldannic-Meghalan force has decided to use disruption and subterfuge as its weapons of choice against the Mivosians. If there are enough people suffering under Mivosian rule, who wish for freedom, they might be spurred into action if they knew that their struggle would not be an isolated one.

What the PCs Can Do: Naturally, the PCs should be among those considered for such a mission. Several parties will be formed and each will be sent to a different city-state, where they will have to spy on the enemy and determine where the Mivosians' weaknesses happen to be. A dangerous job, to be sure.

Fyrmont 13, AC 1017: Nature's Emissaries.

Location: Forests near Camp of Rainbow Spring, Kingdom of Frisland, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: While the Stonewall forces are now busy finishing their river boats and loading supplies and troops onto them, the guard patrols have been expanded due to the recent assassination attempts and some monsters wandering in from Blackheart. One such patrol goes missing and when a group of experts are sent out to find them, they are attacked by bears, wolves, a few treants and other sylvan creatures. They discover that these were apparently made to do so by a druid, whom they then capture. Suspecting that this druid might have something to do with the recent assassination attempt, they then bring him to Rainbow Spring for questioning. However, even after intensive questioning, the druid,

Arbandas, continues to claim that the attack was in response to the army's utter disregard for the forests they're in. He does admit, though, that he had his forces attack and kill the patrol that went missing and even reveals where their bodies are buried. He also admits that he used to live in Arkan, which only suggests to Selcomad and the other leaders that he may indeed have been involved with the assassination attempt and they decide to keep him prisoner until they can decide what to do with him. (*See Fe. 22, Fy. 3; Fy. 25, Am. 4.*)

What This Means: Arbandas is telling the truth. He's a pretty young druid and his youthful anger got the better of him when he decided to attack the invaders. This is just an unfortunate side-effect of the Stonewall army's presence here, but due to the recent assassination attempt, the Stonewall forces are very reluctant to accept Arbandas's claims of innocence.

What the PCs Can Do: Obviously the PCs could be the adventures who capture Arbandas.

Fyrmont 13, AC 1017: The Hatfei Counter... Brutally.

Location: Makekei Territory, Neathar Lands. HW

Description: A Hatfei raiding party crosses over into Makekei lands and stealthily make its way towards the home of Swerg, the believed instigator of the assassination of Duma and his two companions. The Hatfei strike at the abode, killing Swerg, his three sons and two kinsmen outright. The Hatfei raiders withdraw from the area after setting fire to the residence, the flames killing still more of the family, including Swerg's wife and youngest daughter. Other Makekei assemble to fight the fire but by the time they do so the Hatfei are well away from the area. (*See Ya. 6, Fe. 6.*)

What This Means: It did not take long for the perpetrators of the assassinations to be found out, their boasts doing much to undermine secrecy and even support within Makekei. This waning support within the

Makekei Tribe explains the ease that the Hatfei had in assaulting Swerg's home. The demise of Swerg's wife and daughter is a tragedy, but deemed an accident by those wishing to avoid further conflicts. Others see their deaths as omens to the brutalities to come if war erupts. However, several of Swerg's friends and kinsmen swear vengeance and subtly offer bounties on the heads of Hatfei tribesmen.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs already engaged in the conflict may organize and execute the revenge, or try to prevent it, or plan further retaliation, depending on their side and alignment.

Fyrmont 14, AC 1017: Thyatis Recognizes Emirate of Tameronikas.

Location: Town of Tameronikas, Emirate of Nicostenia, Emirates of Ylaruam. OW

Description: Eusebius agrees to meet with the Ylari leader within Tameronikas under a flag of truce. After several hours of negotiation, the emperor signs an agreement, recognizing Tameronikas and the region around it as the sovereign Emirate of Tameronikas and the leader of the Preceptors as its emir. He pledges Thyatian support in protecting the Emirate of Tameronikas from attempts by other authorities to control it. In exchange the representatives of Tameronikas agree to cede the small border region east of Fort Zendrol, running from below the hill escarpment due east to the coast, to the Empire of Thyatis. (*See Fy. 10, Fy. 12; Fy. 26, Am. 1.*)

What This Means: Eusebius would have preferred to conquer Tameronikas outright and add it to the Thyatian Empire, but he is very satisfied with the idea of creating a small client state, dependent upon Thyatis, as a buffer between Ylaruam and the empire. The Emirate of Tameronikas covers the southern half of the former Emirate of Nicostenia, with its northern frontier roughly halfway between Cubia and Tameronikas and its southern and western frontiers ending at the border with Thyatis.

Ylari living in the region ceded to Thyatis will be allowed to move into Ylari territories, while Eusebius will settle some Thyatians in that border area to better control it, including by making some military land grants. Thyatian advisors, representative" and attachés will be very prominent within Tameronikas.

The Preceptor faction as a whole will be of two minds regarding the Emirate of Tameronikas. On the one hand, they do not want to be perceived as being pawns of Thyatis, but on the other hand the Preceptor-led emirate will be too convenient a gathering point for them to pass up; so the opposition to the Kin regime will gather here. This will both help them, but will also undermine their popularity some and thus further entrench Kin rule of Ylaruam. Sultan Hassam will not be pleased when he learns of this.

Third Week

Fyrmont 15, AC 1017: Who Mourns for Wazor?

Location: Barony of Two Lakes Vale, Icereach Range. NW

Description: During the night, Wazor, Court Mage of Baron Maltus Fharo, is interrupted in his sleep by the intrusion of a sinister elf in his quarters. The elf suddenly attacks the wizard, who tries to repel the enemy the best he can. When the guards storm the mage's bedchamber, they find the body of the dead wizard lying limp on the floor, his neck broken and his nightgown caked with blood. The assassin is nowhere to be found, however. (*See Fe. 16, Fy. 12; Fy. 17, Am. 4.*)

What This Means: Nyx has ordered Sylarion to assassinate the court wizard of Baron Fharo. The mage Wazor was in fact a member of the Onyx Ring and was the effective ruler of the barony, having charmed the baron and his seneschal for many years. Wazor administered the barony according to Idris's wishes and had it stay out of any possible political agreements with

the lords of Norwold and Heldann to avoid interference in the country's internal affairs. In fact, Wazor was slowly but steadily spreading the cult of Idris among the population, who had so far accepted it without problems, since the Church of Idris seemed to keep the preying dragons away. With Wazor out of the way, Nyx's servants can now proceed with the next stage of the Immortal's plan.

Fyrmont 15, AC 1017: Date of Burial Set.

Location: Camp of Chagon-Nah, Ethengar *Khanates*. OW

Description: After some talks with the priest and shamans of the Murkit tribe, Manghai *Khan* announces that the burial of his father will be on *Rinpoch*, 15. This day is known as the Day of the Spirits and so the shamans see it as an especially appropriate time to bury Moglai *Khan* on the World Mountain. All important Ethengars are summoned to this ceremony. The body of Moglai will continue to be magically preserved until then.

Akmad ibn Yussef and Trungpa agree that the ceremony would be an opportune time to begin their quest into the Spirit World. (*See Fy. 10, Fy. 12; Ei. 15.*)

What This Means: There is a *gate* to the Spirit World at the top of the World Mountain. Akmad and Trungpa hope to use this to gain entry into that world, that they might find Manghai's lost soul. Using the funeral procession as cover is a perfect opportunity, as a band of adventurers might otherwise be discovered by evil spirits working in conjunction with Jaku the Render.

Fyrmont 15, AC 1017: The Jarls Confer.

Location: Village of Ragnisfjord, Kingdom of Qeodhar, Nayce. AS

Description: The surviving *jarls* of eastern Qeodhar meet in this fortified village, 50 miles west of Østmark, to discuss the recent turn of events. Everyone present is well aware of the continued Qeodharan-

Alphatian drive eastwards into the Antalian-held territories, as well as the fates being visited upon those who are captured. Rumors abound of prisoners being impaled on stakes and many villagers being force-marched in the direction of Farend—towards what is certain to be an unpleasant end. Making matters worse is news of the siege of Østmark, as well as other Antalian settlements on or near the eastern coast.

Realizing that they cannot hold off an invasion on two fronts, the *jarls* agree to send for aid. The main problem is that they are unsure as to who would be willing to aid them. Qeodhar is distant from most of the lands of the Old World and there are no regional powers on Skothar or further north to which they could turn. After hours of tense debate, they arrive at one possibility—the Northern Reaches and specifically Ostland. All present know of their heritage as the people of fallen Ystmarhavn, as well as the kinship they share with the people of the Northern Reaches; if there are any people who might be swayed to aid them, it would be those people and more so for the Ostlanders, who even in Qeodhar are known for their prowess in battle and their stronger adherence to traditional Northman ways. In the meantime, they resolve, their forces will continue to harry their enemies whenever possible—especially in the northern regions of the island, where Norlan’s forces are spread thinly. Happy at arriving at a decision, the *jarls* commission envoys to make their way to the island nation. (See *Ya. 4, Fy. 9; Am. 1, Am. 10.*)

What This Means: As the embattled descendants of the once-mighty nation of Ystmarhavn, the Antalians of Qeodhar have taken great pains to remember who they are and where they come from. They are also aware of the existence of their distant kin—the people of the Northern Reaches. Although contact with these southern cousins is all but nonexistent, mainly taking the form of sporadic trading years ago, the fact remains that they do exist. The *jarls* are hoping that the Ostlanders will not have forgotten about them, nor their own warrior spirit.

As for the rumors, they are mostly just that—rumors. Antalian prisoners have not been executed in large numbers; instead, they are force-marched along with their non-combatant families to parts unknown, perhaps for some more sinister purpose.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs could easily find themselves taking part in a diplomatic mission to Ostland. There are all sorts of dangers awaiting the envoys at sea, some of which could test the mettle of any adventurer!

Fyrmont 15, AC 1017: The Shadow Withdraws.

Location: Villages of Treminios and Doleria, Meghala Kimata Plains. DV

Description: A scouting party from Polakatsikes, sent to these villages to determine the size of the Mivosian force stationed here, is surprised to find them abandoned and in ruin. Anything of value that could be taken is gone and the surrounding fields have been burned. (See *Fy. 10, Fy. 13.*)

What This Means: The Mivosians have withdrawn to Syropolis and Tyrnae, both of which have better fortifications and possess more resources which may be used in the war effort. Furthermore, this better protects the army from any raids or other forms of attack. In the coming months, the Mivosians will be working to replenish their ranks and further cement their hold on the various city-states they have conquered.

Fyrmont 15, AC 1017: Imperial Expedition Returns to Minaea.

Location: City of Minaea, Confederated Kingdom of Minaea, Minaean Coast. SK

Description: The expedition to Skothar returns to the city of Minaea after its transactions with the Jennites. Theodorian Metothemius sends in a search party to try and find the men who deserted, but they have left the city and are not found. After re-provisioning and a brief stopover, the squadron continues on south along the coast of Skothar. (See *Kl. 27, Fe. 21; Sv. 10.*)

What This Means: Theodorian Metothemius knew he was unlikely to find the deserters and even if he did he wasn't sure he'd want them back. But he felt he had a duty to try. In any case, the expedition has until now remained within areas that are at least somewhat known to the Thyatians. Now they will begin travelling into the unknown.

Theodorian decides the expedition will winter in Minaea, sending ships and men on short expeditions to explore the region, especially charting the coasts. Metothemius meanwhile tries to develop good relations with the Minaean government.

What the PCs Can Do: Swindlers or con-men in Minaea might try to separate the characters from their hard-earned loot. Or the characters might try to do that to some poor, innocent, naive, Minaeans—if they can find any.

Fyrmont 15, AC 1017: Pirate Ball.

Location: City of Baraga, Merry Pirate Seas. HW

Description: King Necco the Black holds the annual Pirate Ball, an extremely formal affair which is a virtual who's who among the Merry Pirates. The ball is held in the Grand Ballroom, a lavish hall on Necco's private estate. All of the pirate-kings and their queens, other pirate nobility, plus those with connections or great wealth, are present. The most talented musicians, the finest foods and the most elegant clothes are all part of the gala. During the ball, "Handlebar" Emilio, Pirate-King of Puerto Morillos, makes an overly aggressive pass at Carola the Grappler, one of the few successful women captains. Emilio, having consumed far too much drink, gropes at Carola during a romantic dance. Carola responds, despite her elaborate and attractive gown, by dropping Emilio to the ground and pinning him with an expert wrestling move, her dagger held to his throat. The stunned crowd immediately cheers for Carola and jeers at the drunken Emilio. Carola quickly regains her composure and the ball continues. Emilio

leaves, convinced that she'll be along shortly. (*See Fl. 17, Fe. 6; Fy. 20, Am. 20.*)

What This Means: The Pirate Ball is the highlight of the Merry Pirate's social calendar. This is one of the few times when all of the wealthiest and most famous pirates will set aside their differences to come together in one place. Besides socializing and carousing, the pirates will use this opportunity to hear rumors, check up on their rivals and other gossip. Emilio is a notorious womanizer who has sought after Carola for many circles, to no avail. Carola is annoyed by Emilio and his brash act at a highly visible public event demanded harsh action. She is also an expert wrestler. Although this is a formal ball, no one is really concerned by the incident—these are still pirates, after all.

What the PCs Can Do: Unless the PCs are of Name level, are very wealthy or very well connected, they will not be invited to the ball. However, bribes or trickery may also be able to get them in. The gala can serve as a rumor mill and is an excellent opportunity to role-play the interactions between famous pirate captains. Alternatively, lower-level PCs can be hired as guards, or can hear the gossip from the ball as it spreads through Baraga the next sleep.

Fyrmont 16, AC 1017: A Supposition Vindicated?

Location: Dominion of Vanya's Rest, Aryptian Savannah, Heldannic Empire. DV

Description: Observers stationed at the southern fortresses note the existence of campfires during the night—to the southwest. Curious, the officers dispatch several scouting parties the next days to determine the source of the fires and after they return, they report the existence of many sets of footprints, some of which appear to have been made by paws. (*See Fe. 18, Fy. 3; Fy. 18, Fy. 19.*)

What This Means: Castellan Heinz Kronenburg will feel vindicated that his suppositions concerning the current threat posed to Vanya's Rest appear to be correct,

but he is mistaken. During the recent series of raids, the Meghaddara and their rakasta allies captured a Heldannic patrol. Through interrogation, they learned from the officer in charge that the castellan suspects an attack from the southwest, convinced as he is that the rakasta are in fact divergans. Using this information, they arranged to have a number of warriors make false camps to the southwest of the Heldannic fortifications, to give the illusion that enemies are gathering there.

What the PCs Can Do: Meghaddaran or rakasta PCs can take part in the raids, or they could have interrogated the prisoners.

Fyrmont 16, AC 1017: The Offensive Begins.

Location: City of Helskir, Dominion of Helskir, Heldannic Empire, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: Feeling that the time is right, the assembled Thyatian and Heldunian forces form up into their respective regiments and begin the final offensive. The advance forces are quickly bogged down by traps and other defenses constructed around the motte-and-bailey fortress, such as spike-filled pits, snares and various lethal booby-traps concealed among the thick shrubs and cypresses that grow in the area. As they slowly make their way through these, crossbowmen rain bolts upon the advancing forces, cutting down many where they stand. Some men manage to pass through the gauntlet and force the troops in some of the fortresses to spread their resources thinner in order to hold off attackers from all sides.

For a while, it seems that the Heldannic forces will be able to hold the line, until the main tower of one fortress suddenly explodes in a ball of flame! While the surviving troops within are disoriented, *magic missiles* and *lightning bolts* take down those who did not head for cover. Taking advantage of the confusion, a group of several hundred screaming Northmen charges a battered section of the wall, smashing a large hole in it and proceeding to rout the remaining defenders. Before the

defending Heldannic forces can react, several other fortresses also erupt in balls of flame, or are smashed by large boulders, hurled by heavy Thyatian catapults.

Within an hour, what was a faltering of the line among the southern fortresses becomes a rout, as a large break in the chain of defenses is made. Within that gap, outside the reach of the Heldannic crossbowmen, the assembled force gathers and then passes through into a region of light forests and open fields... and within view of the outer wall of Helskir. Soon, it becomes apparent to the fortress commanders that their enemies have successfully breached their defenses; the options are clear—surrender, or make a mad dash for freedom. Some of them, under the white flag of peace, march from their fortresses and are quickly disarmed and brought to the rear of the Thyatian and Heldunian lines. Others, hoping to win the favor of Vanya one last time, lead their men into a last defiant charge against their enemies—being utterly annihilated in the process, but taking many of their enemies with them as they go down. Finally, there are those who abandon their posts and hope to escape. Although many of these are captured, others manage to make it to the outer walls and are thrown rope ladders in order to enter Helskir, or they disperse into the wilderness. (*See Fy. 2, Fy. 9; Fy. 18, Fy. 20.*)

What This Means: Although the Heldannic force's outermost defenses have failed, they did serve their purpose—they delayed the enemy's advance and they forced the Thyatian and Heldunian troops to expend resources and soldiers against well-built, but barely-manned, wooden fortresses. Anna von Hendriks and her advisors knew beforehand that the advance to the outer wall could not be prevented, only delayed and even one or two days' respite might be enough the better entrench themselves.

In total, about 170 soldiers manned the fortresses, of which about 90 died, with around 40 being captured and the remainder escaping into the wilderness or to Helskir. The assault cost the Thyatian-Heldun force about 140 men, with another 50 or so

wounded, by comparison. Aside from superiority in numbers, what tipped the balance in the attackers' favor was the presence of battle mages, the elite Antalian Guard, which single-handedly secured three fortresses during the battle and the Thyatian *tuldum* regiment, which constructed the heavy catapults that were used to great effect.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are serving with the attacking force, the PCs can earn themselves some glory in battle, especially if they prove instrumental in destroying and/or conquering one or more fortresses. Even after the battle, there will be plenty of work to do: the surrounding territory is still filled with traps and surviving Heldannic soldiers who managed to escape. If they are with the Heldannic force, the PC will have their hands full just trying to survive, but if they manage to do so, an exciting adventure could be staged, in which they must try either to escape the northern Isle of Dawn, or make it back to Helskir.

Fyrmont 16, AC 1017: The Temple of Starlit Knowledge.

Location: Town of Julinius, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: In the city of Julinius, construction is begun on the Starlit Knowledge Dome, the new cult's first permanent shrine in Thyatis. It will be a three story high building capped by a dome. A group of expert Modrigswerg dwarves from Soderfjord are hired to work on the construction. It seems quite odd to the population and the strange dwarves immediately give way to a lot of rumors among the population, especially since the dwarves do not mingle much with others and keep largely to themselves while they are in Thyatis. (*See Fy. 4; Am. 19.*)

What This Means: There is nothing sinister about the Modrigswerg involvement in the tower's construction, although their strange appearance and habits raise a lot of curiosity in the city and people do wonder why they were contracted to do the work. Questions about the Temple of Starlit

Knowledge continue to grow, but for some people the mystery surrounding the cult creates a form of attraction, as a secret they want to be in on and share.

Fyrmont 16, AC 1017: The Olgarians' Problem.

Location: Olgarian *Levtja*, the Converted Lands, Hulean Empire. WB

Description: The war in Olgar has been dragging on for many months now, but with decreasing results. Realizing that their cause will not succeed in the short term, the few remaining rebels decide to flee to the Marmureg Woods. If they cannot free Olgar, at least they can live free themselves. Some head west, hoping to begin a new dominion in the Yazak Steppes free from the Master's domination. (*See Va. 10, Fl. 15; Sv. 1.*)

What This Means: The rebels realize that their cause is hopeless. The people of Olgar have become increasingly scared in the face of the Master's deceptions and use of brute force. Hosadus has been doing his best to depict the rebels as subversives incited by a foreign power (Zuyevo) wanting to conquer the region and destabilize it. The Olgarian Church, having no love for the Master, is however somewhat disillusioned with Zuyevo for going on military adventures elsewhere instead of helping Olgar. Since the Master never really suppressed the church, as long as it did not hinder his rule, they have no option but to accept his control for lack of a better alternative. The Master will continue to increase his hold on the minds of the Olgarian people in the meantime, free from interference from outside powers.

Fyrmont 16, AC 1017: Platoon Disappears near Maelstrom.

Location: Sundsvall Maelstrom, Nayce. AS

Description: A scouting patrol of Underocean merrow disappear while passing near the Sundsvall Maelstrom while on their way to a mission of survey for possible undead activity. There is no sign of battle

with undead or other hazards. (*See Ya. 12, Fe. 10; Sv. 23, Ei. 18.*)

Fyrmont 16, AC 1017: A Little Night Music.

Location: Town of Kopstar, Principality of Bergdhoven, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: Glantri's most notorious couple, Princess Juliana Vlaardoen and the Black Eagle Ludwig von Hendriks, are enjoying an evening's entertainment at a popular music hall in Kopstar. Midway through the performance, the pair is interrupted by Juliana's uncle Anton. He regrets the intrusion, he says, but there are urgent matters regarding the military banner stationed in town and could he trouble the Black Eagle for his extensive expertise? Perturbed, but unable to refuse such a request in front of the princess, von Hendriks complies.

Shortly after the pair leave, the princess is visited by an unexpected visitor—Sir Feldian Lehenard. Upon seeing her former lover, the princess is overwhelmed by emotion and it is not long before she is professing her love to Feldian. When he presses her on the topic of her relationship with the Black Eagle, she turns away. She is in love with him as well, she confesses. Nevertheless, Feldian manages to convince Juliana to come away with him for a time, that he might show her how much he truly cares for her. He also tells her of Anton's acceptance of his bid to marry her. Quietly, the pair slips out of the music hall and to Feldian's waiting chariot.

Later, when the princess does not return to the Tower of Linden at the appointed time, Ludwig von Hendriks grows angry. Servants hear him cursing and breaking things well into the night. The princess does not return for several days. (*See Fe. 7; Am. 24, Ei. 2.*)

What This Means: The magicks used by the Black Eagle to woo Juliana cannot entirely compete with true affection—this is one reason why Dolores Hillsbury arranged for the death of Prince Jaggar's wife years ago when she used a similar enchantment on

him. The Black Eagle had no idea about Feldian's existence—the boy was at war before the Black Eagle started his plan to win the princess. When she returns, Juliana will have a lot of explaining to do and von Hendriks will not be at all pleased with her answers.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are the sort of characters who keep their ears to the ground and associate with unscrupulous types, they may overhear a plot to have Feldian assassinated. They can warn the young man and get in his good graces (for what it's worth—he's no noble), or perhaps they can go straight to the princess herself. If they get involved, however, the Black Eagle will be certain to notice their interference.

Fyrmont 17, AC 1017: The Death Stone.

Location: Barony of Two Lakes Vale, Icereach Range. NW

Description: In a secluded island in the middle of Two Lakes Vale's Western Lake, a black dragon's peaceful slumber is broken by an explosion. The dragon awakes bleeding and stares with agony and pure hatred at the black-robed stranger that stands in front of him, taunting the wyrm with a grin. The dragon immediately lunges at the stranger, biting only air where the projected image of the wizard stood, then his body is shaken by a terrible bolt of lightning he cannot avoid. Still fuming, the dragon tries to exit his hideout inside the isle, but a wall of stone blocks his way out. With powerful blows from his claws, the dragon carves his way out of the cave, while another fiery explosion burns his tail and wings. Once out of the hideout, the dragon darts in the air and turns back to the cave's entrance, prepared to unleash his acid breath upon the intruder. The black-robed wizard walks out without fear and is suddenly washed by an acid rain. However, the fearless wizard stares back at the flying dragon, his red eyes blinking and suddenly the wyrm plummets to the ground, dead frozen. The Shadow Lord grins at his deed and proceeds to take possession of the black rock, which the

dragon was closely guarding in the middle of his treasure cave. (See *Fy. 12, Fy. 15; Am. 4, Am. 12.*)

What This Means: Nyx instructed the Shadow Lord to locate the *Death Stone*, a powerful natural artifact that will be pivotal in the success of Her plan. The stone was guarded by an ancient black dragon that served Idris, so the Shadow Lord's delight in vanquishing the wyrm was even greater. Landryn still doesn't know why the stone is so important to Nyx, as She prefers to reveal Her plan bit by bit to Her servants, but he's determined to exploit it if the opportunity arises.

Fyrmont 17, AC 1017: Darokin Tunnel Plugged.

Location: Kingdom of Rockhome. OW

Description: Construction begins on a new fort, designed to keep watch over the so-called Darokin Tunnel, a pass through the Altan Tepes mountains into Rockhome.

What This Means: The dwarves of Rockhome have had to deal with a few too many invasions by goblinoids through the Darokin Tunnel and now they are finally going to take measures to protect this border.

What the PCs Can Do: Adventurous PCs will be needed to help defend the workers from monster attacks in the dangerous mountain regions.

Fyrmont 18, AC 1017: One's Worst Fears... Come to Life!

Location: Dominion of Vanya's Rest, Aryptian Savannah, Heldannic Empire. DV

Description: During the predawn hours, sentries positioned along the ring of partially-completed fortifications report the presence of a host of unidentified armed men, possibly numbering in the hundreds, heading from the southwest. Once word reaches Castellan Heinz Kronenburg, he orders a force of 1,000 men be sent at once to meet the enemy force and instructs all soldiers manning the various fortresses to hold their positions and try to prevent the

enemy from entering Heldannic territory before help arrives. In addition, he orders one of Vanya's Rest's two *warbirds* to transport a number of troops to the region immediately, as a measure to bolster troop numbers there just in case the enemy force proves to be larger than anticipated.

Thinking the matter settled, Kronenburg goes about his business, confident in the ability of his men to hold back a small number of ragtag Meghaddara and their divergan allies. His reverie is interrupted when, while enjoying a leisurely breakfast, he is interrupted by a breathless messenger, who reports that a large host of Meghaddara and cat-men have overwhelmed two northern fortresses and are now bearing down on Vanya's Rest! Hurriedly, Kronenburg dispatches message to his commanders, ordering them to regroup their forces to meet the latest threat. At the same time, he receives word that the battle in the south has begun; the enemy force is composed primarily of cat-men, with a sprinkling of Meghaddara and even at this early stage of battle, some observers report that the cat-men's tactics do not appear to resemble those documented as being used by the divergans. Nevertheless, the enemy force, though lightly armed, is highly maneuverable, which prevents the Heldannic Knights from pinning them down in order to wipe them out cleanly. Kronenburg orders his southern commanders to use whatever means necessary to hold back the assault until help arrives.

Just as he finishes digesting this latest information, Kronenburg's thoughts are interrupted yet again by an alarmed messenger—intruders have somehow breached the defenses of Vanya's Rest! Already skirmishes are taking place in the lower corridors, as bands of Meghaddara and cat-men stealthily make their way through the fortress, wreaking havoc where they can and running away whenever they encounter a larger force of knights. Grabbing his weapons, he orders the messenger to send word to his remaining commanders: those positioned in the field

should concentrate their efforts on eliminating the enemy force which had breached the outer defenses, while garrison commands should rally their forces and ensure their respective areas are secure. (*See Fy. 3, Fy. 16; Fy. 19, Fy. 21.*)

What This Means: The Meghaddaran-rakasta feint has proved itself to be effective; Kronenburg thought the small force to the south (numbering around 600 humans and rakasta) was the vanguard of a much larger army and so ordered his southern garrisons to remain in position and at the same time ordered 1,000 men sent south to aid them. This left about 2,000 men in the fortress of Vanya's Rest itself. With Kronenburg's attention drawn south, it was easier for the main Meghaddaran-rakasta force (numbering about 1,500 warriors) to break through in the north. Once they managed to get past the defenses, around 250 of the invaders broke off and managed to sneak into Vanya's Rest itself, while the remaining warriors drew the attention of the garrison. Now that the Heldannic Knights have enemies in their midst, the situation looks grave, indeed.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are with the knights, the PCs will either be hunting down those enemies who managed to enter Vanya's Rest, or engaging in pitched battles outside (either around the fortress, or to the south). If they are with the Meghaddaran-rakasta alliance, the PCs could either be drawing attention by staging daring raids, or they could be part of the force that is infiltrating the fort.

Fyrmont 18, AC 1017: Commanders Nominated.

Location: Cities of Theeds, Earldom of Theeds and Leominster, Bishopric of Leominster, Kingdom of Bellayne. SC

Description: Both sides choose this day to nominate overall commanders of their swelling armies.

For the royalists: General of the Army, Lord-General Jeremy Brumstead; Major General of the Foot, Sir Lionel Edgwinton; General of the Horse, Lord Rodney the

Intrepid; and for the parliament: Commander in Chief, the Rt. Honorable Blythe-Jackson; Commander of the Horse, the Honorable Edward Hampden; Commander of the Foot, the Honorable Richard Croft; Magical Advisor, the Honorable Philip Southwell. (*See Fe. 19, Fy. 2; Fy. 27, Am. 17.*)

What This Means: By now both sides appear to have become bored of the paper war of words between the two sides—both sides launch a massive recruiting and arming drive across the kingdom. Due to the parliament's superior resources, it seems that the king is perhaps lagging behind somewhat in the race for recruits.

What the PCs Can Do: Prominent characters could be given secondary command positions or become staff advisors to one of the commanders or form special action squads on their faction's behalf.

Fyrmont 18, AC 1017: Withstanding the Storm.

Location: City of Helskir, Dominion of Helskir, Heldannic Empire, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: A massive bombardment of Helskir's outer walls begins, as ten heavy catapults lob boulders at the fortifications. Although many of them miss their mark, falling short of the wall itself, others score direct hits, causing considerable damage and inflicting casualties. The barrage continues all day, with the hits becoming more accurate as the hours pass. A cease-fire is called by dusk, after which the Heldannic soldiers send out repair crews to restore the worst-hit portions of the wall. (*See Fy. 9, Fy. 16; Fy. 20, Fy. 23.*)

What This Means: The Thyatian-Heldunian alliance is displaying a show of force, to illustrate to their foes what they are capable of doing. They also hope to demoralize the Heldannic soldiers defending Helskir, by being able to pummel their defenses from a safe distance, without fear of a counterattack. Although the damage was considerable, relatively few defenders

lost their lives and the worst of the destruction is repairable in fairly short order.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs serving with the attacking force could find themselves scouting the outer wall to determine where bombardments should take place, or perhaps sneaking behind the defenses themselves. Heldannic PCs could perform acts of sabotage against enemy catapults, or wreaking havoc among outlying troops.

Fyrmont 18, AC 1017: Azcan Keep Falls.

Location: Calpaquelli Keep, Azcan Empire. HW

Description: After a long siege, punctuated by ferocious sorties by the Azcan defenders and costly bold assaults by the besieging Schattentalen, the bastion finally falls, thereby completing the conquest of southern-central Azcan jungles. (*See Va. 8, Fe. 11; Am. 24, Sv. 7.*)

Fyrmont 18, AC 1017: Eastward Ho!

Location: City of Raven Scarp, *Exarchate* of Davania Superior, Hinterlands, Thyatian Empire. DV

Description: After months of alternating between resting in Raven Scarp, making runs to other coastal settlements (including a brief jaunt to Kastelios, where a small number of Milenian refugees from the interior were picked up) and charting some of the larger coastal islands of the Hinterlands, Julius Ambrosius orders his men to settle any business they might have in Raven Scarp, as tomorrow the exploratory flotilla will sail eastwards. (*See Va. 25, Fl. 15; Am. 9, Sv. 2.*)

What This Means: Julius wanted to familiarize his men (many of whom have never sailed in tropical regions) with the waters around northern Davania, as well as acclimatize them to the rigors of the land, as he suspects that future events in the expedition will not be so tranquil. In the meantime, the Thyatian authorities asked him to perform some minor chores for them, such as charting islands and ferrying cargo over short distances, in part because

of the ongoing conflict with the Hinterlanders of the interior. Seeing that some action would keep his men alert, Julius agreed. Now, however, he can delay his voyage no longer; his crew are as prepared as they can be.

Fyrmont 19, AC 1017: Armistice Negotiated With Twaelar.

Location: Twaelar Merrow Empire, Sea of Dread. OW

Description: The Thyatian Empire and the Twaelar Merrow Empire conclude an armistice agreement, bringing an end to the two year long war between them. They agree to respect each other's presence in the region and to cooperate against threats to their mutual interests. The Thyatians will draw up new sea-charts and their ships will travel in designated sea-lanes to avoid passing over Twaelar communities. This will limit the risk of a ship sinking and hitting a Twaelar settlement. Thyatis also agrees to pay 100,000 gp in compensation, plus a 1,000 gp per month subsidy to the Twaelar. The Twaelar officially recognize Thyatis's claim to the Thanegioth Archipelago islands (eastern, not the western group part of Yavdlom).

Both parties will establish permanent embassies in each other's capitals and trade will be permitted. This last part was suggested specifically by the envoys from Minrothad and will help expand the empire's trade network. Soon the Thyatian Empire will be taking in enough revenue from taxing the trade to more than cover the cost of the monthly subsidy to the Twaelar. (*See Ya. 16, Fy. 10; Am 20, Ei. 19.*)

What This Means: The Thyatians and the Twaelar decided a mutually beneficial pact would be better than the mutually harmful war. Neither are rivals for the same resources, since the Twaelar are a sub-oceanic power and the Thyatians almost exclusively a land-based power. Twaelar consulates will also be established in Mora and Raven Scarp and Thyatis will establish consulates in some other Twaelar communities as they learn more about the

Merrow Empire. As a result of this peace agreement, the Thyatians will redirect several fleets of marines to support the fight in the Hinterlands against the Thratians.

As a part of this deal the Thyatians requested that the Twaelar turn over information regarding who was shipping them supplies during the war. Names of several of the Twaelar contacts in the Nayce's arms trade are given to Thyatis. The Thyatians will keep their sea-charts secret, available only to their own merchants (which include those of Minrothad). Thus their ships will stay in the safe sea-lanes. The Twaelar have the right to attack ships sailing outside these lanes, which may make things dangerous for those who don't have the proper charts. Most Thyatian captains will abide to this restriction and be safe, but ships from other nations—notably those from the Western Defense League, but also Kastelios, Yavdlom, Nayce, or some even farther countries—will not benefit from the same protection; such ships may be sunk by the Twaelar and it will probably be some time before the merrow empire realizes that Thyatis is not the only nation with ships passing above its cities.

What the PCs Can Do: Characters could explore the Twaelar Empire, gain some Twaelar contacts, or perhaps even a merrow character could join the party.

Fyrmont 19, AC 1017: Siege of Tashgoun Lifted.

Location: Kingdom of Douzbakjian, Midlands. WB

Description: The forces of Kiligi Alp Arslan reach the city of Tashgoun and drive the Zuyevans before them. The Zuyevans withdraw in good order back towards the borders of their empire, but are hotly pursued by the forces of Douzbakjian. The people of Tashgoun cheer as the relief forces ride into and through the city. (*See Ya. 1, Fe. 6.*)

What This Means: The Douzbaks will harass the retreating Zuyevans all the way back to the border over the next weeks and days, pursuing them closely, riding down

foraging parties and stragglers. As the route back home is already denuded of forage, the Zuyevan troops begin to starve and are forced to eat their own mounts and pack animals. Troops begin to try and sneak away, deserting in the night, at first in ones and twos and later in entire squads and bands. Some of these manage to slink safely home, but more are captured or killed by their enemies as the invasion becomes a debacle.

Fyrmont 19, AC 1017: Cabal Expedition Reaches Albarocca.

Location: Northeastern arm of the Great Escarpment, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: After skirmishing with both phanatons and some araneas, the expedition sent out by the Cult of Thanatos reaches the isolated Barony of Albarocca. Albarocca lies on the edge of the escarpment, just south of Trikelios. The barony submitted to the Thothians during the fighting on the Isle of Dawn, but since then has languished, almost forgotten, in a monster-infested wilderness. They welcome their fellow Thyatians into their community. There is a degree of tension between both groups upon first contact. The expedition members stay for a few days, giving news from back home (emphasizing tales of famine, riot and civil war, making things seem unspeakably grim). They say they are refugees from Eusebius's tyrannical despotism, causing Baron Augustus Ignazio to feel sympathy for their plight. A few members of the Cult of Thanatos remain in Albarocca while the others travel on towards Trikelios. (*See Th. 2, Kl. 3; Am. 8, Sv. 4.*)

What This Means: The cultists of Thanatos, playing on the isolation of the barony and sympathy as fellow Thyatians, hope to quickly bring Albarocca under their sway, advising the baron and twisting him and his subjects towards the worship of Thanatos. What the cabalists don't know is that Albarocca was overrun by araneas back in 1014 AC and all of its inhabitants were slaughtered or enslaved.

Now, the barony is populated entirely by werespiders, in their latest effort at

infiltrating the human communities on the Isle of Dawn. The tension between both groups that was initially felt was due to their mutual scheming, but was similarly dismissed by both as paranoia. It is inevitable that both groups will uncover one another's deception, but until they do, they will each attempt to manipulate the other.

Fyrmont 19, AC 1017: A Dark Day for the Heldannic Order.

Location: Dominion of Vanya's Rest, Aryptian Savannah, Heldannic Empire. DV

Description: The battles within and outside of Vanya's Rest continue throughout the night and into the next day. Although the initial Meghaddaran-rakasta attack has been blunted and turned back to some extent, the skirmishing inside the fortress goes on, with the small squads of raiders, for the most part, able to avoid capture. So concerned is he with the situation that Castellan Heinz Kronenburg himself has donned his weapons and has taken part in the hunt for the intruders. Indeed, it is in the midst of a fray in one of the numerous kitchens, where he and a handful of junior knights discovered a small party of Meghaddara rooting through a pantry, when a thunderous roar appears to shake the entire fortress itself! Everyone falls to the ground from the accompanying shock wave and is unable to move until the dust settles once more. Losing no time, Kronenburg and his men dispatch the intruders, but in doing so he reflects upon where the emanations might have originated—the holy chamber containing the *Star of Vanya*?

With growing trepidation, he orders his men to follow him to the central chambers of the fortress, where the star lies, always under heavy guard. Prepared as he is for a surprise, he does not anticipate what he actually sees—half of the guards surrounding the star lie dead, while the others are either wounded, or dazed. The star itself has not escaped damage, as a long, thin crack extends down one side and small shards lie scattered about the floor. Splayed about the star are a number of Meghaddaran

and rakasta warriors, many of whom are dead, but some remain alive, although heavily wounded.

Not wishing to lose any time, a stunned Kronenburg tells his men to secure the prisoners, while he issues orders, to be carried throughout the fortress, to redouble efforts to crush the invaders. (*See Fy. 16, Fy. 18; Fy. 21, Am. 15.*)

What This Means: The *Star of Vanya*, the artifact which provides power to the Heldannic *warbirds*, among other things, has been damaged by the raiders. Though they had initially entered the fortress to wreak as much havoc as possible, one group came across the heavily guarded chamber and guessed at its importance. The battle with the guards was exceedingly difficult, but enough warriors managed to get close enough to the star to inflict some damage—one blow was in fact landed by a Meghaddaran warrior wielding a *hand axe +4* (a family heirloom, passed to him, he believed, just for such a purpose). Although the warrior was killed instantly by the resulting wave of shock from the artifact and his axe was destroyed, the damage had been done.

Throughout the Heldannic Empire, all *warbirds*, no matter where they are, suddenly lose all power—permanently. Those *warbirds* which were in flight crash to the ground, resulting in the death of all those on board (as was the case with the *warbird* attacking raiders to the south), while those resting on the ground remain inert. This will present a serious setback to the Heldannic Order, as much of their military might rested on the ability to move large numbers of soldiers quickly through the use of the *warbirds*, as well as on their formidable weaponry. Forced to rely on more mundane means to extend their power, the knights' advance in various regions of the world will likely be slowed, or reversed. Once the Heldannic Order's leaders realize the true gravity of the situation, they will take pains to ensure that other nations do not find out—until such means can be developed to provide the knights with aerial offensive capability once more.

What the PCs Can Do: If they were part of the raiding force, the PCs could have been the people who stormed into the chamber containing the *Star of Vanya* and tried to damage it. If this is the case, events in future almanacs will continue as written if they succeed. If their attack failed, then the Heldannic Order will not have lost its *warbird* fleet and thus events in the future will have to be changed accordingly, or the PCs might try again some other time (though the guard around the star would be strengthened even more). If they manage to damage the star, the shock wave will do 5d8 damage to everyone in the chamber (save vs. death ray for half damage); if they accomplish this and manage to escape afterwards, they will be hailed as heroes among the Meghaddara. If the PCs are with the Heldannic Knights, they could be the ones who try to hold off this daring raid.

Fyrmont 20, AC 1017: The Gentle Breeze of War.

Location: City of Bluenose, Kingdom of Arogansa, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description:

Queen Detteria Scarback summons her military commanders and begins ordering them to begin preparations for war. Surprised by



the sudden decision, they are told that Arogansa is in need of more farmlands and farmers. As such, Arogansa will have to seize such lands and farmers to do their bidding.

Most expect that Detteria will seek a war with Theranderol as the two kingdoms have a history of dislike, with a heavily fortified border as a visible testament. However, their queen surprises them again by aiming her kingdom's forces upon Eadrin. Eadrin, as she states, will provide the lands and peoples they need without overly stressing the kingdom's resources. Eadrin is also

Arogansa's main competition in the realm of tourism; eliminating that kingdom, or even just ravaging its lands in war, will eliminate this competition.

Since Eadrin is considered weak and generally inferior, the military officers are enthusiastic about a war against them. However, several assert their concerns that neighboring Randel may intervene. They are also worried about initiating a war while the bulk of their forces are integrated into imperial units. Detteria informs them that she has contemplated their concerns. She tells them that Randel is too weak and too disoriented to assist the Eadrin. She adds that Eadrin is also without large numbers of its troops.

As for the rest of their concerns, Detteria points to a map and lays out her plan. She tells her officers that all they need to do is invade and take land. They do not require the conquest of the entire kingdom. Her forces will focus on Archport and Deipan, which should give them control of the lower Thera River.

Detteria states that Arogansa's forces will be divided into four groups. One group will remain in Arogansa and man the fortifications along their border with Theranderol. One group will cross the Thera River and lay siege to Archport. Another will cross and proceed to Deipan. The last group will cross between the two cities and act as a strategic reserve force to support and defend either of the besieging forces. This group will be in position to intercept any Eadrin counterattacks into Arogansa. (*See Th. 2; Am. 11, Am. 23.*)

What This Means: Detteria is a militaristic mage, rivaling even most Randel mages in her love of combat. She utterly despises the reputation that her kingdom has gained as a playground of the empire's elite. She had hoped that with the loss of the beaches and diminished tourist trade, her fellow Arogansans would focus their attentions elsewhere, preferably molding the kingdom into a major power in the empire.

The truth is that Arogansa's tourist trade is still suffering from the loss of its beaches.

Thus the kingdom's revenues have suffered considerably. Detteria hopes that removing the competition will restore Arogansa's fortunes and prosperity.

Though Theranderol is the most justified target for invasion because of past historical rivalries and feuds and seizing its wealth would help, it is also the most formidable. Likewise, Theranderol's ruler is the empress's daughter. Though it is not typical for the imperial throne to intervene on kingdom conflicts, Eriadna may initiate a precedent at the behest of her daughter. Given the presence of imperial *skyships* in Randel amid the fear of a Bettelwyn invasion, the imperial throne is already on the verge of breaking that tradition.

Greenspur is an option. However, that kingdom is powerful and there is not a lot of justification for an invasion. Detteria knows that any military action is going to be received coldly by the hedonistic noble majority. Conflict with Greenspur would be bad for business. Likewise, it could be militarily disastrous.

Therefore Eadrin comes into play. Though Eadrin and Arogansa have few incidences of hostility, Eadrin has often found itself in Arogansa's shadows. But Eadrin's successes in recovering after the sinking have undermined Arogansan ideas of their superiority and made them a bit envious of their neighbor. Normally, Eadrin would have been untouchable thanks to their friendly relations with Randel. However, Randel has its own problems with a weak ruler, eroded military and threat of a Bettelwyn invasion, so Detteria doubts that the Randel will contribute anything significant to Eadrin's defense.

Detteria is more concerned about the reaction from her constituent noble mages. Most have little interest in military affairs and prefer to keep to their various businesses; either managing and promoting them or indulging in them. She will have to deal with them eventually; she already has some plans to put before them, should it come to that. However, she hopes that they will find amusement and even a little pride in

the expansion of the kingdom.

Fyrmont 20, AC 1017: An Offer of Allegiance.

Location: City of Baraga, Merry Pirate Seas. HW

Description: Carola the Grappler is approached in a tavern by a member of a female pirate club. Her recent skirmish with Emilio has brought her to their attention. The women are trying to recruit Carola into their group. They try to persuade her by talking of further vengeance against Emilio, but Carola is unconvinced. She informs the woman that she will consider the offer and then excuses herself. (*See Fe. 6, Fy. 15; Am. 20, Am. 27.*)

What This Means: The woman is Felicia Marlinspike, the leader of the Sisters of the Sea. The Sisters are a radical group with a decidedly anti-male bias. Felicia's overzealousness in exacting revenge on Emilio was picked up on by Carola. The Grappler is neutral toward the offer, as she wants no formal ties to any organization and she considers the matter with Emilio to be finished.

Fyrmont 20, AC 1017: Disturbances in the Rear.

Location: City of Helskir, Dominion of Helskir, Heldannic Empire, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: After completing another day of sporadic bombardment, the gathered Thyatian-Heldunian force prepares to bed down for the night, secure behind their ring of sentries and palisades. Scant hours after sundown, the encampment is surprised to hear shouts of alarm coming from the western fringes—20 sentries have been found dead and three catapults are in flames. As soldiers are roused to douse the flames, Heldannic heavy cavalry seem to arise from the ground itself to harry the allies' efforts. As they turn to face this new threat, small platoons of light infantry coalesce out of the surrounding woodlands and tall grasses to wreak even more havoc.

It is some time before the nearby forces can collect their bearings in order to stage an effective counterattack, but by the time they are able to do so, the Heldannic soldiers are withdrawing, having created enough destruction in their wake to ensure that most of them manage to escape. (See *Fy. 16, Fy. 18; Fy. 23, Fy. 24.*)

What This Means: Anna von Hendriks's forces have not been idle while their enemies were subjecting them to bombardment. Soldiers and townsfolk were ordered to dig several tunnels under the outer wall itself, some distance from the areas being attacked currently. These were used by the infantry to disperse into the wilderness around the designated target region of the enemy camp. These soldiers ambushed the nearby sentries and set fire to the catapults close by, thus providing the distraction necessary to allow the cavalry to leave through the outer gates unnoticed and return afterwards. After the surviving raiders returned to Helskir, the tunnels were filled.

While it may seem very elaborate—perhaps excessively so—the counterattack did fulfill its purpose: several catapults have been destroyed and the confidence of the attackers has been shaken—to the extent that their plans to stage a large-scale assault might be delayed.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are working with the Heldannic forces, the PCs could be ordered to take part in the raid (especially if they are good at sneaking about, or possess spells useful for such purposes. Likewise, PCs serving with the Thyatian or Heldunian forces might find a way to prevent so many Heldannic soldiers from fleeing, thus allowing their side to gain valuable information through the interrogation of any prisoners.

Fyrmont 21, AC 1017: Amidst the Ruin Rise Hidden Agendas.

Location: Dominion of Vanya's Rest, Aryptian Savannah, Heldannic Empire. DV

Description: The Heldannic forces based at Vanya's Rest have managed to rally themselves and drive back the raiders (who,

having sensed that enough disruption has been created, are only too happy to withdraw—for now). Once the casualties and damages have been assessed, the local high-ranking members of the Heldannic Order, unbeknownst to Castellan Heinz Kronenburg, send a report to Freiburg, detailing the events leading up to the successful raid on the part of the Meghaddara and their rakasta allies and how Kronenburg had been misled by the tactics of the enemies into thinking an attack was coming from the south, despite evidence to the contrary. They go further, blaming him for the damage sustained by the *Star of Vanya* and ask *Oberherr* Wulf von Klagendorf to render his personal judgment on the matter, recommending that Kronenburg's command be terminated.

In the meantime, Kronenburg's advisors quietly co-opt him, issuing orders in his name and effectively running the fortress themselves. While all this is happening, Kronenburg, still distraught over the damage sustained to the star and over the success of the raiders in breaching what was once thought to be an impregnable fortress, keeps to himself in his chambers, seeing no one at all. (See *Fy. 18, Fy. 19; Am. 15, Ei. 14.*)

What This Means: Kronenburg's career as a high-ranking Heldannic commander is effectively over. Although he was unable to handle the situation, his immediate subordinates, wishing to gain more prestige for themselves, exaggerated certain aspects of the events to make the castellan appear totally incompetent. Wulf von Klagendorf, being in far-off Freiburg, will not have any evidence of his own to compare with the information he receives.

What perplexes the Heldannic officials, though, is the motivation for the attack, as well as the reason for the presence of the rakasta (who have since been distinguished from the divergans as a separate race). Thorough interrogation of the prisoners captured in the chamber containing the star revealed that they had no previous knowledge of the artifact.

Fyrmont 21, AC 1017: Military Aid and Migration.

Location: City of Andaire, Kingdom of Alphas'ar, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: With the demobilization of certain imperial units, a new problem has presented itself. There are some personnel that originally hail from kingdoms outside of the Alphatian mainland and therefore have no kingdom to return to, though their memories have been altered so that they think they hail from one of the mainland kingdoms and they have detailed memories of where they were born and their childhoods, implanted by the Immortals. But many want to continue serving in the military, having known no other adult life. Others are experienced enough to have their full memory of the surface world.

This premise brings out another idea. Eriadna sees this as an opportunity to reestablish added dependence and relations between Alphatia and the kingdoms that now compose Nayce. She instructs that those who want to continue to serve be told that there is a large area on another world that has been colonized by Alphatians and she will allow some of these individuals their return to go to this Outer World. She commandeers four *skyships* and uses them as their transport. The *skyships* will also serve as the means to transport surplus weapons, armor and magical weaponry to Nayce. (*See Va. 24, Th. 21; Fy. 22, Fy. 27.*)

What This Means: With its magical foundation, these offerings can easily be replaced in a rather short period. The *skyships*, though needed by the imperial forces, are considered worth dispatching, as more can be built. One of the ships, *The Dervish*, is one of the last remaining men-of-war of the skyfleet, a class of *skyships* whose enchantments cannot be used to their fullest in the Hollow World, except on the Floating Continent of Alphatia itself; therefore, it will be more useful in Nayce.

Eriadna places Colonel Sdandre into command of this squadron of *skyships*. Born and bred in Floating Ar, he has made a

career in the imperial *skyship* fleets. However, he is getting old and desires to end his service. He would prefer to do so in his home kingdom and in his family estate. Being the senior and most skilled *skyship* officer, Eriadna's choosing him is the natural choice.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs that also hail from kingdoms still on the surface, or who have their full memory, may volunteer to be part of that expedition.

Fourth Week

Fyrmont 22, AC 1017: Another Venture to Mykonos.

Location: City-State of Kastelios, Serpent Coast. DV

Description: Adonai Stephanos departs once more for Mykonos, with two ships laden with supplies and hopeful colonists, a number of whom are former refugees from the Meghala Kimata Plains. (*See Fy. 1, Fy. 9; Am. 20.*)

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs can be part of the group embarking for Mykonos.

Fyrmont 22, AC 1017: Into the Distant Night.

Location: Northern Polar Opening. AS

Description: Three Alphatian *skyships* emerge from the polar opening. The voyage through the opening has been difficult and costly. Two of the vessels had hit the opening at the wrong angles, the *Dervish* crashing in the anti-magic zone. The *Madgyn's Revenge* had managed to remain aloft long enough to carry the anti-magic zone, but had scraped the ground just as the enchantments returned. This vessel is heavily damaged but can be flown again if repairs are made.

The squadron's senior officer, Commander Sdandre decides to continue on towards Naycese lands aboard the *Aran*. He orders the *Cloud Kin* to remain by the *Madgyn's Revenge* while it undergoes the

needed repairs. He tells the captain of that vessel to keep an eye out for any of the *Dervish's* crew that may have survived the crash and journeyed out of the anti-magic zone. Sadly, the *Dervish* was the most precious of the four ships and it transported the most experienced crew.

After transferring most of his supplies over to the two vessels and taking on their magical cargoes, Sdandre orders his navigator to set a southerly course for Naycese lands. Though his navigator suggests that they head for Norwold, flying over it as a navigational aid, Sdandre decides that they will instead sail to Qeodhar. The exact situation of Norwold is unknown to them; tales of Heldannic aggression and dragon attacks have filtered down to the Hollow World. The commander does not want to take that risk. (*See Fy. 21; Fy. 27, Fy. 28.*)

Fyrmont 22, AC 1017: *Torpin* Officer Staff Named.

Location: City of Ionace, Ionace Island, Nayce. AS

Description: Amid great fanfare, the Nayce Council announces the appointment of officers and non-commissioned officers to the *Torpin*. Charged with commanding the vessel is Dhallaq Trest, a retired *submersible* captain from Aquas. Myarkhen Bayller, a stranded resident of Greenspur, will act as his second in command. Sister Yalonda, a cleric of Alphatia from Ekto, will attend to the physical and spiritual needs of the crew. Magus Dlanor, one of the *Torpin's* creators, will serve as the vessel's chief engineer.

There are other appointees and positions offered. It is quickly noticed that the appointees are a fair representation of the Naycese kingdoms. This is a surprise as most would naturally assume that Aquans would fill out the ranks of the massive *submersible*. However, this diversity is brought about the need to not over-stress Aquas's populace and limit Aquas's influence with the *Torpin*. (*See Kl. 24, Fy. 8; Fy. 24, Fy. 25.*)

What the PCs Can Do: PCs allied with Nayce may find themselves tasked with an

appointment to the *Torpin*. Conversely, PCs not friendly to Naycese interests may be alerted to investigate the appointees for possibly use by their respective allies; blackmail, assassination, information, or sabotage.

Fyrmont 23, AC 1017: Strike on Helskir.

Location: City of Helskir, Dominion of Helskir, Heldannic Empire, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: Under the cover of ballistae and light catapults, a detachment of Heldunian troops from the 1st division of the army of Heldun stages an assault against the outer wall of Helskir, supported by Thyatian and Heldunian battle mages. The magical and mundane barrage is sufficient to prevent the Heldannic crossbowmen from killing too many of the attackers. Although some of them are lucky enough to find shelter underneath rocky outcroppings; most are not and, knowing they have only a limited amount of time before they are no longer protected from a concerted counterattack, they turn their attention quickly to the main gate.

While intense conflict ensues by the gate, the remainder of the Thyatian-Heldunian force advances, seeking to press its advantage before it is too late. Catapults and ballistae are moved into better positions and siege towers (built during the previous nights by the Thyatian *tuldum* regiment) draped with water-soaked animal skins are wheeled into place. The magical barrage intensifies, as *magic missiles*, *lightning bolts* and *fireballs* streak across the sky towards their targets, forcing the Heldannic soldiers manning the wall to keep their heads low. The defenders have a few tricks up their proverbial sleeves, however; ballistae and light catapults mounted atop the wall manage to do considerable damage to several pieces of siege equipment (and their crews) and focused applications of *finger of death*, *cloudkill* and *flame strike* spells take their toll.

Meanwhile, Naycese ships seek to press their advantage by bombarding the warehouses by the northernmost docks with

delayed blast fireballs and *lightning bolts*, as well as the *magic missiles* that issue forth from the boltmen's wands. The Naycese commander orders her soldiers to concentrate their attacks on a number of docks, hoping to clear the defending Heldannic forces out of those regions long enough to secure landing areas for the ground troops. The attack almost succeeds, as Anna's forces are for the most part too busy holding back their enemies along the walls, but a skillful re-deployment of crossbowmen and artillerymen brings enough military might to bear, for just long enough a time, to blunt the Naycese assault and inflict enough casualties that the attackers are forced to withdraw temporarily.

The day's end, however, sees the partial withdrawal of the Thyatian-Heldunian force as well, as they remained unable to obtain a secure foothold close to the outer wall. (*See Fy. 18, Fy. 20; Fy. 24, Fy. 25.*)

What This Means: The Thyatian-Heldunian force managed to press its advantage considerably and inflict many casualties upon the Heldannic defenders of Helskir, but the occupiers were too well-entrenched to dislodge easily. Despite the setback, the attacking army managed to inflict irreparable damage on the gates and almost breach the outer wall in several places—though it suffered around 250 casualties in doing so. The Heldannic soldiers, though they managed to hold the line, did so at great cost—almost 200 dead, in spite of the protection afforded by their defenses.

The Naycese assault managed to inflict a number of casualties as well—almost 60. However, due to the lack of coordination between them and the Thyatian-Heldunian force, Anna's soldiers were able to hold both enemy armies back.

What the PCs Can Do: This is an opportunity for PCs to distinguish themselves in battle, regardless of which side they are on.

Fyrmont 23, AC 1017: A Bad First Impression.

Location: Eagret Island, Nayce. AS

Description: Arriving off the coast of Eagret Island, a Naycese warship drops anchor down the coast from the island's fortifications. A launch ferries the newly deployed Commander Talmata, his staff and an armed escort to the shoreline. The party makes its way up the coast to the fort with the intent to surprise the garrison.

It is Talmata that is surprised as his approach is not met and he makes his way into the compound unchallenged by the guards sleeping at the gatehouse. As he strolls through the interior, the grounds are mainly empty. The few garrison personnel that are seen initially ignore the group only to snap to attention as his rank is recognized. With a scornful look, Talmata ignores their tardy salutes and inattentiveness and makes his way towards the garrison keep. These troops quickly make haste into nearby buildings to inform their fellows that a high-ranking officer is here.

Outside the keep, Talmata spots the fort's bugler kicked back in a chair sleeping away. Kicking the chair from under him, he demands to know where the garrison commander is. The groggy soldier at first curses the interruption but quickly assesses the rank of the individual standing before him. He tells the cleric that Commander Fragnin is inside meeting with his aide, Sergeant Ziessa. He adds that the commander has given strict orders not to be disturbed. From behind him, he hears a rude remark about the nature of their meeting.

Turning to the speaker, Talmata notes that the garrison is slowly turning out. The first to arrive is a group of twenty troops. Though a bit worse for wear, each are smartly dressed in their Randel uniforms and fully armed with weapons and armor. These troops form up in orderly ranks and offer a crisp textbook salute. The rest are a mixed bag of hastily-dressed and poorly-armed troops. Gritting his teeth, Talmata motions

for some of his escort to follow him into the main keep.

As the assembled troops watch, Talmata and his escort enter the keep. After a few silent moments, there are a series of crashing sounds and a woman's scream. Seconds later, Talmata emerges back out onto the main yard dragging a hastily-dressed Commander Fragnin by his unbuttoned tunic. His escorts accompany a still dressing Sergeant Ziessa, virtually dragging her out into the inner grounds before the assembled troops. Talmata personally drags Fragnin out into the yard and drops him before his troops. A few move to help him, but are stopped by the glares offered by Talmata's escorts.

Sprawled out on the ground, an embarrassed Fragnin threatens Talmata, citing that he is a noble and such insubordination by a mundaner will have its repercussions. Talmata laughs and produces a parchment. Unrolling it, he reads it aloud to the gathered troops. The document officially transfers command of the Eagret Island base to Commander Talmata, cleric of Razud.

Though insulted and embarrassed in front of the troops, Fragnin recognizes the name. He knows that he cannot possibly stand up to the older and more experienced cleric. Still, he tries a final move to grasp a sense of victory out of the transition by downplaying the change of orders. With obvious contempt, he tells the cleric that he can have the inhospitable post and its pathetic garrison.

As he heads to gather his belongings, Fragnin tells Sergeant Ziessa to inform the rest of his staff to prepare to leave. Talmata interrupts and tells him that the orders make no mention of his staff being redeployed along with him. They will stay on Eagret Island and learn to be soldiers under his command. Obviously enraged, Fragnin storms off. Later, he leaves without any further incident.

Talmata informs the garrison that they should continue their rest for the remainder of the day. The coming morning will see the

beginning of the reversal of the base's sorry condition. When they are not working to rebuild the defenses, they will be working to rebuild themselves as soldiers. (*See Nu. 18, Va. 25; Am. 22, Sv. 1.*)

What This Means: Talmata's orders are to assume command of Eagret Island's naval base. It is a rather mundane posting and seen as punishment for his "failings" at Torenal Site. Ever the professional, Talmata chose to surprise the garrison to survey its preparedness. What he found is a grave disappointment. Commander Fragnin is a low-level noble mage; his appointment as the base's commander was more of an act of family ties than any military experience and ability.

During his tenure as the base's commander, Fragnin has filled his days with entertaining himself with his mistress, Sergeant Ziessa and letting the troops do as they wish. Without a commander petitioning the Nayce Council, supplies are barely adequate and new equipment is almost unheard of. The troops' morale, combat ability and discipline have all suffered. Only a handful of professional soldiers are present to maintain any semblance of military preparedness.

Talmata was outraged at the state of the base. He quickly surmised what had transpired. Given his ties to the Razud clergy, he felt that it is appropriate that those that bolstered Fragnin's self indulgent command should learn from their mistakes and find a sense of redemption. As for Fragnin, he felt nothing but contempt for him and saw no way that he can redeem himself at this post. In fact, he wanted him off of the island as quickly as possible.

Revitalizing the base will be a daunting task. Talmata is an experienced commander and should do well in righting matters. Likewise he is imposing enough to personally keep his troops in line and well motivated. The coming weeks will be busy for the troops. However, they will find that Talmata will be right there with them working and training.

Fyrmont 23, AC 1017: Double Weddings in Adlerturm.

Location: Barony of Adlerturm, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: All of Adlerturm and Aalban come out in celebration today, for a spectacular double wedding. Held in Adlerturm, the participants are Rolf Löwenroth (the heir of Baron Franz Löwenroth) who is marrying Viktoria von Drachenfels (second cousin of *Prinz* Jaggar von Drachenfels) and Walburg Löwenroth (the baron's daughter) who is marrying Sigmund von Drachenfels, the heir of *Prinz* Jaggar.

What This Means: The close ties between Aalban and Adlerturm are getting even closer after these marriages.

Fyrmont 23, AC 1017: The End of Crime?

Location: City of Aaslin, Kingdom of Notrion, Continent of Bellissaria, Nayce. AS

Description: King Corydon announces that his guard has uncovered and destroyed a thieves' guild operating within the kingdom's capital. The guild's stronghold has been raided, offering a bounty of documentation relating the details of the criminal organization. Guild holdings have also been seized by the monarchy. Among these documents were the identities of the guild's leaders. Though the guard managed to eliminate or apprehend many key guild personnel, the leader has managed to elude capture. Corydon issues a bounty on the head of Myarko Daon as the leader of the guild.

What This Means: Given the extent of magic used on the Alphatian mainland, thieves' guilds and organized crime feared discovery from the proper authorities. Those that did operate on the mainland had to do so under the protections of powerful magic and influential benefactors. Most thieves operated outside of the mainland on imperial possessions on the isle of Dawn, Bellissaria, Esterhold, Norwold and the Alatian Islands where magic was less of a factor.

After the sinking of the Alphatian mainland, displaced mages settled in these imperial possessions. Likewise magic savvy thief organizations moved to these holdings. Magical discovery and competition have placed a lot of stress on the native thieves' guilds. Some have merged with these newcomers to gain magical protection, others have downsized their actions to avoid discovery. However, such changes are never without initial conflict.

This is what has transpired in Notrion. The native thieves' guild had long operated without drawing attention from the authorities. However, a rival thief organization has settled in the capital and the two have clashed. The native guild, led by Myarko Daon, was larger and better organized than the newcomers. However they lacked the magical support to claim absolute dominance over the new guild.

With Corydon's sense of paranoia over the mages, it was feared by both guilds that his tightening of security would offer their demise, as they would be discovered. The new guild decided to kill two birds with one stone and leaked some very credible information to the guard. The result was that the guard mobilized against the native guild.

The one catch in the plan is that Myarko has managed to avoid capture. The new guild fears that if he can remain at large, he can rally support. Since he knows about the other guild and some of its members, they fear that he may be able to expose them as well. They want him dead and have managed to influence Corydon into placing a bounty upon his head.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs may find themselves involved in all manner of ways. They could be hired to act as Myarko's protectors. They could be hunting him, either as agents of Corydon or the rival guild. The identities of the leaders of the rival guild have been left purposely vague. The DM should fill in the details of this guild as he or she sees fit. The PCs may even be directly involved with one of the guilds and be either key players in the downfall of

the native guild, or try to escape capture by the royal guard.

Fyrmont 24, AC 1017: The Line Falters.

Location: City of Helskir, Dominion of Helskir, Heldannic Empire, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: The assault on the outer wall of Helskir continues as siege towers are wheeled up to the wall itself and battering rams are applied against the gates. From above, Heldannic crossbowmen and battle clerics try to hold off the assault as long as possible, while light infantry, wielding their spears grimly, mass beyond the gates, preparing for the inevitable battle with their foes. Unlike the previous day, however, the line does not hold. Within half an hour, the gate shatters with a resounding crack and the victorious Heldunian troopers surge into the breach. Atop the walls, the Heldannic soldiers and their clerical overseers become hard-pressed to aid their companions below, as they are faced with the furious might of over 300 members of the elite Antalian Guard, backed by bowmen stationed in the siege towers.

Pressed from two fronts, the 2nd regiment of Vanya's Loyal Heldannic Expeditionary Force (which was responsible for manning the wall) is forced to give ground, but even this attempt to maintain order fails; a full rout ensues, with the remnants of the force fleeing to the inner walls. Those soldiers who pursue them fall victim in large numbers to the assorted traps that dot the field between the walls and soon the pursuit is called off. By sundown, the banners of Heldun and Thyatis fly over the partially-ruined gatehouse. (*See Fy. 20, Fy. 23; Fy. 25, Am. 2.*)

What This Means: Although they held their ground well, the Heldannic force lacked the numbers and the resources to hold out for a prolonged period, especially given the ferocity of the assaults over the previous days. Of the roughly 300 men who comprised the Heldannic force, less than 60 managed to escape, with the remainder having been killed in action, or captured.

With the outer wall firmly under Thyatian-Heldunian control, the position of the occupying forces in Helskir is becoming very precarious, indeed.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs serving the Thyatian-Heldunian force could find themselves probing the inner defenses of Helskir, to determine where the assault should be concentrated next. Alternatively, they could assist in interrogating the prisoners. Heldannic PCs (if they escaped) could be involved in the preparations for the final defense of Helskir.

Fyrmont 24, AC 1017: The *Torpin's* Near Disaster.

Location: *Torpin* Construction Site, Kingdom of Aquas, Nayce. AS

Description: Though still uncompleted, Xerathis, Tredrigo and Dlanor order the massive *submersible* pen to be flooded to test the hull integrity of the *Torpin*. As the chamber fills, the workers scramble through the *submersible's* interior checking for leaks. With everything secure, Xerathis suggests that the vessel's airlocks be tested. Since the construction hangar is flooded and will require hours of pumping to empty, his colleagues concur with the opportunity to test them.

As the main entrance airlock is flooded, the inner door gives way and a veritable wall of onrushing water barrages the upper deck. The workers scramble to close subsequent watertight doors to isolate the flooding. Quick action limits the flooding and the workers begin manning the pumps to remove the waters from both the hangar and the *Torpin*. Though several workers drown amid the flooding waters, the damage to the *submersible* is light. However the incident raises many questions as to the structural integrity of the *Torpin*. While the pumping is carried out Xerathis, Tredrigo and Dlanor pour over the *Torpin's* plans trying to spot any overlooked weaknesses in the designs.

It is hours later before the answers are gathered. Examination of the main airlock reveals that the inner door had been installed backwards with the door opening inward,

forcing the door latches and hinges to bear the full weight of the water pressure. Had the doors been installed correctly with the inner door opening into the airlock chamber this exterior water pressure would have been borne out by the door frame and the airlock chamber walls.

Tracing the installation back to the workers; the construction crew that fitted out the airlock is arrested. The mages question the four workers, using magic to verify their answers. Once done, Xerathis, Tredrignon and Dlanor have the workers arrested and placed into custody pending their being sent to Aquas to stand trial. This move is unpopular to the rest of the workers who want them punished now. However, the mages stress that the law must handle the matter. Given the list of charges being brought up against them and the magically-confirmed interrogations, their guilt is certain to bring out the vilest of sentences. (See *Fy. 8, Fy. 22; Fy. 25, Am. 14.*)

What This Means: The construction workers are guilty, there is no doubt about it. Though the *Torpin* is a military vessel, civilians are overseeing its construction. Xerathis, Tredrignon and Dlanor are undecided as to whether they have the authority to officially pronounce judgment and execute the sentence. Their own informal investigation merely insures that those responsible have been detained and will be turned over to the imperial courts.

Fyrmont 25, AC 1017: A Time of Reckoning.

Location: City of Helskir, Dominion of Helskir, Heldannic Empire, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: In a secret meeting several hours before sunrise, *Ordensgeneral* Anna von Hendriks holds a meeting of her most trusted aides, concerning the strategic situation—which is looking worse by the minute. Morale is plummeting, supplies are becoming scarce (thanks to the Naycese blockade); even repeated *create food and water* spells are not sufficient to alleviate the needs of the troops and no solution seems to be

readily apparent. Even attempts to *commune* have proven inconclusive; the few answers given by Vanya Herself have been cryptic—when they have been given at all. Nearing their wits' end, some advisors even broach the formerly unthinkable option: surrender. Anna dismisses that immediately, feeling that the terms might prove too onerous and she is not willing to sacrifice the honor of her soldiers, or risk the displeasure of her Immortal, to soothe her own fears.

The discussion continues for several hours, as the booming sounds of offensive magic echo from the south. Knowing that, at best, the remaining forces might be able to hold out for another week, the group continues its deliberations, interrupted only by the occasional messenger dispatched by field officers requesting orders. (See *Fy. 23, Fy. 24; Am. 2, Am. 6.*)

Fyrmont 25, AC 1017: Counter-Offensive.

Location: Hinterlands, Thyatian Empire. DV

Description: With increased forces at her disposal due to the conclusion of the Twaelar war, Leilah ben Nadir decides on a more proactive strategy. She sends out forces to engage the Hinterlanders in their own lands, intending to push back the frontier and create a buffer zone. The Thyatians also hope to gain control of the lands around the River Australis as far as the borders of Emerond, to facilitate trade with that recently contacted nation and its capital of Izmira.

Leilah sends her forces first through the Raven lands to the frontiers of the Leopard Clan, engaging them in a series of sharp battles and securing several key places where forts are built to shelter the core of the Thyatian Hinterlands. (See *Fe. 6, Fy. 9; Sv. 14.*)

What This Means: The Thyatians intend to put an end to the raids and secure the regions inhabited by Thyatian settlers and those Hinterlanders (Thratians) who are loyal to Thyatis. Strategic areas are selected for improvised forts and military roads are cut through the jungle to strengthen supply

and communication lines. Leilah strikes at the Leopard Clan first as a means to undermine Siobhan's authority and also construct a cordon to isolate the Leopard Clan from the other clans, which Leilah hopes will then be easier to subdue.

What the PCs Can Do: As the war grinds on there are many small skirmishes the characters can be involved in. Those helping the Thyatians seize and control land might be granted it, along with the status of baron, as a fief.

Fyrmont 25, AC 1017: And Let Slip the Dogs of War!

Location: Fris River, along the border between Kingdoms of Frisland and Arkan, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: The river boats carrying Stonewall's primary invasion force arrive and set the troops ashore on Arkan soil. They meet little resistance from the farming communities in the area and set up their military command post here under the leadership of General Selcomad in a small village called Ronden. (See Fy. 3, Fy. 13; Am. 4, Am. 16.)

What This Means: The Arkan-Stonewall war has begun! Selcomad and Amagast are both here, but Rogart is with the secondary force which is now on its way down Snake River to sail to Crystal Lake by the Roaring River in Foresthome, hoping to surprise the Arkan forces.

What the PCs Can Do: Fight, of course! On either side. PCs on Arkan's side won't be able to stop Stonewall's advance, but they might be able to slow it down significantly.

Fyrmont 25, AC 1017: *Torpin* Crew Training Begins.

Location: Seashield Dome, Kingdom of Aquas, Nayce. AS

Description: The first batch of recruits for the future crew of the *Torpin* arrives in Seashield. Following Naycese parameters, very few are actually from any of the Aquas domes. Several arrivals immediately

withdraw their desire to serve on the *Torpin* because their initial introduction to being underwater has been unsettling. These individuals are allowed to withdraw as it is realized that if they are so worried about the submerged confines of the domes of Aquas then they will be horrified by the cramped confines of the *Torpin*.

Nayce officers and trainers meet with the remaining recruits and introduce them to the demands of duty aboard a *submersible*. As the days go by, recruits are introduced more and more to the equipment and tactics that will be seen in the actual *Torpin*. The recruits are evaluated, those displaying promise being sent to the *Torpin* site to be placed into their most rational positions and partake in specialized training. Of the recruits roughly half are accepted to begin this next stage of training. (See Fy. 22, Fy. 24; Am. 14.)

What This Means: Overall, the recruits show promise. By deciding upon the requirements of positions within the *Torpin* the recruits can be subdivided by their abilities. The trick will be altering these abilities to fit the requirements of their respective duty obligations aboard a *submersible*. Given that the recruits are all volunteers and come with some degree of endorsement from military officers, nobles, or kingdom rulers, they all have something to offer to the *submersible* fleet. Even if they do not live up to the requirements of the *Torpin*, some may find service within the remainder of the *submersible* fleet.

What the PCs Can Do: Nayce affiliated PCs may easily find themselves recruits in the *Torpin* crew. Their exact position depends upon their abilities and experience. Given the manpower needs of the proposed fleet, PCs may find themselves offered higher ranking positions in the smaller *submersibles*.

Fyrmont 26, AC 1017: Anchorage Besieged.

Location: Town of Anchorage, Province of Anchorage, Republic of Esterhold, Nayce. SK

Description: A portion of the united Jennite army reaches the port town of Anchorage and besiege it. However, though the Alphatian defenders are less than in Faraway, they are better organized this time and the Jennite meet stronger resistance than they expected. (*See Fe. 25, Fy. 12; Am. 23, Sv. 2.*)

What This Means: Anchorage never depended on the leadership of a strong and dictatorial aristocrat, as both Blackrock and Verdan used to, because few aristocrats were interested in the place and the commoner soldiers are thus more used to organize themselves and they've had to fight off their share of attacks by both humanoids (like orcs or goblins) as well as free Jennites in the past. In addition, the Governor of Anchorage also has the advice of Krael and Lyriander who lived through both the siege of Vigil Keep and the siege of Faraway and who can thus give him valuable insight into the strategies of the Jennites. Things still look fairly ominous for Anchorage though.

What the PCs Can Do: Once again it is time to participate in a siege on either side.

Fyrmont 26, AC 1017: Necromancer News.

Location: City of Ionace, Ionace Island and Seashield Dome, Kingdom of Aquas, Nayce. AS

Description: Returning to Aquas to replenish his supplies, the necromancer, Pidimigd, sends a report to the Nayce Council concerning the undead at Bluenose. He confirms that the beings are undead and that they were once Alphatians. However he cannot explain how they became animated and how they have maintained their sentience. He does note their memories lack any Alphatian ties, going back only a couple of years and always noting being under the sea. Most of what they do know comes from historical records discovered and studied by them. He does note that they seem to have a vague recollection about Alphatia, most being certain that they had once been part of Alphatia.

The necromancer reports that the undead refer to themselves as the Alphadon. Some tell that they have been in Bluenose for years, while others traveled to the ruins from other parts. Pidimigd cites his suspicions that there may be other Alphadon communities scattered throughout the sunken continent. Pidimigd reports that he has established an increasing degree of trust between himself and the Alphadon. He hopes that this openness and further study will answer the remaining questions about these undead. He also cites his intent to begin identifying the undead and whom they were when they lived.

Pidimigd also reports that the Alphadon have recognized that the ghouls have become more organized of late. Despite this the undead have armed themselves well from the various weaponry found in Bluenose and do not see any need for a military alliance with Nayce. The necromancer does report his impression that the undead are greatly interested in the Alphatians. However he urges that they be studied before any further contacts are pursued.

Seeing a definite need to evolve the project, Nayce appoints Pidimigd as project leader, though elements hostile to the undead, such as Underocean, take this opportunity to once again protest the decision not to exterminate the Alphadon. As his first display of this position, the necromancer dispatches messages to several other necromancers requesting their assistance in the project. (*See Fe. 22, Fe. 27; Fy. 27, Am. 4.*)

What This Means: Pidimigd has uncovered few real details about the Bluenose undead. All he really knows is that they are undead and that their bodies are those of deceased Alphatians. He knows not the exact nature of their animation or them being lightning zombies. Pidimigd is becoming obsessed with the study of the Bluenose undead and his attaining control over them. He fears that if he does not hurry other mages may undermine his presence there. So far he has initiated a program

aimed at establishing trust between himself and the undead.

Pidimigd has chosen to withhold some details. First, the undead do not like him too much as he is overly curious about them and tends to treat them as objects. Second, the necromancer has tried to use his necromancy spells to gain control over them; these efforts have failed and the attempts have not gone totally unsuspected by the lightning zombies. Third, he suspects that others are trying to gain influence over the undead—not only has he felt other necromantic powers at work, he has also been told that at times the lightning zombies hear a feminine voice in their heads. Pidimigd has no idea who or what this female necromancer is, his scrying spells offering no answers.

Pidimigd knows that he needs help in Bluenose, but without jeopardizing his own authority in the matter. As such, he is very particular about who comes to work under him. His position allows him the power to recruit necromancers, especially ones that he can keep subordinate to himself. Most of the necromancers he contacts are less experienced than himself, some being former apprentices of his.

Fyrmont 26, AC 1017: We Don't Want Your Kind Here.

Location: South of City of Izmira, Kingdom of Emerond. DV

Description: While on patrol atop their flying insectoid mounts, a small party of Emerondians spots a column of smoke rising from the jungle floor. Curious, as well as annoyed at this evidence of unwelcome intrusion, the patrol flies towards the smoke to investigate and soon finds a large group of humans, gathered around several fires.

The patrol's leader, wishing to get to the bottom of this immediately, lands not far from the group and addresses them in a number of languages, demanding to know the humans' business in Emerond. After overcoming their shock at seeing such a strange individual, some of the humans manage to respond—the more educated

ones being vaguely familiar with one of the Emerondians' languages—they explain that they are fleeing fierce battles to the south and merely seek a new home where they can rebuild their lives. The Emerondian leader considers this and, after conferring with his companions, tells the humans to accompany them; there is a nation to the northeast populated by humans, who would be able to take them in.

Seeing that they have little choice in the matter, the humans accompany their Emerondian guides. (*See Fe. 9; Fe. 27; Am. 9, Am. 16.*)

What This Means: As hostilities continue on the Meghala Kimata Plains, the inhabitants of many of the settlements in the region come to realize that their homes are no longer safe. Some seek shelter in other city-states, while others, either wishing to leave the area entirely or having been turned away by other towns, seek out new lands. Many Milenian refugees end up in Emerond, which straddles a large stretch of jungles lying north of the area of conflict. The Emerondians, being in communion with their forests, know that the ecology of their kingdom is delicately balanced and that the sudden influx of a large number of people could very well upset that balance.

Additionally, although they are a relatively peaceful people, the Emerondians have no desire to allow other races to settle their lands in large numbers; if a group of refugees is allowed to remain, the proverbial floodgates could be opened for future inflows. Many Emerondians are well aware of this and, with the recent treaty of friendship with the Empire of Thyatis, will send any future refugees to the Hinterlands, citing population pressures and cultural differences to their Thyatian neighbors.

Fyrmont 26, AC 1017: Sultan's Troops Arrive at Tameronikas.

Location: Town of Tameronikas, Emirate of Nicostenia, Emirates of Ylaruam. OW

Description: The forces of Sultan Hassam arrive outside Tameronikas. After a brief skirmish between scouting parties, the

sultan's forces set up camp for the night and both armies begin to prepare for tomorrow's inevitable battle. But the next morning the Thyatian troops withdraw southward rather than fighting. The sultan parades his forces in front of the walls of Tameronikas, then he withdraws northwards. (*See Fy. 12, Fy. 14; Am. 1.*)

What This Means: Neither side really wanted to fight a battle that could be immensely disastrous if lost. Eusebius did not want to risk throwing away what had already been gained, or lose both precious troops and even more precious prestige. For Sultan Hassam, a battle that could go either way would have been even more risky.

Thus, both sides sent secret representatives to talk to the other side during the night and they reached a tacit agreement. The Thyatians would withdraw, but Hassam would not challenge the existence of the Emirate of Nicostenia. A week after today, the Thyatians will release the remaining Ylari prisoners, sending them to Tameronikas. Hassam also agrees to allow Thyatian traders to pass through Ylaruam and even conduct some business in the emirates so long as they are circumspect about it.

Hassam agrees to these things because he can correctly claim the Ylari retain control over Tameronikas and nominally claim authority over it. Plus, like the Preceptors, he realizes its existence as a town that seems friendly to Thyatis will tend to undermine support for the Preceptors and thus strengthen the Kin faction's control on the rest of Ylaruam.

Tameronikas will become a sort of open city, a town where non-Ylari can come to do business in ways that would be difficult in the rest of Ylaruam. But, more than that it becomes a focus of intrigues, as Thyatians, Preceptors, Kin representatives and eventually diplomats and spies from other agents all congregate here.

Fyrmont 27, AC 1017: A Paradoxical Proposal.

Location: City of Ionace, Ionace island, Nayce. AS

Description: Representative Kratynn of Meriander addresses the council to put before them a few thoughts on the undead at Bluenose. With a copy of Pidimig's report in hand, he goes over key aspects of the findings to great detail. Coming to the point of the matter, he offers that just because the undead are composed of the physical remains of Alphatians that does not mean that they are Alphatians. He specifically cites that there has to be a difference between the identity of the physical vessel and the identity of the life essence inside. Just because an individual wears the physical body of another, that does not entitle that person to the status of the physical form.

He goes on to relate that if the physical body is solely demonstrative of the living person, then any animated corpse could easily claim its right to be awarded any properties or titles it held in life. Grasping current events, he states that given that line of thinking then the very undead that inhabit the Alphatian Sea would be members of Nayce. And then comes in the question of this undead aggression actually being domestic strife and any coming conflict should be considered a civil war.

Kratynn's argument brings a variety of responses from the gathered council. Though varying in detail, all contend that the argument is sound. Some point out that they have lost family in the sinking and cannot reasonably see any of the undead as their kinsmen. It is decided that the undead will be treated as undead. After this decision is reached, Underocean's representative comments that the only way to treat undead is as enemies. However, the matter of the Alphadon is still vague. The council decides to not take any action against them until their exact nature and origins can be determined. Likewise, their present status will not reflect their living identity. Only a few have been identified and those have no

recollection of their mortal lives. (See *Fe. 27*, *Fy. 26*; *Am. 4*, *Am. 16*.)

What This Means: Representative Kratynn's little speech is more targeted towards Karszamon than the lightning zombies. Essentially, his argument is a debate on which has more a bearing upon Karszamon's assumption of Broderick's position.

Fyrmont 27, AC 1017: *Skyships Over Qeodhar.*

Location: Kingdom of Qeodhar, Nayce. AS

Description: Aboard the *Aran*, the fleet commander is summoned to the helm by the cries of land being spotted. After some quick checking, the landmass is realized to be the Island of Qeodhar. The commander instructs the navigator to use the sighting as a means to pinpoint their location and replot their course towards the kingdom's capital. (See *Fy. 21*, *Fy. 22*; *Fy. 28*, *Am. 9*.)

What This Means: The *skyship* has made great progress, however their position is not exactly where the commander had wanted to be. The navigator is a bit off on his calculations and the vessel is a bit off. The *Aran* will have to cross over the island kingdom to get to the kingdom's capital, Farend.

Fyrmont 27, AC 1017: *Blackheath Plate Retained.*

Location: Town of Blackheath, Bishopric of Kittings, Kingdom of Bellayne. SC

Description: An attempt by the parliament to sell the solid gold Memorial Plate of Blackheath, dedicated to those Blackheathians who have fallen in the various wars of Bellayne's past, is defeated by the staunch opposition of Richard Croft, Blackheath's member of the parliament. (See *Fy. 2*, *Fy. 18*; *Am. 17*, *Am. 26*.)

What This Means: The parliament will be a few hundred gold pieces worse off, but Richard Croft's popularity in his constituency is unrivaled. Blackheath, unlike most of Kittings, is a firm supporter of the

parliament.

Fyrmont 28: *The Aran Arrives.*

Location: City of Farend, Kingdom of Qeodhar, Nayce. AS

Description: The *Aran* arrives overhead Farend and after signaling the garrison, Commander Sdandre disembarks with an away team. He is hastily shown to King Norlan, who orders food and drink for them. Over these delicacies, Norlan inquires about the common news of the Alphatian continent and the empress. Through conversation it is revealed that Norlan's wife, Mariella, has made her way to the Hollow World and is safe with her mother at the imperial palace.

Apparently unconcerned by this news, Norlan informs them of the current conflicts that are occurring in his kingdom. He points out that Nayce has offered some assistance but not nearly enough to completely remove the threat. He asks Sdandre if he would add his *skyship* to his cause and aid in quelling unrest. Sdandre responds that he and his companions are on an important mission and cannot endanger the *skyship* in a local disturbance. In fact, the commander requests supplies and berthing while they await the arrival of the rest of the *skyships*.

Though a bit disappointed at being denied such a powerful weapons platform, Norlan makes a counterproposal. He agrees to provide the supplies and quarters; in return he requests that the *skyship* be a visible deterrent in the capital's defense. He feels that the mere presence of a *skyship* should be a major morale boost to his forces and cause the rebellion to falter.

Sdandre agrees to the proposal and adds that he, his men and vessel will assist in any defense of the capital. He will even offer to ferry Norlan out of the kingdom should the opposition prove to be insurmountable. This additional offer is born out of pride as it would be seen as detrimental for a *skyship* to flee from a rabble of rioting barbarians. (See *Fy. 22*, *Fy. 27*; *Am. 9*, *Am. 12*.)

Topic of the Month: *Los Amantes: A Miracle in Glantri?*

By Hector Tremontaine, Priest of Valerias from the Church of Darokin, Diplomat Second Class of the Darokinian Diplomatic Corps, Karameikan Mission.

[The following is an excerpt from a recent meeting held on Fyrmont 17, AC 1017, at the Church of Valerias in Mirros, discussing the mysterious events in Glantri City now dubbed as “La Milagro de Los Amantes” (“The Miracle of the Lovers” from Belcadizan Elvish). In attendance were Father Sergei Horatio Romankov, Patriarch of the Temple of Valerias in Karameikos, Lady Admetis Gabriela Valeriatides, Pontifex Valeriana from Thyatis and Doña Marianita Lucia de Leon y Valdez, Glantrian Ambassador to Karameikos.]

Marianita: In fact, from my recent correspondences with Princess Carnelia de Belcadiz, I have learned that the mystery woman whom you claim to be a manifestation of your Immortal was identified as one *Doña* Rosario de Villaroja, come to the Savage Baronies in the far west.

Admetis: And what of the Ethengar calling himself Tabak, which, if I may add, is a variant of the Ethengar appellation of the Sun-Prince Ixion, the radiant lover of our Patroness?

Marianita: Ah, you must understand, the Krondaharans of Glantri are skilled masters of illusion. This “Tabak” could have been any one of these Krondaharan illusionists under a very elaborate phantasm, as the whole spectacle of the dance and their disappearance was.

Admetis: And yet, the diviners of the Council of Haruspices of Thyatis have gathered sufficient evidence that this “whole spectacle,” as you call it, was not created with any wizardly magic at all, but Immortal magic—more powerful than any licensed cleric in Glantri at the time could even have managed!

Sergei: Milady, if I may, perhaps I can provide an explanation. For decades, the Temple of Valerias in Karameikos has been receiving intriguing reports of a secret cult of female worshippers of the Immortal

Valerias in Glantri, based primarily in Belcadiz—

Admetis: Ah, yes! What I have heard is that they are a coven of witches who—

Marianita: Impossible! There is no thing as a secret cult or coven in Belcadiz or Glantri for that matter! And as a woman of Belcadiz myself, I must say, I take strong offense at these allegations! Besides, wizards or witches simply cannot practice clerical magic.

Admetis: And yet, our diviners have detected the taint of Immortal magic at the Belcadiz Mansion! So if this did not come from clerics, they must have come from the Immortals themselves! How do you respond to this?

Marianita: Organized religion and the practice of clericism is forbidden in Glantri and the use of priestly magic has only very recently been sanctioned and very restrictedly at that. We Glantrians believe that relying on Immortals for any magic or powers simply hinders the individual person in achieving her potential in spellcasting and—

Admetis: That does not answer my question at all!

Sergei: Milady, please, if I may, our meeting today is not to attack the good ambassador here, but to address the issue of *Los Amantes* and its significance to the clerics and worshippers of Valerias throughout the Old World.

Admetis: Is it not apparent enough, *Pater* Sergei? For Valerias to appear in a heathen city is a call for us to proselytize and spread Her worship and who else but the ardent and zealous followers of the Patroness of Passion can dare face these godless wizards!

Sergei: Milady, please, let not your fervor get the better of you. I understand your enthusiasm stems from the recent popularity of Valerias in Thyatis, but Glantri is a different matter altogether. Remember that the Lady of the Rose was aligned against Glantri in the Wrath of the Immortals War and perhaps Her appearance merely signifies Her forgiveness of—

Admetis: *Pater*, this is not the place to discuss spiritual matters of the utmost sanctity.

[End of excerpt.]

Events: Ambyrmont

First Week

Ambyrmont 1, AC 1017: New Borders Drawn.

Location: Emirates of Ylaruam. OW

Description: The borders of the individual emirates are officially redistributed and new maps depicting the holdings of the emirs are drawn. The Emirates of Dythestia and Makistan remain as before; the town of Tel al Kebir is now considered a part of the Emirate of Nithia; the town of Hedjazi is now considered a part of the Emirate of Abbashan; and the coastal town of Fabia is annexed to the Emirate of Nicostenia. (*See Fy. 14, Fy. 26.*)

What This Means: Sultan Hassam al-Kalim has been steadily working to increase the importance of the Emirate of Abbashan for the last few years and this is his latest effort to clarify the changes in his reign. At the same time, he hopes to reduce the influence of members of the Preceptor faction by diminishing the size of the Emirate of Alasiya (traditionally the seat of Preceptor power). By adding the town of Tel al Kebir to the Emirate of Nithia, the sultan hopes to create a substantial power base for the new Nithian Emir to gain a greater foothold in that region. Finally, the town of Fabia was ceded to the Emirate of Nicostenia as a concession for their loss of Tameronikas earlier in the year and will hopefully keep the emir and peoples of that region loyal to the current regime.

Ambyrmont 1, AC 1017: A New Ruler... a New Name.

Location: City of Haldemar, Kingdom of Alphatian Neatharum, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: Imperial representatives arrive and announce that the Kingdom of Alphatian Neatharum will be renamed Kingdom of Neatharm. They also announce that its new king, King Trikard, will rule the

kingdom. The military governor is surprised by this announcement, as he had not expected that he, a cleric and soldier, would be given such a title. Included is a private dispatch from the empress, which instructs Tri kard to use Norwold as a model to develop his new kingdom. (*See Nu. 8; Sv. 14, Sv. 27.*)

What This Means: Eriadna has tired of the rulership void in Alphatian Neatharum. As such, she has decided that she shall appoint its next ruler since no worthy candidates seem interested. With a sense of nostalgia, she decides that this kingdom will follow the lines of Norwold and the Isle of Dawn and be open to non-magic-using individuals as rulers. Since Tri kard is essentially ruling the kingdom she chooses him as the king.

Eriadna also takes the time to rename the kingdom. Though she can use the moment to symbolize a new beginning for the empire's surface holding, the name change is more a matter of annoyance than anything else. The name is too long and too focal on the Neathar aspect to properly reflect a developing Alphatian kingdom. Since assimilation and enslavement of the Neathar are currently non-factors, she sees no reason to include them in this Alphatian kingdom. They can stay and contribute to the kingdom or leave; the choice is theirs.

The choice of Neatharm is drawn from the common reference to the kingdom, based on shortening the given name. Most of the inhabitants of the kingdom have adopted using the shortened version. Making it Neatharm officially is just an added convenience to a rather lengthy and mostly unused name.

What the PCs Can Do: Worthy PCs that so desire may become king or queen of Neatharm, or important advisors.

Ambyrmont 1, AC 1017: Resting after a Frightful Journey.

Location: Island of Okta. HW

Description: The combined group of Antalians and Heldannic Knights drops anchor in a small bay lying in the shadow of

Mt. Xyntrillia, both to replenish depleted supplies and to repair the ship itself, which sustained some damage during the voyage through the Sound of Yith, around the Ross Peninsula and northwest along the coast of the Island of Okta. Though the party did not encounter any intelligent creatures, the seas and the weather posed more than their share of perils; two knights and three Antalians perished during the voyage due to various causes. (*See Fe. 16, Fy. 3; Am. 4, Am. 24.*)

What This Means: Although Friedrich von Dreiburg and his followers managed to escape from Lothar, the subsequent voyage was very difficult. He and his followers will likely have to shelter here for several weeks before being able to continue their journey, their ultimate destination still undecided.

Ambyrmont 1, AC 1017: Østmark Falls.

Location: Town of Østmark, Kingdom of Qeodhar, Nayce. AS

Description: After weeks of incessant fighting, the Qeodharan troops besieging this Antalian town breach the palisade in several places and stream inwards. Though the inhabitants fight bravely, making the invaders pay dearly for every inch they gain, it is not enough; within 20 minutes of entering Østmark, the battle ends with a resounding Qeodharan victory. Once the remaining defenders are disarmed, they are herded, along with their families, to the center of the town. There, they are forced to watch the execution of Østmark's surviving clanheads, along with the looting and burning of most of the buildings.

Once these deeds are done, the commander of the Qeodharans addresses the gathered prisoners, saying, "Your treason has been paid for with the blood of your leaders and this nest of villainy has been cleansed! Now, you shall be scattered to the winds, as should have been done ages ago. The mines beckon, the fields call and you, my worms, will respond!" With that, he orders his men to march the townsfolk outside. (*See Fy. 9, Fy. 15; Am. 10, Am. 22.*)

What This Means: The fall of Østmark represents a deadly blow against the growing

revolt against Baron Norlan and his regime, as the town is widely known among the Antalians as their main stronghold. Norlan's men are aware of this as well and the symbolism of conquering it was not lost on them. Once news of the conquest spreads, the morale of the Antalian fighters will likely waver.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are with Norlan's men, the PCs can try to hasten the process somewhat—possibly allowing the Qeodharans to capture it earlier than this date. If they are with the Antalian defenders, the PCs can delay, but not likely prevent, the Qeodharan victory. If the PCs manage to avoid capture, they can perhaps find a way to free the townsfolk, but otherwise they may have their hands full trying to escape themselves!

Ambrymont 1, AC 1017: Sieges.

Location: Ciudad Tejillas, *Estado de Almarrón*. SC

Description: The forces of *Barón Maximiliano* have been keeping *Don Esteban* and his troops under siege in the Almarrónian capital of Ciudad Tejillas since Flaurmont 16 of this year. The defenders are very close to breaking point. Food and water supplies are now very low. Attempts to escape by sea have failed as *Barón Maximiliano* has had support from some Texeiran warships to block the harbor. *Don Esteban* has been holding out for support from his shadowy advisor (an agent of the necromancer), but that support never arrived. He now decides that he can no longer maintain the defense of the town and so he orders his troops to surrender but manages to escape the town by *teleport* to again form plans to retake his beloved dominion. (See *Fe. 22, Fy. 1; Am. 6, Am. 26.*)

Ambrymont 1, AC 1017: First Canal Plans Are Presented.

Location: City of Andaire, Kingdom of Alphas'ar, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: From this day on the law about canal construction can be used to demand funds from the imperial treasury to build canals. To the big surprise of the bureaucrats, no less than three different plans are presented.

The first one is a plan to connect Lake Shiell, Crystal Lake and Lake Llyn. Of course this one came from the Navy of the Lakes.

The second plan is the one from the Queen of Foresthome, who wants to connect the former harbors of the kingdom by a proposed Foresthome Rim Canal. Part of the plan is to construct dams in the harbors.

The third plan is about a canal between Andaire and the Llyn River. The plan is signed by the Queen of Jafilia. As the people realize that this means that the empress herself is planning a canal the astonishment is really big. (See *Ya. 3, Kl. 15; Am. 2, Am. 5.*)

What This Means: The plans of the navy are ready. One of these plans they gave to the Queen of Foresthome as she desired to control the coastal canal, in exchange for letting them propose their own plan in Foresthome lands. The Foresthome Rim Canal is not a very daring or inspiring venture, but as Queen Kikania has shown a particular interest in this project Halzunthram and his fellows shrugged away and have made the decision to proceed with their favorite project. After all, this rim canal is a useful thing as well and was one of their own plans, although it never has been the main one. On the other hand nobody had expected Eriadna's canal. Obviously the empress wants to strengthen the position of her new kingdom.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs can work for one of the canal projects as there is a lot of work to be done. The most likely position is that of guardians for the engineers and workers. Of course, before digging a canal the possible routes must be examined, a dangerous task in the Alphatian wilderness.

Ambyrmont 1, AC 1017: Another Volospin Sighting!

Location: City of Glantri, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: Once more, rumors of Volospin sightings abound. This time, however, they are in Glantri City itself. Several citizens claim to have seen the ex-prince walking about the streets, either deep in discussion with shady characters, or surveying the many changes to the city that have taken place since his supposed death many years ago. The *Paparazzi Glantri* is offering a reward: 50 *ducats* for any confirmed Volospin sightings. Elsewhere in the city, many entertainers are beginning to emerge as Volospin-impersonators; it's the latest fad. (*See Th. 14, Kl. 17; Am. 13.*)

What This Means: Dolores's agents will be on a double lookout now. The supreme judge is half-convinced that her long-lost "father" is behind the recent assassination attempt on her life and that he is toying with her. She is not yet desperate enough to call in the city guard to look for him—she doesn't want any of the other nobles to become too interested in the rumors. The reward by the *Paparazzi Glantri* is turning up the heat for her, though—she must find Volospin first, by any means necessary.

What the PCs Can Do: They can try to make some cash by tracking down the mysterious ex-prince, but it will be very difficult to claim that reward, as Volospin is making himself very hard to find. He may not even actually be in the city itself; these rumors may only be rumors after all.

Ambyrmont 2, AC 1017: Announcement of a New Troop.

Location: City of Andaire, Kingdom of Alphas'ar, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: Halzunthram from the Navy of the Lakes announces the set up of the 1st Marines from the Lakes. These soldiers will have to protect the surveyor and the construction teams who will have to go to the wild inner territories of Alphatia. The chief admiral of the navy invites everybody

to join the ranks of this new unit, especially the recently demobilized men and women who would like to continue with a military job, but this time in a private (mercenary) army. The marines can be members of the navy but it is not necessary to become one. (*See Kl. 15, Am. 1; Am. 5, Am. 16.*)

What This Means: Normally the recruitment of a new unit would have been an internal affair of the navy but in this case the public announcement was necessary to quell the fears that the surveyors and workers will be eaten by the great numbers of monsters. This unit is unique in the history of the Navy of the Lakes—until now the sailors always have fought on or from the decks of ships but they have never been committed to longer land-based operations.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs can be hired in the new unit.

Ambyrmont 2, AC 1017: The Stage Is Set.

Location: City of Helskir, Dominion of Helskir, Heldannic Empire, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: Having spent the last few days disassembling their various pieces of siege equipment and reassembling them on the other side of the outer wall, the assembled Thyatian-Heldunian force stages its first assault on the inner wall of Helskir. Casualties are relatively light during the assault itself, as the Heldannic defenses atop the inner wall had been softened somewhat during the past few days by means of offensive spells and many of the traps dotting the field between the walls have been discovered—often by accident. A large detachment of heavy infantry manages to reach the inner gates and attempts to batter them down, but crossbow fire and boiling oil soon force them to beat a hasty retreat.

Also, a flurry of messages are exchanged, by magical means, between the Thyatian-Heldunian force and their Naycese allies, in order to coordinate a final push to reconquer Helskir. (*See Fy. 24, Fy. 25; Am. 6, Am. 7.*)

What This Means: Enough time has passed for the combined Thyatian-Heldunian force to better position itself for a final assault on Helskir, but the Heldannic defenders have shown themselves still capable of delaying an enemy victory.

Amyrmont 2, AC 1017: A Deluge of Festivals.

Location: City of Bluenose, Kingdom of Arogansa, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: The Bluenose business owners meet to discuss preparations for the planned week-long festivities for Closing Day. As each goes over planned events and attractions, it soon becomes apparent that the city will see observances of any and all forms of excess that the Alphatian nobles can imagine. Several rearrange their venue schedules to keep from competing for tourists.

Jhadix offers an added proposal. He cites that Bluenose could also take advantage of the various holidays that the empire recognizes, so they could promote extravagant festivals based on them. He offers the Alphatian New Year, Opening Day, the Empress's birthday, the Day of Magic, Howling Day, Doggerel Days, Ancestor's Day, Wine Festivals and of course Closing Day. The assembled business owners like the idea and agree to adopt them. (*See Th. 14; Am. 23, Ka. 15.*)

Amyrmont 2, AC 1017: Domes Arrive.

Location: Over Torenal Site, Sunken Arogansa, Nayce. AS

Description: After the long and slow journey from Notrion, the domes, barges and armed escorts arrive over the Torenal work site. As the naval contingents take up defensive positions, workers from above and below move to make preparations to lower the domes down to the seabed below. Though these domes are nowhere near the size of those seen in Aquas, transferring them down to the seabed is a major undertaking. The operation is rather tense at

times, however the domes are slid off of their transport barges and hoisted slowly down to the awaiting crews. The entire process takes several days before all the domes are off-loaded and positioned on the awaiting foundations. As the barges and escort vessels depart, the construction crews are given a few days' rest before work continues. (*See Nu. 12, Nu. 20; Am. 18, Ka. 2.*)

Amyrmont 3, AC 1017: Going Down.

Location: Underneath City of Hattias, Duchy of Hattias, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Thyatian agents using *etherealness* spells have, over the preceding months, attempted to map out the chambers under Hattias City that were used by the followers of Thanatos. They hoped to locate whatever it was the fiend was referring to with its cryptic remarks, then send in a strike team to eliminate it. While they have managed to gain good knowledge of the layout of these warrens, they failed to find anything noteworthy—until today.

Using *ethereal* travel, one of those scouting the area happens to get lost momentarily and descend deeper, under the known complex of warrens. There she stumbles upon a seemingly vast sub-level, apparently inaccessible from the main complex, cut off from it by a thick layer of bedrock. These chambers seem extraordinarily ancient and seem to be inhabited by a variety of undead. Fearing she'll be noticed by one or more of them, she hastily ascends back to the surface and reports what she found to her superiors. (*See Fl. 24, Kl. 24; Am. 23, Ka. 10.*)

What This Means: The Thyatians have discovered a large, ancient complex inhabited by a powerful lich who serves Thanatos and his undead minions. Agents of the Thyatian *magistranoi*, at the emperor's command, will investigate this complex and map out its features. Divinatory spells are also used, to uncover information about the threats that they will face in clearing it out.

What the PCs Can Do: Characters exploring the vast dungeon underneath Hattias City will be able to buy (or, if they've

done something to serve the empire, be rewarded with) maps and information about the areas they plan on clearing out. Particularly prominent characters (especially those who investigated the crimes caused by the fiend, or who faced the fiend and beat it) might be tapped for the mission into the secret sub-level.

Ambrymont 3, AC 1017: Skyship over Aengmor.

Location: Canolbarth Forest, Colony of Aengmor, Shadow Elves' Territories. OW

Description: In the northern region of Canolbarth Forest, the shadow elves spot a strange sight above the twisted trees: a flying *skyship* of human creation. Soon, mounted shadowelf wizards fly up to the foreign vessel and attack it with *fireballs*. Within moments, the aerial battle is over and the *skyship* crashes somewhere deep in the forest. (See *Fe. 20, Fy. 7; Am. 14, Am. 15.*)

What This Means: Many of the shadow elves who witness this event believe it was a routine mission of militant shadow elves protecting their forest realm from human intruders. None realize that the *skyship* was sent by Prince Malachie du Marais of Glantri and among its passengers were his agents sent to Aengmor to investigate the schemes of his enemy, Princess Dolores Hillsbury, otherwise known as the sorceress Synn.

What the PCs Can Do: The plot of the D&D: *Shadow Over Mystara* arcade game continues here. The PCs are Malachie's agents on board the *skyship*, which is attacked by shadowelf warriors, wizards and one mysterious champion named Tel'Arin. The *skyship* crashes and the PCs continue their adventure within Canolbarth, the Forest of Despair and in the underground shadowelf territories, until they reach Synn's fortress.

Ambrymont 4, AC 1017: Terror from the Mount.

Location: Island of Okta. HW

Description: Friedrich von Dreiburg is roused from slumber aboard his group's dry-

docked vessel by the panicked cries of one of the Antalian, who runs into the group's makeshift camp by the seashore. Demanding to know the cause of the disturbance, he asks the man curtly what is the matter. Still gasping for breath, the Antalian responds that, while foraging with his brother for edible plants near the foot of the large mountain nearby, they came upon a lush valley filled with all manner of flowering plants, which ran up the shallow slopes towards the summit. Although they found many good nuts and berries, their finds grew richer the further up the slope they traveled, until, near the summit itself, they found a grassy bowl littered with wildflowers and oddly-shaped bushes bearing fruits. It was in touching one of the plants that his brother screamed and fell to the ground.

Before the Antalian's eyes, his brother's skin adopted the texture of bark and limbs sprouted from all over his body and grew leaves, while his feet became rooted to the ground. Within moments, where his brother once writhed in agony, a leafy shrub now stood, its shape vaguely resembling the posture of a man stooped in pain. It was at that instant that the Antalian fled in mindless, gibbering fear.

Seeing the seriousness of the man's expression, von Dreiburg opts to give him the benefit of the doubt and issues an order that no one is to approach the mountain. (See *Fy. 3, Am. 1; Am. 24, Ei. 8.*)

What This Means: For all its lushness, von Dreiburg and his men found this region of the Island of Okta odd in that no land animals of any sort were present—they may now know the reason. The Hollow World is not just host to vanished cultures; animals and plants of various sorts are also transplanted here once conditions are no longer suitable for them on the surface world. What inhabits this region of the island is a variety of magical giant plant, which feeds itself by luring its prey with fruits and berries, absorbing those who touch them. The area of the most lush vegetation is where it "feeds;" it draws its prey inwards by offering better and better lures (fruits).

Amyrmont 4, AC 1017: Early Encounters—the Battle of Ronung.

Location: Countryside near the Village of Ronung, Kingdom of Arkan, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: Arkan and Stonewall forces meet for the first time in earnest. The Arkan forces try to use cavalry to attack Stonewall's infantry since the invaders brought no horses with them. But though Arkan archers try to support them, they're brutally slaughtered by the vast number of boltmen on Stonewall's side; the Arkan forces are forced to retreat and their infantry never even get to enter the fight, though they still take serious casualties from hostile fire. The few Arkan forces that are able to close with Stonewall's army are promptly killed off by hostile magic from Stonewall's wizards and their few wizard allies and mercenary mages from Randel. (*See Fy. 13, Fy. 25; Am. 16, Sv. 1.*)

What This Means: This outcome does not bode well for Arkan—they were soundly defeated! Thus, Arkan is now forced to realize that it will never win a conventional war against the invaders. General Lotaran will consider the matter with his advisors and King Qinn and they will soon choose the hit-and-run tactics that Wolf-Hunter suggested from now on, though General Lotaran will have to completely reorganize his forces and tactics as a consequence.

What the PCs Can Do: From now on, the Stonewall forces will primarily be harassed by sniper-fire and ambushes from adventurers like Wolf-Hunter's group, which is soon nicknamed the Wolf-Pack by both sides. The PCs can be involved in these on either side.

Amyrmont 4, AC 1017: Pidimigd Reinforced.

Location: Bluenose Ruins, Sunken Arogansa, Nayce. AS

Description: A *submersible* arrives carrying several mages and their apprentices. The

arrivals depart the vessel and are met by Pidimigd. He shows them to their quarters, a building that had once been a brothel. Pidimigd and the mages begin sealing the building and making it habitable for air-breathers. The apprentices begin off-loading their equipment and supplies from the vessel. Noticeably absent at the arrival are the Bluenose undead. Most watch the procession at a distance. (*See Fy. 26, Fy. 27; Am. 16, Am. 19.*)

What This Means: These are the respondents to Pidimigd's call. There are four arriving mages in all and all but one are necromancers. Zebul is a former apprentice of Pidimigd. Veanyas and Pidimigd were both apprentices to the same necromancer during their initiation into the dark arts. Mosira, a Thothian, had worked with Pidimigd previously in the necromantic arts in Thothia. Prellia is not a necromancer, but is secretly Pidimigd's estranged daughter.

For various reasons, Pidimigd feels confident that these mages can be controlled either through force or through loyalty. Prellia is his ace card in any uprising to his authority. Though father and daughter do not get along, Pidimigd hopes that their common blood will add a definite ally to his side. For her part, Prellia is here out of compulsion for her father. However she also wishes to keep him in line in regards to the Bluenose undead. She knows what he is, but hopes to accomplish some feat in creating in him some tangible father figure.

What the PCs Can Do: Famous necromancers (but of lower level than Pidimigd) can be recruited as well. In that case, the other PCs can come along, though they will be treated by Pidimigd as mere assistants to the necromancers.

Amyrmont 4, AC 1017: Darkness Gathering.

Location: Barony of Two Lakes Vale, Icereach Range. NW

Description: The fishermen of the Western Lake notice a strange eerie black cloud appearing in the middle of the lake, just 120 feet above the Shunned Island. The

cloud keeps growing with each passing hour and at the end of the day half the lake region is darkened by the inexplicable phenomenon. Even the inhabitants of Skullheim, Baron Fharo's capital, can see the dark cloud from their hills. The court chaplain is at a loss at explaining the occurrence, but he is sure this can only mean an ill fate for the barony. (See *Fy. 15, Fy. 17; Am. 12, Am. 20.*)

What This Means: After two weeks working on the right enchantments, the Shadow Lord and Sylarion managed to cast the right spell upon the *Death Stone*. The black magics invoked by the two spellcasters created a rift in the plane's fabric, opening a gate directly to Nyx's home plane. The deadly energy stemming forth from the Sphere of Entropy is now swirling in the barony's sky, creating the dark cloud that blocks all light coming from the sun and the stars above. With each passing day, the cloud will increase its magnitude, until the entire vale is bathed in a permanent dusk. Then the undead will raise under the Shadow Lord's command to claim their new dominion from the living beings.

Ambymont 5, AC 1017: Flight of the *Devil Ray*.

Location: Borydos Naval Research Base, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: A sleek Thyatian airship is launched on Borydos, beginning her maiden voyage with some trial runs to test her capabilities. The ship, the *Devil Ray*, is the most complex and expensive constructed in Thyatis to date. She is intended to be the first in a line of improved Thyatian airships, with several more planned each year, depending on how well the *Devil Ray* performs. (See *Sv. 21.*)

What This Means: The *Devil Ray*, while fast, stealthy and powerful, was very expensive to build. While the *Devil Ray*'s capabilities surpass expectations, so does her cost and many begin to wonder if such expensive vessels are an efficient use of the empire's resources and questions about the project will grow. The emperor is a great

proponent of the airship program, however and wants to see Thyatis's skyfleet expand.

What the PCs Can Do: Loyal Thyatian characters may be hired to serve onboard the *Devil Ray* in her explorations.

Ambymont 5, AC 1017: Contracts Are Signed.

Location: City of Andaire, Kingdom of Alphas'ar, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: Halzunthram, Queen Kikania and Empress Eriadna sign an agreement that assigns the newly-formed 1st Marines from the Lakes with the protection of their canal projects as well as the project of the sailors. They also agree that Rear-Admiral Clarendon from the Navy of the Lakes will oversee all three projects. (See *Am. 1, Am. 2; Am. 16, Am. 22.*)

What This Means: Both rulers think that forming a united front with the sailors will improve the chances of success for the various projects. Of course it is a very rare event that a mercenary unit is hired before it is even formed, but the fame of the Navy of the Lakes is good enough that Eriadna and Kikania trust in their ability to be ready in time—the navy may not have been important before, but it has always been reliable, for those who knew of it.

Likewise both rulers have decided that it will be cheaper to hire the navy for planning and overseeing the projects than to build up their own teams, especially as both rulers are too occupied with their normal work to be involved personally. Clarendon is planning for a long term now; he has a good team and he has established contacts with the leading engineers of Alphatia.

Ambymont 6, AC 1017: Undead Horde Enters Yazak Steppes.

Location: North of City of Plaktur, Yazak Steppes. WB

Description: Having passed through Gosluk and Kuttai territories and gathered some humanoids and nomads to his banner, Don Claudio's forces have passed over the

eastern half of the Yazak Steppes and stand poised to enter the Yalu Bay region. Zuyevo, having lost most of a major army in Douzbakjian, is facing a grave threat to its recently-extended southern frontier. (*See Fy. 1, Am. 1; Am. 26, Sv. 5.*)

What This Means: Zuyevo has bitten off more than it can chew. With two armies approaching, one from the north and one from the south and the baronies preparing a counter-attack to recover Richland, the *tsar* must scramble to meet all the approaching threats. When the *tsar* gets word of the approaching undead horde, he decides to try and make peace with Kiligi Alp Arslan and set aside his hope to conquer Douzbakjian, even though his anger at the death of the crown prince is severe. Nevertheless, he looks for other, less conventional ways to revenge himself on the Douzbaks.

Kiligi Alp Arslan accepts the offer and the *tsar* orders troops shifted southwards. Kiligi Alp Arslan would prefer to drive the Zuyevans back beyond the Tozel and Tunguska Rivers, if not further, but has heard of increasing white orc raids in Douzbakjian, so he reluctantly accepts the *tsar's* peace offer, which sets the frontier at the pre-war border.

Ambyrmont 6, AC 1017: The Sundering of the Gates.

Location: City of Helskir, Dominion of Helskir, Heldannic Empire, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: Scant minutes after sundown, after several days of intermittent raiding and probing of the defenses, a mighty barrage is let loose from the artillery massed around the inner wall of Helskir—this time focusing on the gates themselves. Boulders, ballista bolts and flaming oil are thrown at the defenses, doing extensive damage. The Heldannic counterattack is spirited, but unable to diminish the severity of the strikes being made against them—only a couple of ballistae are destroyed and casualties among the Thyatian-Heldunian force are quite low.

Inevitably, the gatehouse literally implodes under the bombardment and, with a hearty cheer, the alliance surges forward to do battle. Soon, a fierce melee ensues, as Heldunian soldiers, Antalian guardsmen and Thyatian legionnaires press northwards into Helskir, while the Heldannic Knights and their soldiers try to drive them back. Clerical and magical spells are exchanged between the two armies, as men and women go down on all sides. Heldannic crossbowmen rake the crowds below them, trying to aid their companions on the ground, while Heldunian bowmen try to take up strategic positions.

The fighting continues for hours, with the lines holding fairly steady around the ruined gates, until the sounds of magical explosions can be heard to the north—from the docks! One of the Naycese warships has entered the harbor and its boltmen proceed to launch *magic missiles* at any likely targets and at the Heldannic vessels anchored nearby. Some of the Heldannic soldiers in Helskir lose heart and manage to make their way to the harbor, where they board one of the smaller ships, cast off and try their luck on the open sea—their vessel taking moderate damage as they pass the Naycese vessel. (*See Fy. 25, Am. 2; Am. 7, Am. 8.*)

What This Means: The alliance against Heldann has managed to breach the inner defenses of Helskir itself and the Naycese contingent acted on previously agreed-upon signals to wreak havoc in the harbor, in the hopes of dividing the defending forces and hastening the recapture of Helskir.

What the PCs Can Do: This entire battle with provide opportunities for heroism and bravery!

Ambyrmont 7, AC 1017: Not This Year.

Location: City of Blueside, Kingdom of Lagrius, Continent of Bellissaria, Nayce. AS

Description: The planned yachting regatta is regretfully canceled. With the troubles with the undead, response from sailing enthusiasts outside of Lagrius has been slight. The planned events have been scaled back and the races evolve into a few contests between local yachtsmen. The local mage

Dreximar maintains his supremacy over the yachting community with several decisive victories aboard the *Sundowner*. Though the competition is limited to the locals, his performance proves that he and his vessel are still the ones to beat. (*See Fe. 15.*)

Ambymont 7, AC 1017: The Battle for Helskir Continues.

Location: City of Helskir, Dominion of Helskir, Heldannic Empire, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: The fierce battle of Helskir rages unabated in the streets. Realizing that they have some control over the field of battle as long as their enemies are bottled up in the ruined gatehouse, the Heldannic army tries its best to hold its position, pelting the massed Thyatian and Heldunian soldiers with crossbow bolts, spells and thrown spears. By sunrise, however, they are dismayed to see enemy bowmen ranged along the parapets of the inner wall and are forced to withdraw—some of them dispersing into the surrounding buildings. Making the affair more difficult are several small-scale uprisings among the populace, seizing upon the opportunity to regain their independence.

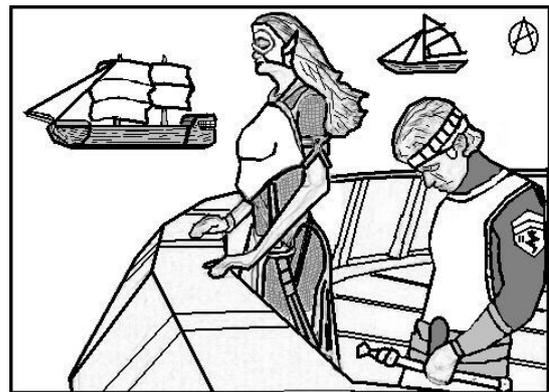
Although the battles rage on all day, sundown sees the Thyatian-Heldunian alliance in control of only the southern third of Helskir. Elsewhere, Anna von Hendriks, wounded from the day's fighting, gathers as many troops as she can and heads to the former palace, which she has been using as her personal headquarters. (*See Am. 2, Am. 6; Am. 8, Am. 9.*)

What This Means: Although the alliance has obtained a decisive advantage against the Heldannic occupying force, victory is by no means certain. The dispersal of Heldannic soldiers into the surrounding buildings will mean that every structure will have to be cleared on an individual basis—something that could take days. In the meantime, the defenders will have places in which to hide and recuperate somewhat, or possibly hold Helskir residents as hostages. For the alliance, the presence of the native

Helskirans is more of a hindrance than a benefit; despite the fact that some of them are rising up against their overlords, they are still in the way. There will be many innocent casualties once this conflict has ended.

Ambymont 7, AC 1017: To Strike or Not to Strike.

Location: City of Citadel, Kingdom of Bettelyn, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW



Description: Queen Llynara is advised as to the sighting of the three imperial *skyships* flying along the border and entering Randel. Her military advisors analyze the sighting and offer various reasons for their presence in Randel. The two most commonly cited scenarios are that the imperial troops are there either to bolster Randel's military power or to act as a peacekeeping force to keep Junna in power. The officers also speak of reports of Randel forces mobilizing into defensive positions near the border.

Llynara contemplates the situation before postponing any invasion of Randel. Though her representatives in Andaire tell her that the trio of *skyships* is performing training maneuvers, she is skeptical that that is their true purpose. This doubt intensifies as it is realized that Dogrel, who originally hails from Randel, commands the force. She doubts that Eriadna would use imperial forces to bolster an individual kingdom or even aid a ruler; however, the mere presence of those imperial troops complicates matters.

Llynara has an opportunity that cannot and should not be so easily dismissed. She issues the order authorizing the invasion of

their nefarious neighbor. Her officers support the move, but stress caution. Llynara agrees and tells them to attack when they are ready. She turns command of the operation over to General Taghist, her senior military officer. (*See Fe. 14, Fy. 1; Am. 18, Sv. 1.*)

Ambyrmont 7, AC 1017: Ennius Stops in West Portage.

Location: Town of West Portage, *Archonate* of Hesperia, Thyatian Empire. SD

Description: After tarrying in the city of Thyatis for awhile to consult some of the more obscure books in the Great Library, Ennius Necrekis reaches West Portage. He intends to stop there for a few days' rest before continuing. At this point of the journey, a rumor begins that he intends to enter the Great Escarpment and then to continue to Thothia. Some also notice that the expedition gains an additional member in West Portage. (*See Fe. 1, Fe. 13; Ei. 12, Ka. 3.*)

What This Means: The man who joins Ennius's expedition is Rudolf Neuenberg, a famous philosopher and adventurer, who had left Thyatis after a dispute with the Storm Soldiers who have made several attempts on his life since then. He has recently returned to the empire, invited by Ennius and Galea to enter this expedition.

Second Week

Ambyrmont 8, AC 1017: Closing the Ring.

Location: City of Helskir, Dominion of Helskir, Heldannic Empire, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: Along the western inner wall of Helskir, advancing Thyatian troops enter the harbor area and encounter Naycese soldiers encamped in one of the warehouses. After a few terse words exchanged between their respective commanders, both forces gather their gear once more and press

eastwards, towards the Heldannic-held portion of Helskir.

Meanwhile, in the southern portion of the city, a Heldannic counterattack manages to force Heldunian soldiers to abandon their positions and hole up in a gutted mansion, while crossbowmen stationed in a two-story building fire upon a Helskiran rebel patrol seeking to aid their erstwhile liberators, inflicting many casualties. Heldunian battle mages quickly eliminate the threat of the crossbowmen, however, through *sleep* and *hold person* spells.

The battle rages underneath Helskir, too, as soldiers on both sides do battle in the grimy, ill-lit sewers. Here, the battle lines are even more blurred, as combatants wander the maze-like tunnels in search of opponents in small groups, fearful of what lies around the next corner. Many warriors fall and not only by the blades of their enemies. (*See Am. 6, Am. 7; Am. 9, Am. 10.*)

Ambyrmont 9, AC 1017: ... Then a Flood!

Location: Territory of Thratia, Hinterlands, Thyatian Empire. DV

Description: In the months since the first refugees from the Milenian city-states made their way to the Hinterlands, the flow of migrants into the empire has increased markedly. The border forts and outposts, lacking the resources to shelter the newcomers, have been directing them northwards to the more settled region of Davania Superior. Even so, some forts end up receiving another batch of refugees just as another group departs, hampering their own efforts at maintaining order along the empire's southern frontier.

Several commanders, seeing a potential crisis, dispatch messengers to Leilah ben Nadir in Raven Scarp, requesting more manpower. (*See Fe. 27, Fy. 26; Am. 16, Am. 19.*)

What This Means: With widespread destruction befalling the northeastern Meghala Kimata Plains, those that can leave the area do so. While some fled westwards to Ilioloosti—the nearest neutral major city-

state—many more sought shelter in the jungles and hills stretching along the northern fringes of the plains. Even here there was no shelter, as the indigenous humanoid tribes and Hinterlanders (primarily un-Thyatianized members of the Rhino Clan) drove the newcomers away from their homes and hunting grounds. Some of the craftier clan chieftains deliberately drove the Milenians northwards, knowing that this would further strain the Thyatian Empire's resources in the area. The Kingdom of Emerond also had a role in this, as those Milenians who entered its borders were quickly ferried through to Thyatis—the Emerondians having no desire to let large numbers of humans settle in their lands and upset the delicate balance of nature.

Thus, large portions of the southern frontier, which is still in the process of being pacified, are having to cope with the strains of protecting and moving refugees, in addition to countering Hinterlander attacks. Some Hinterlander clan leaders think this will slow down, or possibly reverse, the Thyatian advance.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs in the service of Thyatis could find themselves handling refugees, either protecting them as they cross the border, or guiding them deeper into Thyatian territory.

Ambyrmont 8, AC 1017: Cultists of Thanatos enter Ekto.

Location: City of Ekto, Kingdom of Ekto, Nayce. SD

Description: Having left two members in Trikelios to establish a safe house and start recruiting followers, the expedition of the Cult of Thanatos reaches Ekto. Here they plan on establishing another main base, taking advantage of the confusion caused by the disruptions the city has experienced and the large number of bodies and undead buried under the ruins. The Cult of Thanatos will also begin to recruit members here as well. (*See Kl. 3, Fy. 19; Sv. 4.*)

What This Means: The Cultists of Thanatos now have a broad network of bases and enclaves on the Isle of Dawn. The

ruined portions of Ekto and the many lost chambers and sewers under the city, provide a prime breeding ground for undead minions. The cultists also hope to gain some sway over Ekto's politics, but will find this difficult if not impossible because of the growing hold Thothia has on the city.

Because many building supplies and other resources necessary for a recovery project are passing into the city of Ekto, it is also fairly easy for the cultists to acquire what their base on the Great Escarpment wants. They begin smuggling supplies to their fellow cultists.

What the PCs Can Do: The cultists are surreptitious and circumspect at this stage and characters are unlikely to take particular note of them. This will likely change in time, however. Officials might eventually notice that additional supplies are disappearing from the warehouses where they are stored and hire characters to track down the smugglers. Some of this is just normal corruption, people diverting supplies for their own use, to their friends and to wealthy people bribing them, but the party could also discover the growing smuggling operations conducted by the cultists.

Ambyrmont 9, AC 1017: The Last Stand.

Location: City of Helskir, Dominion of Helskir, Heldannic Empire, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: After over two days of almost continuous fighting, only pockets of Heldannic resistance remain in Helskir, though they have a stronger presence in the sewers. The one stronghold remaining, that of the former palace, is all that stands between the Thyatian-Heldunian-Naycese force and victory. Warily, but full of hope, they storm the main entrance, only to be repulsed by relatively well-rested Heldannic Knights, who wield their weapons and spells to great effect—though some of their number are cut down in the process.

As the other pockets are cleared out in succession and headway is made in the sewers, more troops are brought to bear on

the palace and though considerable ground is gained, the Heldannic presence is still strong in the palace's core—in the throne room, the former royal bedchambers and adjoining rooms. (See *Am. 7*, *Am. 8*; *Am. 10*, *Am. 12*.)

Ambyrmont 9, AC 1017: The Natives Are Restless and They Are Not Friendly.

Location: Eastern Jungle Coast, roughly 100 miles east of Colony of Davania Inferior. DV

Description: Having left the last vestiges of civilization behind them, after passing Tiberio's Lighthouse in Davania Inferior, the Thyatian exploratory flotilla spent the past several days hugging the coast, charting sandbars and other obstacles carefully, as well as noting oddities in the land formations and the locations of rivers where they enter the Sea of Dread. They come upon a stretch of land where the jungle has been cleared and the resulting clearing is littered with crude racks upon which animal skins are drying, as well as a couple of crude huts.

Curious, Julius orders a detachment of men to go ashore and examine the handiwork. Before they can come close to the racks, however, a deep, booming battle cry reverberates throughout the clearing and well over a score of jungle orcs leap out of the surrounding underbrush and charge the newcomers. Fortunately, the Thyatians are able to flee to the safety of the ships, which the contingent of marines keeps the orcs at bay with a few volleys of crossbow bolts.

Losing no time, Julius orders his ships to resume their voyage. (See *Fl. 15*, *Fy. 18*; *Sv. 2*, *Ei. 13*.)

What This Means: This region of the Jungle Coast is inhabited by a tribe of jungle orcs, who saw the Thyatians approaching almost an hour earlier. Eager for some fresh meat, the orcs abandoned their camp and waited to see if the foreigners would pass by, or let their curiosity get the better of them. Unfortunately for the orcs, Julius has ordered the marines to be prepared for any ambushes and thus no one was lost.

Ambyrmont 9, AC 1017: A Balance Returns.

Location: City of Farend, Kingdom of Qeodhar, Nayce, AS

Description: The *Cloud Kin* and the *Madgyn's Revenge* arrive overhead Farend. The two vessels land alongside the *Aran* and their captains are met by Sdandre. Since the *Dervish* is not with them, he can only assume that the vessel and crew were lost. The assumptions are confirmed with no reports of any survivors emerging from the darkness. Sdandre tells the arrivals to rest while their vessels are repaired and supplied. Once that is done, they shall depart together and head for Ionace. (See *Fy. 27*, *Fy. 28*; *Am. 12*, *Am. 14*.)

What This Means: Though a bit enraged that Sdandre extended the rights of hospitality and supply to the other two vessels without asking him, King Norlan lets the matter slide. He would have allowed it anyway as the addition of two more *skyships* is good for him. Though he cannot reasonably hope to call upon them in his war, he has hopes that the rebels and invaders will try to assault the capital—then the *skyships* would have no other choice than to fight alongside his forces.

Ambyrmont 10, AC 1017: A Final Surprise... and the Aftermath.

Location: City of Helskir, Dominion of Helskir, Heldannic Empire, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: After an entire night spent attempting to demolish the hastily-erected barricades protecting the remaining Heldannic pockets in the former royal palace—by magical and mundane means—the allied Thyatian-Heldunian-Naycese force manages to enter the royal suite, which is occupied by a handful of injured Heldannic soldiers—and the shrouded remains of the dead. Quickly taking control of the situation, the allied soldiers round up the walking wounded and escort them into captivity, while those too injured to move are carried out on stretchers.

Elsewhere, allied soldiers are able to make their way into the throne room, which they knew Anna von Hendriks had been using as a fallback position. Inside, they find no one. (See *Am. 8*, *Am. 9*; *Am. 12*, *Am. 15*.)

What This Means: The battle for Helskir is effectively over. The concerted allied assault has managed to free Helskir from Heldannic control, but the campaign has been a costly one. The Heldannic defenders were able to hold off the main body of the attacking force long enough for some of them to make a strategic withdrawal to the palace and there to erect defenses capable of preventing complete capitulation for a couple of days—long enough for the able-bodied Heldannic soldiers to escape capture through the use of *word of recall* or *teleportation* spells. Thus, only the dead and critically injured are left behind for the most part, but these are likely to have useful information.

What the PCs Can Do: There may be scattered pockets of resistance yet—isolated Heldannic soldiers hiding in remote cellars, or their sympathizers organizing street gangs to delay the allied force's victory—which might require clearing out. A bigger job is at hand, however; the examination and interrogation of the newest group of prisoners. There is a good chance that some of them will know where the other Heldannic soldiers—and most importantly Anna von Hendriks—might have fled.

Ambyrmont 10, AC 1017: Those Hydraulic Mills.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: The first of the new aqueduct-powered mill structures is completed and begins operating. Water from the aqueduct flows down in stages over a series of 16 water wheels, arranged two abreast. The axis-shafts of the wheels are magically lubricated to eliminate friction resistance. The water wheels are themselves wholly enclosed within a large stone building that forms the mill complex itself.

The aqueduct water can be diverted to allow any or all of the wheels to be shut

down (for maintenance or whatever reason). The water then enters an underground pipe, where it passes through a chamber that magically *purifies* it before it is deposited into the cistern and there piped throughout The City. The cistern itself was once open-air, but has been covered, creating a large plaza and park. (See *Va. 19*.)

What This Means: The chamber that creates a *purify water* effect was added at the recommendation of the imperial hospitaliers as a public health measure. As additional aqueduct-driven hydromills are completed, each will also have a *purify water* enchantment. All the cisterns in Thyatis will be dredged deeper and covered as well and will thus become underground chambers and additional parklands and plazas will be built atop them; plants will be transplanted to create the parks and where helpful *plant growth* spells will be used. Once this project is completed there will be six such aqueduct-powered mill plants in the city of Thyatis and one each in places like Kerendas City and Port Lucinius. There will also be six new parks and plazas in Thyatis City, as each cistern is moved underground and the surface converted.

Ambyrmont 10, AC 1017: More Victories for Norlan.

Location: City of Farend, Kingdom of Qeodhar, Nayce. AS

Description: Baron Norlan receives the latest reports from his military commanders and spies in the field and the news is good. Advances have been made along the main battlefield, with one town and three villages being recaptured over the past month, with approximately 450 prisoners being marched to Farend. Many of those prisoners, the reports state, are suitable for forced labor in the shipyards, the fields, or the mines. The reports also detail the successful opening of the second front along the east coast. The only bad news is the continued failure on the part of Qeodharan forces to pacify the northern foothills; isolated patrols are still being ambushed.

The tactical assessment makes Norlan even happier; it is predicted that both forces of soldiers will soon meet each other in the midst of Antalian-occupied territory, effectively cutting the rebels' forces in two and isolating them from the coast. (*See Fy. 15, Am. 1; Am. 22, Ei. 2.*)

What This Means: Norlan's forces clearly have a tactical and numerical advantage. It seems that it is only a matter of time before he is in a position to annihilate the Antalian rebels in the heartland.

Ambymont 11, AC 1017: Crossing the Border... War.

Location: Kingdom of Eadrin, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: Arogansan troops cross the lower Thera River and begin their march into Eadrin lands. Each group makes its way towards its objectives. With the element of surprise and few sizable communities before them, the groups march virtually unopposed into the Eadrin countryside. Their progress is good, even the units towing siege equipment. (*See Th. 2, Fy. 20; Am. 23, Sv. 4.*)

What This Means: Though the military units are confident, many officers wonder how long their approach will go unopposed. Many have some serious concerns about their troops. Though sizable, few troops are adequately trained and equipped; Detteria's rush for a large army has undermined their effectiveness. Though not equipped with the proverbial dagger and bagpipes, few units are wearing metal armor and most are poorly equipped. Many units are composed of raw recruits; some have only been in service for a few weeks.

What the PCs Can Do: They can be part of Arogansa's invasion force; if they are competent enough, they might easily be placed in positions of command and weigh heavily on the success of the military campaign. PCs present in Eadrin the moment the war starts may be caught in it.

Ambymont 11, AC 1017: Duttai Defeated.

Location: Kiyat Territories, Ethengar Khanates. OW

Description: Rebel Kiyat tribe forces, under the command of Duttai Khan, are defeated by the combined armies of the Murkit tribe and Manghai Khan's *kesbak*. Manghai Khan commands that all rebel Kiyat males be slain to the man. He personally strangles Duttai Khan with a bowstring, in the manner befitting Ethengar *kebans*. He never allows them the opportunity to swear allegiance to his tribe. (*See Ya. 1.*)

What This Means: With Duttai's defeat, the last true opposition to the merging of the Kiyat and Murkit tribes is gone. Manghai Khan can justly claim the territories of the Kiyat clan as belonging to him and his power base has become that much greater on the steppes. His show of ruthlessness on the field will have mixed blessings however—many who saw him weak will respect him more now, but those who know the true Manghai Khan will have their suspicions raised ever further.

Ambymont 12, AC 1017: Farewell... But Leaving So Soon.

Location: City of Farend, Kingdom of Qeodhar, Nayce. AS

Description: Commander Sdandre surprises King Norlan by announcing that he and his retinue of three *skyships* are about to depart to continue their mission to Ionace. Norlan is obviously disappointed at their early departure and tries to persuade the commander to stay for but a few more days to fully restock their supply stores and rest their men. However, Sdandre is adamant that they have dallied from their journey for far too long and must leave. He cites that the final leg of their journey is fairly short, the amassed supplies should be more than adequate. The three vessels leave by the day's end. (*See Fy. 28, Am. 9; Am. 14.*)

What This Means: The truth is Sdandre feels a bit uneasy about prolonging their stay. He is well aware of Norlan's desire to add the vessels to his forces. The monarch's pestering on the matter has become unbearable. A quick survey of the offered

supplies is deemed adequate to get the three *skyships* from Qeodhar to Ionace. Had he had his way, Sdandre would have left without informing Norlan. However, such acts may be viewed badly within Nayce, where the non-spellcasters are taking a more prominent role in official matters.

Ambrymont 12, AC 1017: A New Day for Helskir.

Location: City of Helskir, *Exarchate*/Kingdom of Heldun, Thyatian Empire and Nayce, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: A concerted effort has been made on the part of the allied forces to round up all able-bodied prisoners remaining within Helskir and to remove them to the fields lying between the inner and outer walls. They are put to work, building shelters for themselves, while others are tasked with clearing away the smaller piles of rubble scattered throughout the town. While all of this is going on, interrogations are being conducted, with the aim being the identification and location of any remaining Heldannic forces in northwestern Heldun.

Within the city, the locals, under the guidance of the recently-reorganized constabulary, search the streets for known collaborators with the Heldannic regime, often following tips given by fellow cityfolk. Wherever they are found, such people are taken to the gaol, which survived the battle. (*See Am. 9, Am. 10; Am. 15, Am. 17.*)

Ambrymont 12, AC 1017: Citizen Wererat.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: After weeks of renewed debate over conferring citizenship on the wererats who live below the city of Thyatis, Phileus and Lyra Furmenglaive get their chance to speak on the issue. They give an impassioned speech on the respect for life, the contributions of the wererats to the empire during the recent war and highlight the variety of races that are already regarded

as equal citizens in the empire. One of the senators calls out from the gallery that wererats are not a race, but people infected with a disturbing disease and thus unworthy. Phileus and Lyra's eyes sweep the chamber. As Lyra lists the worthy service that the Furmenglaives have given the empire, Phileus begins to transform, changing into werewolf form. Lyra then follows suit, changing into her werewolf form. The chamber is stunned as they shift back into human form. None quibble about the loyal and worthy service the Furmenglaives have given the empire.

The senate votes on the measure to extend Thyatian citizenship to the wererats living beneath The City. It passes by a narrow margin and the wererats are incorporated as the Dominion of Subterranea. A separate, but coincidentally related bill, to create a communications network within the city of Thyatis, is also passed.

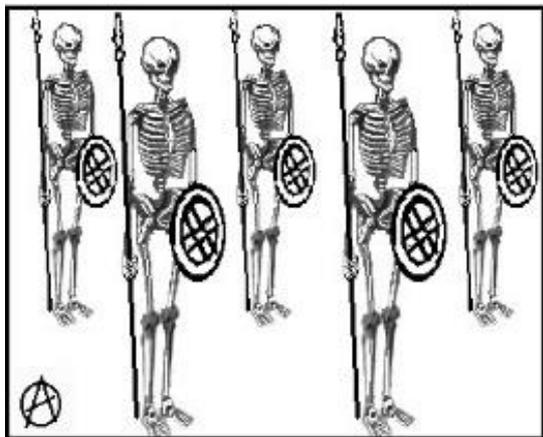
What This Means: Over the last several years, especially during the Great War, Phileus and Lyra Furmenglaive learned how to control their lycanthropy. They were thus able to demonstrate it in the senate chamber, taking a great risk since they did not know how the senate would react. But Thyatians are fairly open-minded (some might say jaded); people were surprised and stunned, but not shocked or revolted (many have seen similar transformations in the Coliseum). Still, the measure was not uncontroversial, as many do not trust the wererats, who are thought to be thieves and lowlifes. But the bill passed. The wererats are now imperial citizens but are also subject to imperial law. But many are given jobs as sewer workers, maintaining, repairing and extending the system of sewers under The City. They are also given jobs working on the construction of the new communications network, which involves connecting the buildings of Thyatis with each other with a system of pneumatic tubes running under The City. Still others will help guard the subterranean entries into Thyatis and also help guide expeditions to explore the tunnels and the Hollow World.

Indeed, the bill granting the wererats citizenship passed when several decisive votes were swung following the news of the creatures living in the tunnels under Hattias City. This alerted the senators involved to the possibility of an attack on Thyatis from below and they see this as a step to prevent such a thing from occurring.

What the PCs Can Do: Characters wishing to explore the catacombs beneath the city of Thyatis will now have numerous safe havens there.

Ambymont 12, AC 1017: The Death Ride.

Location: Barony of Two Lakes Vale, Icereach Range. NW



Description: The dark ominous cloud now hangs over the whole Two Lakes Vale. The crops start to wither and die, sickness spreads among its citizens and rumors of the dead leaving their graves circulate in the region. The sentinels of the western border report to a worried Baron Fharo that they have spotted a great army of undead marching towards their valley. The baron sends his heralds to the nearby states looking for help to cope with the situation, while the court chaplain restores the old faith in the Northern Pantheon and the priests of Idris flee the country fearing for their lives. After *communing* with Odin Allfather, the chaplain informs the baron that their only hope lies in the fabled *Hammer of Life*, which is said to be hidden somewhere in the baron's castle. A frantic search for the

hammer begins. (See *Fy. 17, Am. 4; Am. 20, Am. 26.*)

What This Means: The army of the Shadow Lord is now on the march to conquer the whole dominion and enslave the human population without killing too many souls (they'll need them as cattle to feed off later). In the meantime, Sylarion is gathering the mindless skeletons and zombies that raise spontaneously from the graves in the vale, because of the energy from the Sphere of Death that now permeates the region. Sickness and death of vegetation is another side effect of the deadly cloud.

The clerics of Idris, once they realized they had no means of coping with these events, decided to flee the hopeless country and seek refuge in the nearby regions, waiting for the outcome of this phenomenon. The old chaplain of Baron Fharo profited from this situation to restore the old faith in the Northern Pantheon and immediately asked Odin for a remedy against this disaster. The holy *Hammer of Life* is an artifact that Thor gave to the people of Two Lakes Vale to banish the forces of darkness more than two hundred years before. Lost at the end of the battle, it is now buried in the castle's grounds. Only by battering the *Death Stone* with the *Hammer of Life* can it be destroyed and the gate closed forever (the *Death Stone* is impervious to anything else).

What the PCs Can Do: This is the beginning of the Companion-level adventure CM2 *The Death Ride*. The plot has been changed to fit this campaign and Wazor has obviously been replaced by the Shadow Lord, while the cleric Ulslime will be featured in the future (the vampire elf Sylarion is at the moment the most powerful priest of Nyx in the dominion). For those of you who have the adventure, you can play it with minor changes that will be suggested in this line of events. The emissaries sent by the baron to the nearby countries (Heldannic Territories and dominions of the Norwold Confederacy like the Barony of Two Lakes or Arcadia) provide the hook to get the PCs into the adventure by the beginning of Sviftmont.

Ambyrmont 12, AC 1017: Arkan Man.

Location: City of Ionace, Ionace Island, Nayce. AS

Description: Representative Afaetuir of Floating Arkan has himself referred to as High Councilor Afaetuir, Floating Arkan Emissary to the Nayce Council by his staff and servants and soon enough every mundaner knows better than address him any other way. He superbly ignores every co-councilor that calls him Representative Afaetuir, so that when his input or vote is badly needed everybody bows to his capriciousness.

What This Means: Afaetuir is a pure product of the Alphatian aristocracy, with an air.

Ambyrmont 14, AC 1017: Ultimatum to the Sultan.

Location: City of Abbashan, Emirate of Abbashan, Emirates of Ylaruam. OW

Description: Envoys from the Empire of Thyatis meet with the sultan. They convey the emperor's condemnation of Ylari raids that have been conducted sporadically against Thyatis over the last several years. They also rebuke the sultan for Ylaruam's involvement in subverting the son of the Sheik of Tel Akbir at the beginning of this year. The envoys tell the sultan that the empire currently holds as prisoners of war several hundred Ylari raiders as a result of last year's attempted attacks. They inform the sultan that Eusebius is willing to magnanimously return the captives to Ylaruam and forgive Ylaruam's acts of aggression—if Ylaruam returns all the booty taken when Biazzan was sacked, plus pays 100,000 gp compensation. They add that a monthly tribute of 1,000 gp will be required, plus the sultan will have to pay Thyatian taxes for himself, his wives and his children to the empire.

Sultan Hassam replies coldly that he rejects these absurd demands, that furthermore it was his misguided predecessor who let brigandish elements within Ylaruam get out of hand and these raided Biazzan without government sanction. Hassam al-Kalim also

says that since then the warriors of Ylaruam have only striven to reclaim their rightful heritage and that Ylaruam will pay nothing to Thyatian infidel dogs. He insists that whatever captives Thyatis holds must be released at once, or Thyatis will once again learn to fear the name of the house of al-Kalim. He also tells them, in a clip, terse tone, that were he not a man of honor, he would slay such persons as the Thyatian envoys for abusing his hospitality and orders them to leave Ylaruam by the end of the day before he forgets his manners. The Thyatian envoys depart hastily. (*See Nu. 3, Nu. 5; Ei. 8, Ei. 18.*)

What This Means: This was a calculated move on Eusebius's part. He made sure that the Thyatian demands would be so onerous that the sultan would not possibly accept them. But Eusebius will portray himself as having made peace overtures, which the intransigent Ylari rejected. Since the current regime in Ylaruam is not popular abroad, this virtually guarantees that no one will stand by their side when Thyatis "justly punishes them for their continual acts of aggression and war against Thyatis." The imperial senate will unanimously vote for war against Ylaruam when Eusebius proposes it.

Members of the party of Thyatian envoys also performed a bit of espionage within Ylaruam while they were there and secretly met with several pro-Preceptor dissidents. They did not get nearly as much encouragement and support from the latter as they initially hoped, because Thyatis is hardly popular among the Preceptors, either.

The sultan reacted as he felt he must, but is not blind to what the Thyatians were doing. He will order the Ylari armies to increase their readiness.

What the PCs can do: Thyatian characters could be sent on the mission, especially to conduct covert talks with representatives of the Preceptor faction. If they are extremely persuasive, they might get some promise of help or some information from them, but this will be very difficult. Ylari characters that have ties to the

Preceptor faction might be the ones sent to meet with the Thyatians. If so, their task will be to try and get the Thyatians to promise as much help as possible without giving anything in return. The Preceptors wouldn't mind seeing the Kin regime embarrassed, but not if it benefits Thyatis. If there's one thing that unites all Ylari, both Kin and Preceptor, it is antipathy to the Thyatian Empire.

Ambrymont 14, AC 1017: A Vile Plot Publicly Exposed.

Location: City of Rardish, Kingdom of Randel, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: After a day's examining, the investigations of the temple, palace and Junna have given answers to the majority of the questions desired by the coup plotters. Publicly it is announced that the troubles were a result of corrupt and overly fanatical members of the clergy of the Immortal Alphatia, who in turn used their influence as advisors and fellow clerical status to influence the queen. It is announced that Junna is recovering from the ordeal and that her aunt, Karatnora, will act as queen regent for as long as it is necessary. (*See Fy. 7, Fy. 8; Sv. 1.*)

What This Means: The official version is intended to explain matters in the least damaging manner to the royal family, the Alphatia Order, the empire's immortally contrived history and to Junna who may be needed to reassume the throne should Karatnora tire of the position. Junna seethes with anger over her treatment, however and is kept as a prisoner in the palace. What exactly has transpired will take days to properly unfold. Even then there will be certain lingering questions.

In truth the matter is more complicated than the simple explanatory statement offered. The instigators of the plot are Brother Paxxel and his colleagues, Sister Vikatynn and Brother Mogoden. The three are some rather ancient vampires, originally operating in Theranderol before the sinking. In the Hollow World with its eternal

sunlight, the vampires suffered as they were forced to shelter and did not have the luxury of the night. With the return of magic in AC 1016, the vampires were able to leave their shelters using *teleportation* magics. They decided to move towards the continent's edge and try to seek shelter on the underside.

Their magically-fueled journey brought them to the sewers running beneath Rardish. There, the vampires set up shop for a stay before continuing on their journey to the underside's sanctuary. Using the city's sewers they observed the goings-on of the populace. Paxxel saw in Randel an opportunity to live a rather pampered existence, with the populace as their personal larder and them holding the reigns of power.

Though Randel normally would have been the least of their choices to try such a thing, Junna's clergy were advising her to move the militaristic people towards the peaceful and pacifistic nature of the Immortal Alphatia. With the military diminished and with a ruler that sought to change them, Paxxel and his vampires saw ample opportunity.

Paxxel and his vampiric colleagues watched the domestic situation and took notice of Junna's reliance on her fellow clerics. In those clerics, the vampires saw several that were reveling in their newfound power and the luxuries that they had acquired. Paxxel sought out Sister Riddlynn, considered to be the most likely candidate to use. Comfortable with her present situation and hungering for more, she was an easy enough recruit for the vampires. Though they needed her as a human to perform duties out in the ever-present sunlight, they did offer her the promise of the immortal embrace of vampirism once they held the reins of power.

Through Riddlynn, the vampires were able to sway yet more clerics to their offer. Those that opposed the vampires' proposition were slain and replaced by dopplegangers. The vampires were not entirely dependent upon convincing clerics and acolytes to join their cause. Many were periodically fed upon by

the vampires, either forcibly detained in larder cells or *charmed* into submission.

Paxxel and his vampires really desired to bring Junna under their direct influence, either by *charm* or by turning her into a vampire. However, being the queen she had certain protections that prevented their being in the palace much less gaining access to her. Until they could find a way to circumvent these wards, they were forced to depend heavily on Sister Riddlyn and the corrupted clerics to influence Junna to do their bidding.

The vampires also desired to bring many of the military officers under their control, either by *charm* or by vampirism. However the plan never got that far, as the military rose against Junna and removed her from power. The military also assaulted the temple and discovered the vampiric influence there. However, Brother Paxxel, Sister Vikatynn and Brother Mogoden were able to avoid capture. Their whereabouts are unknown, some believe they proceeded with their new vampire slaves to the underside.

What the PCs Can Do; The PCs could be the investigators that have to find what happened. If they do, their next step is probably to go after the vampires.

Ambyrmont 14, AC 1017: A What over Aengmor?!

Location: Canolbarth Forest, Colony of Aengmor, Shadow Elves' Territories. OW

Description: Shadow elves inhabiting the central region of Canolbarth are alarmed by what first seemed to be an earthquake. Although the ground tremors are mild, the sound of rumbling and cracking rock could be heard as far south as Dolos. Stranger still is the sighting of a large floating island rising from the earth, crowned by a dark sinister tower at its peak. Shadowelf shamans whisper of ominous things to come. (*See Fy. 7, Am. 3; Am. 15, Am. 25.*)

What This Means: The enchanted fortress of Synn has risen from the ground to float above the dark and twisted Canolbarth Forest. The site of its early moorings is located on a Magic Point and

shall be the magical *gate* from whence fiends from the Pits will enter into Mystara.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs following the D&D: *Shadow Over Mystara* arcade adventure will have reached Synn's fortress at this point. They will enter the dark heart of the floating fortress to face the shadow elves and Tel'Arin, humanoids and other monsters, the nagpa minion—and ultimately Synn herself!

Ambyrmont 14, AC 1017: New Arrivals.

Location: City of Ionace, Ionace Island, Nayce. AS

Description: The *Aran*, the *Cloud Kin* and the *Madgyn's Revenge* arrive at Ionace and are challenged by the city's air defenses. After a brief exchange of signals, the vessels are allowed to land at the city's *skyship* berths. The duty officer, to whom they present their orders and letters of introduction, meets Sdandre and his fellow officers. The duty officer summons an aide and delegates the securing of the vessels. He tells Sdandre that they will be billeted while the proper officials examine their papers and decide where to put their talents to proper use. Since a good number of the crew hail from surface world kingdoms, they are allowed to contact their respective council representatives to make a courtesy call and be updated on the local events—at least for those who do remember their real origins. (*See Am. 9, Am. 12.*)

What This Means: The arrival is quickly reported to the Nayce Council. Though they are gracious to the contribution of three *skyships* and their crews, they know that not all of the arrivals will want to stay with the vessels. Likewise, they are unsure what exactly to do with these new vessels and personnel. Since the *skyships* are a gift to Nayce, they will be controlled by Nayce and not allotted to any individual Naycese kingdom. However, they will need crews and they will need certain modifications to better serve their intended role within Nayce's service. With recruiting and training already focused upon the *submersible* fleets, finding and training these replacements will be difficult.

For the time being, the vessels will be readied for deployment to Aeria where they will be modified for Nayce's purposes. The arriving personnel will be allowed to decide their future. Those that decide to remain in Nayce's service will be placed in positions where their skills and abilities can be most useful. At a glance, most seem to have been naval personnel before the sinking—even though that's not what they remember. It is hoped that some will be able to make the transition from a surface navy role to the *submersibles* and *skyships*, which was already their Immortal-induced capacity in the Hollow World anyway. Of course, there is always the opportunity to serve in the surface fleet, too.

Third Week

Ambyrmont 15, AC 1017: The Final Assessment.

Location: City of Helskir, *Exarchate*/Kingdom of Heldun, Thyatian Empire and Nayce, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: After having interrogated the Heldannic prisoners of war (who number almost 400 in total, not including another 132 captured on the march to Helskir itself) and having ensured that Helskir's streets are clear of any enemy holdouts, the leaders of the allied forces meet to discuss future plans. It has been learned that neither Anna von Hendriks, nor the other soldiers who were with her in the throne room, have been located in any of the lands now liberated. They are forced to assume, therefore, that Anna and her soldiers have escaped. The Naycese commander also mentions that one Heldannic ship, crammed with fleeing soldiers, managed to make its way through the blockade, although it sustained heavy damage. She indicates that, though it is possible that it remained seaworthy long enough to make it back to Heldann, it would probably not be worth the time and effort to locate it. The other commanders agree to let that matter drop.

The discussion then turns to the prisoners and the damage sustained by Helskir. In total, 532 Heldannic soldiers, officers and common infantry, have been captured. The Thyatian commander mentions that those men and women captured by his own forces will be sent to Westrouke, most likely to aid in road construction and other projects. He asks whether either of the other forces wishes to take any prisoners for themselves; otherwise, his forces would be more than happy to remove them all. The other commanders ponder these words and promise to provide a response as soon as possible. Finally, the officers turn their attention to Helskir itself. Preliminary reports by engineers and surveyors indicate that roughly half of the town is in ruins, particularly in the southern portions, where much of the fighting took place. Many more structures sustained enough damage to require their demolition, as they are no longer safe for habitation. (*See Am. 10, Am. 12; Am. 17, Sv. 3.*)

What This Means: Once control of Helskir had been returned to Heldun itself, attention turned to how the town might be restored to its former prominence and what should be done with the Heldannic prisoners. Though they will be put to work in the short term, all sides realize that their continued presence in the area would not go over well with the locals.

Ambyrmont 15, AC 1017: Kronenburg Recalled to Freiburg.

Location: Dominion of Vanya's Rest, Aryptian Savannah, Heldannic Empire. DV

Description: The garrison of Vanya's Rest receives an official message from Freiburg: Heinz Kronenburg will no longer be Castellan of Vanya's Rest; he is to be sent to Freiburg as soon as possible for questioning, pending a final judgment concerning his fate. Henceforth, Thomas von Wetingen, formerly the officer in charge of *warbirds*, will be the new castellan. Once this announcement is shared with the troops as a whole, an unresisting Kronenburg is bound and sent by ship to Freiburg that day. (*See*

Fy. 19, Fy. 21; Ei. 14, Ei. 17.)

Ambyrmont 15, AC 1017: More Skyships over Aengmor.

Location: Canolbarth Forest, Colony of Aengmor, Shadow Elves' Territories. OW

Description: Already alarmed by the amount of aerial activity above Aengmor the past weeks, the shadow elves are shocked to sight a small squad of *skyships* again. Flying too fast to be identified, much less intercepted, the four or five *skyships* fly towards the dark flying fortress and unexpectedly, bombard its moorings with *fireballs*, *meteor showers* and other magical tirades. Above the din of the explosions, a cacophony of unholy otherworldly howls is heard. The dark tower all but disappears in a brilliant flash of purifying light. And the *skyships* just as soon fly back to some northwestern destination. (*See Am. 3, Am. 14; Am. 25, Sv. 1.*)

What This Means: These are the final events of the *Shadow Over Mystara* arcade game. Synn is defeated by brave adventurers, although not until she manages to open the *gate* to the Pits. But just as the first fiend is crawling out of the *gate*, Prince Malachie's *skyships* arrive and block its entrance with their deadly assault.

Synn has failed again, almost at the cost of her life. She will return to Glantri in her guise as Princess Dolores Hillsbury, where she will find some strange comfort amongst the backstabbing and bickering of Glantrian politics, as she lays low and tries to regain her energies. She will be wondering why the Immortals of Entropy let her down. And if she sees those who defeated her again, she will be sure to plot their deaths.

What the PCs Can Do: This is the end of the arcade game D&D: *Shadow Over Mystara*, but not necessarily of the adventure for the PCs. They must find their way out of Canolbarth Forest, which is extremely hostile to intruders and that is without the shadow elves getting involved. The PCs may attempt to make their way back to Glantri, where Prince Malachie and his rewards will await them—but so will Princess Dolores...

Ambyrmont 16, AC 1017: Surveyors Are Hired.

Location: City of Andaire, Kingdom of Alphas'ar, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: Halzunthram announces that the navy, Queen Kikania and Empress Eriadna have now hired enough surveyor teams to start the projects. The teams will be dispatched in a few days. At the starting points of each canal project a ceremony will be held. (*See Am. 2, Am. 5; Am. 22, Sv. 1.*)

What This Means: The debates in the Grand Council had not found the attention of the public, naturally. Since the plans have become more widely known the population at large are getting more and more intrigued by them.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs with the necessary abilities can become surveyors.

Ambyrmont 16, AC 1017: Unrest in Raven Scarp.

Location: City of Raven Scarp, *Exarchate* of Davania Superior, Hinterlands, Thyatian Empire. DV

Description: Throughout the city of Raven Scarp, dissatisfaction with the current state of affairs reaches a breaking point, as a number of local ruffians descend on one of the tent cities now lying on the outskirts of the city and proceed to attack the refugees. Until the city guard arrives to drive off the attackers, many tents are burned and a number of Milenians are killed or severely injured. (*See Fy. 26, Am. 9; Am. 19, Am. 27.*)

What This Means: It will take some time before the pressures affecting Raven Scarp and other urban centers in the Hinterlands are eased. This attack will not be the only one of its kind.

What the PCs Can Do: Local Thyatian PCs might be asked to help defuse tensions by tracking down known troublemakers and turning them over to the authorities. Equally important, they may be asked to speak with the more influential Milenian refugees and try to find some way of preventing retaliatory attacks.

Ambrymont 16, AC 1017: The Conscience of the King.

Location: Korrigan Forest, Kingdom of Wendar. OW

Description: A messenger from the elves fighting in Denagoth reaches the Genalleth Clanmaster's seat in the Korrigan Forest. The weary and hurt Long Runner tells the Genalleth elders that they have discovered Bensarian has been replaced by an impostor, a wizard of the Onyx Ring—a secret cabal of evil mages faithful to Idris—who has taken control of his mind and body. After the revelation, the elders meet to discuss the next possible move. (See *Ya. 27, Fe. 18; Am. 28, Ka. 28.*)

What This Means: Only one of the messengers sent by Beasthunter to Wendar in Felmont has managed to reach his destination, after a long and perilous trek across Denagoth and the Mengul Mountains. He has brought with him the unsettling news of Bensarian's real identity, which has finally cast light on his seemingly crazy actions. The elves must now decide what to do with this news. An open confrontation is to be avoided, since without any concrete proof this would only cause another civil war and this time the Church of Idris could really have a plausible excuse to incite the Wendarian humans against the Genalleth elves.

Ambrymont 16, AC 1017: Prellia About Town.

Location: Bluenose Ruins, Sunken Arogansa, Nayce. AS

Description: While Pidimigd's necromancers are embroiled in their studies, Prellia has been left to her own devices, which include wandering the ruined streets of Bluenose. This has brought her into greater contact with the Bluenose undead. Though initially associated as part of Pidimigd's ilk, Prellia quickly gained the trust of many of the undead. She spends most of her time among them, ironically learning



more about them in these few weeks than the necromancers have learned in months. (See *Fy. 27, Am. 4; Am. 19, Am. 20.*)

What This Means: Prellia's familiarity with the undead have inspired her to be ever more vigilant in defending these people from any nefarious plans that her father and his cronies may be devising. Though she is hesitant at openly opposing her father, she has made several suggested inferences to her more friendly undead acquaintances to be cautious of the necromancers.

For their part the undead have embraced their growing friendship with Prellia. Her personality and objectivity offer them a glimpse of Alphatians beyond what they have seen in Pidimigd. From her, they have also been gaining additional information about Alphatia.

Ambrymont 16, AC 1017: Secondary Force Ambushed.

Location: Snake River, Kingdom of Foresthome, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: The secondary force of invaders from Stonewall, who sailed south from Shiell Lake via the Snake River and planned to then sail up the Roaring River to Crystal Lake, is ambushed by an unexpected enemy—Foresthome warriors! It's a surprise attack and the pinned Stonewall forces have no chance of victory. A few, including Rogart, are able to escape, but most are taken captive. (See *Fy. 25, Am. 4; Sv. 1, Sv. 4.*)

What This Means: The Stonewall force relied on Foresthome's great size to allow them to slip through unnoticed, but due to some recent surveying in the wilderness, they were noticed almost immediately. Queen Kikania was none too pleased, to say the least, about having this invasion force trespass in her lands and ordered them captured.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs with the Stonewall force need to fight hard to escape, but if the PCs are with Foresthome, they can plan the ambush and carry it out, then perhaps pursue the fleeing Stonewall soldiers.

Ambrymont 17, AC 1017: Commanders Assassinated.

Location: Village of Asandapur, *Mumbyket* of Putnabad, Kingdom of Sind. OW

Description: The forces of Chandra ul Nervi are hit hard as several important commanding officers are found dead in their tents. (*See Th.22, Ya. 19; Am. 19, Sv. 15.*)

What This Means: The officers were assassinated by agents of the *buraiya* sect, at the behest of the Master of Hule. The *buraiyas* infiltrated the allies' camp, striking at several targets at once.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs can try to prevent the assassinations.

Ambrymont 17, AC 1017: Nayce Collects Its Due.

Location: City of Helskir, *Exarchate*/Kingdom of Heldun, Thyatian Empire and Nayce, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: In a meeting between the allied commanders, the Naycese representative informs her counterparts that, under the orders of Commander Karszamon, she will take half of the Heldannic prisoners. She explains that the Heldunian officers indicated that the continued presence of the prisoners within their nation would not be desirable in the long term and that they would be in agreement with any settlement that divides the prisoners between the two empires. The Heldunian commander nods silently in agreement. After the Thyatian commander indicates that he finds nothing wrong with this arrangement, the commanders go their separate ways.

Hours later, after the Heldannic prisoners to be taken by Naycese forces are segregated from their companions, the clerics among their number are quickly isolated and taken to the Naycese lines, where they are told they will be held until such time as their religious order pays ransom for their freedom. The remainder, composed of soldiers and mercenaries, are told without ceremony that they are to be enslaved, as per the orders of Commander Karszamon.

Some Naycese officers show signs of surprise after hearing this announcement, but say nothing. (*See Am. 10, Am. 12; Sv. 3, Sv. 6.*)

What This Means: The people of Helskir, after having experienced the ill-effects of a protracted siege in and around the town's environs, plus several months of occupation, have no wish to see the Heldannic soldiers on their soil anymore. For this reason, the Heldunian military commanders were content to see their allies take the prisoners away.

The orders of Commander Karszamon to enslave those enemy combatants captured by Naycese forces does surprise some people present—particularly those who had been observing the growing moderation in Naycese military policy following the ascension of Commander Broderick. Unbeknownst to them, however, is the fact that Karszamon has possessed the body of Broderick and is now trying to build his own power base, for purposes only he knows at this point. While the practice of enslaving defeated opponents is not new in itself, the swiftness of the decision implies to some that it had been premeditated, whereas normally a formal decision might be made some time after capture. No one will speak out against the act, but both the Thyatians will be keeping a closer eye on future Naycese policies.

Ambrymont 17, AC 1017: Hazardous Territory.

Location: Westrouрке Bogs, Kingdom of Hillvale, Nayce, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: Mario's Marauders are caught in an ambush by the forces of William Hazard while they march through the Westrouрке Bogs. The surprised marauders fight as best they can, but their usual organization breaks down before the onslaught. Once that happens, they begin fighting individually, like the mercenaries they really are and Hazard's men have them. The bulk of the force surrenders, though several dozen of the marauders manage to escape into the bogs. Mario finds himself in

a personal duel with Hazard. Though equally skilled with the sword, Hazard's greater strength and size prove the deciding factor. Mario is captured, to be sent back to East Portage to stand trial for his crimes.

Hazard and his men encamp for a few days, in order to try and track down the escapees before returning. (*See Fe. 27; Sv. 13.*)

What This Means: Hazard has finally gotten his man and Mario's Marauders, after years of raiding in the northern territories of the Isle of Dawn, have been brought to heel. Hazard hopes to return to his simple retired life in Bellissaria... though an old instinct tells him his days of service aren't quite complete.

What the PCs Can Do: Capture the brigands, of course.

Ambymont 17, AC 1017: King's Ships Taken.

Location: Off the south coast of Kingdom of Bellayne. SC

Description: The king's ships Bonaventure and Swallow are sailing by Malburn Lighthouse when they are engaged by a frigate flying the skull and crossbones. To make matters worse, the frigate seems to be particularly heavily armed, with the new Torreóner bombard devices. After a brief gun battle the king's ships are forced to strike their colors. Their crews are crammed into four rowboats and told to get to the coast while they still can, while the triumphant pirates take their two prizes and sail east. (*See Fy. 18, Fy. 27; Am. 26, Sv. 5.*)

What This Means: The frigate was in fact the parliamentary ship Liberty, conducting its first sweep for royal trading vessels. Unaware of the parliamentary raiders being outfitted in Chansea, the king's navy is likely to be slow to react to the threat.

What the PCs Can Do: Nautical-oriented parties may be involved in the sea battle on either side, possibly swaying its outcome.

Ambymont 18, AC 1017: A Breath of Fresh Air.

Location: Torenal Site, Sunken Arogansa, Nayce. AS

Description: With the domes secured to their foundations, mages begin conjuring breathable atmospheres within the domes. As the first dome begins filling with air, there is a tense moment as the footings' strengths are tested against the growing buoyancy of the hemisphere. However the engineering is sound and they hold as expected. As the first dome is completed, the mages retire for the day to replenish their spell inventories to begin the process on the next dome. The non-spellcasting construction crews begin the construction on that dome's inner buildings. (*See Nu. 20, Am. 2; Ka. 2, Ka. 12.*)

Ambymont 18, AC 1017: Battle of Twin Oaks.

Location: Near Town of Deipan, Kingdom of Eadrin, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: Arogansan and Eadrin troops clash near the hamlet of Twin Oaks. The battle is brief and is a victory for the Arogansans. This outcome is not a surprise as the Arogansans have a clear numerical superiority over the Eadrin forces, which are little more than a reconnaissance troop reinforced by local militiamen. However, the Arogansan victory is undermined by the survival of most of the Eadrin troops, as they are able to withdraw from the battlefield with a minimum of casualties and head towards the safety of Deipan's walls. The Arogansans themselves suffer a number of casualties. (*See Fy. 1, Am. 7; Sv. 1, Sv. 7.*)

Ambymont 19, AC 1017: A Time for All to Do Their Part.

Location: Hinterlands, Thyatian Empire. DV

Description: In a personal letter to each dominion ruler in Davania Superior and Inferior, as well as the Baronies of Fiorenza and Cittanova, *Exarch* Leilah ben Nadir

outlines the ongoing Milenian refugee problem and requests their cooperation by taking in as many refugees as they can. (*See Am. 9, Am. 16; Am. 27, Sv. 1.*)

What This Means: Davania Superior, though the most settled of all the regions of the Hinterlands, will soon reach its breaking point, as Milenian refugees continue to stream across the southern frontiers of Thratia and the border region with Emerond. She hopes that, by moving some of the Milenians to other dominions, the burden might be more equally distributed.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are dominion rulers in the Hinterlands, the PCs will soon receive the aforementioned letter.

Ambyrmont 19, AC 1017: Pidimigd's Grand Plan.

Location: Bluenose Ruins, Sunken Arogansa, Nayce. AS

Description: Pidimigd requests to meet with the undead leaders to discuss a possible solution to the ghoul threat. The request is accepted and Tarog, Zormyll and Sisrynn agree to meet with the mage. Pidimigd presents to them a plan to execute an incantation to afford a protective aura. Despite their growing wariness of him, the undead leaders discuss the proposal before agreeing to the procedure. (*See Am. 4, Am. 16; Am. 20, Am. 22.*)

What This Means: Pidimigd's spell has no protective qualities. The spell is really a powerful version of *control undead*. Pidimigd feels that with the assistance of the other necromancers, they can weave a spell to gain control over the Bluenose undead. Pidimigd's request is based on his desire to prepare for and to cast the spell without interruption. He also hopes that its ignorant targets will more easily receive the spell's affect if they accept its casting, even if they are misled as to its effects.

Ambyrmont 19, AC 1017: The Starlit Justiciar Institute.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Agents of the *magistranoi* discover that Apuleius Necrekis has contacted members of the Justiciar Institute several times in the last years. Necrekis is currently one of the most active supporters of the Starlit Knowledge, organizing in Julinius several meetings among followers and scholars of religion and priests of other faiths to discuss his pantheistic views. The meetings are held in the home of his son Ennius, currently away from home. (*See Fy. 4, Fy. 16; Sv. 9, Ei. 1.*)

What This Means: This is just one discovery made as a result of the investigations of both the Justiciar Institute and the Temple of Starlit Knowledge.

Ambyrmont 19, AC 1017: Putnabad Lost Again.

Location: Village of Asandapur, *Mumlyket* of Putnabad, Kingdom of Sind. OW

Description: Before the Sindhi forces can recover from the assassinations of their officers, they are attacked by the Master's forces in Putnabad. After fierce fighting, they are driven back across the Asanda River. The Master now holds all of Putnabad again. (*See Ya. 19, Am. 17; Sv. 15, Ka. 8.*)

What This Means: The Master is not wasting time—he uses the confusion created by the assassinations to strike a blow against the forces of Sind. This is intended to show them that fighting Hule will still be long and hard and make them more receptive to the upcoming negotiations.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs can try to help the Sindhi forces minimize their casualties as they retreat.

Ambyrmont 20, AC 1017: Colonialism.

Location: Thanegioth Archipelago, Thyatian Empire. DV

Description: With peace between Thyatis and the Twaelar now secured, the Thyatians begin colonizing islands of the Thanegioth Archipelago in earnest. This is mainly accomplished through the establishment of plantation estates controlled by Thyatian aristocratic families that had disgraced

themselves during the Crown War by joining the losing side. Having lost many of their properties in the mainland, they are established here as a means of redeeming both their honor and fortunes. They are leavened with sufficient loyal colonists who come to the Thanegioth seeking land and fortune to ensure that further revolt is far from their minds.

The local natives, few in number and divided into numerous small tribal villages, are either subdued quickly or ignored (in areas where the Thyatian presence hasn't penetrated yet). (*See Fy. 19; Sv. 21.*)

What This Means: The Thanegioth Archipelago, being sparsely inhabited (and not by fierce tribes as in the Davanian Hinterlands) and laying between the Thyatian mainland and their colonies in the Hinterlands, was a natural acquisition from their point of view. Having come to the empire's attentions during the Twaelar war, the islands were discovered to not only be ideal basing points but home to several resources the Thyatians value. Plantations producing sugar, tea, various spices and (eventually) the now coveted cocoa (chocolate) bean of Yavdlom will spring up, exporting their products to Thyatis and elsewhere. Similarly, rare woods (teak and mahogany especially) will be cultivated and harvested. The Thanegioth Archipelago becomes a very profitable link in the growing Thyatian imperial trading network, as well as an important communication point connecting Thyatis to its colonies and allies in Davania. The easternmost island lays on the midpoint between Thyatis and Raven Scarp and the westernmost roughly halfway between Thyatis and Kastelios, as well as along the route to Yavdlom and beyond.

All is not sanguine in the islands, however—dangerous animals and monsters inhabit the jungle depths and will plague the colonists. Jungle orcs, especially, will be a menace.

What the PCs Can Do: Characters could clear out monsters in preparation for colonization and for a long time afterwards.

Ambymont 20, AC 1017: Pidimigd's Grand Casting.

Location: Bluenose Ruins, Sunken Arogansa, Nayce. AS

Description: Following days of preparations, Pidimigd and his necromancer compatriots gather to evoke the powers of their contrived spell. Gathering together, they begin the rather lengthy process of evoking the dark powers to their will. After some time, the spell begins to manifest, with a gathering of glowing power surrounding the casters that steadily builds and builds. As the incantation draws to its climatic apex, the energies expand out in all directions as far as the eye can see.

Weak from the tedious casting, the mages turn to see their spell's handiwork. All around them, the Bluenose undead are sprawled out on the ground writhing in agony. The necromancers are shocked at the display, knowing that their spell has failed. As the undead begin recovering, their sounds of agony are replaced by a shrill scream from the interior of a nearby building. The noise is soon explained by the appearance of a specter racing out the building, heading straight towards the group of mages.

Disoriented from the casting, the mages are hard-pressed to meet the fast approaching undead. The specter attacks the mages, killing two apprentices and sorely wounding Zebul before Prellia unleashes a volley of spells on the creature. Wounded, it turns to meet her attack but only scores a minor hit before Pidimigd engages the specter. The battle favors the necromancer, despite his weakened condition and several draining hits on his person by the specter.

With the battle over Pidimigd attends to the wounded Prellia, totally ignoring the dead apprentices and wounded Zebul. The Bluenose undead voice their concerns over what had just transpired. Pidimigd explains that the spell failed and that it had probably drawn the attentions of the specter. He suspects that the discomfort that the lightning zombies experienced was an added side effect. He apologizes for the incident,

citing that he had thought that he had addressed any possible affects of the spell on the Bluenose inhabitants. He also cites his belief that the concessions to their presence may have been key weaknesses to the spell.

The Alphadon accept this explanation. However, they disallow any further attempts to recast the spell until these problems are addressed. However, Pidimigd and his fellows will note that the Alphadon begin watching their actions with great interest. Their distrust for the necromancers will become more apparent as armed Alphadon will seem conveniently close to the mages as they walk the streets or take up watch positions outside of their compound. (*See Am. 16, Am. 19; Am. 22, Am. 24.*)

What This Means: The spell is a failure. The seawater contaminated several key components in the spell. Likewise, the spell was flawed from the offset as it was engineered on a general understanding of all undead and not the unknown unique properties of the lightning zombies. These combined to not only make the spell's intent fail, it also altered the spell's affects: instead of imposing the casters' will over the undead, it bombarded them with the powers of the spell and caused them intense pain.

A specter that had been living amidst the Bluenose ruins had felt the spell and had sought to destroy the casters. Driven by the agony, the specter charged the casters. It may have very well succeeded against the weakened mages were it not for Prellia who was not about to let her father be harmed by such a creature. She struck at the creature but drew its wrath in the process. That her father intervened on her behalf is a big surprise, one that she will not forget.

The Bluenose undead felt this agony and an underlying sense of an attempt to command them. At first they felt compelled to strike at the mortals, killing all of them for causing such pains. However the specter's appearance is diversion enough until they can regain their senses and shrug off the thoughts of bloodlust. For the time being they are content to accept Pidimigd's explanations. They are struck by the

intensity of Pidimigd's defense of their friend, Prellia. In repayment, they will abstain from any retribution for the time being. However what little trust they had for the necromancers is gone.

Pidimigd has no idea what caused the spell to fail. He has a few suspicions but cannot say for certain without further study of the matter. His concerns are with his daughter Prellia. In a rare show of emotion, the sight of her in danger filled his heart with paternal concern. Though he triumphed against the specter, he suffered a great deal of damage, including losing four levels of experience due to drain attacks.

Pidimigd also has no idea as to the extent of the troubles that his spell has created. For miles all around, undead felt the pains of the spell. Many undead who had contented themselves with resting in their watery crypts and to live off the occasional mortal encounter are now stirred up. Many emerge from their watery holdings with one thought in their heads: death to the mortals.

Ambyrmont 20, AC 1017: A Terrible Discovery.

Location: Village of Mykonos, Island of Mykonos, City-State of Kastelios, Sea of Dread. OW

Description: The party led by Adonai Stephanos drops anchor near the village of Mykonos, only to find it oddly silent. No one comes down from the small escarpment to meet the ships and there is no movement save the stirring of leaves and branches by the wind. Uneasily, Adonai dispatches a small party of scouts to go ashore and find out what is going on. They are gone less than ten minutes, when they are sighted once more, frantically running down the slope towards the beach, exclaiming that everyone on the island is accounted for—and dead!

Upon hearing this, most of the people go ashore and begin to poke about the now-silent village and see before them the decaying remains of the colonists, none of which seem to bear any signs of violence. In fact, they all appear to have died quite

suddenly, as some of them appear to have been going about their various tasks at the time of death. Unable to determine what happened, Adonai and his men say a few prayers for the departed and prepare to bury the bodies in an open patch of land just east of the empty buildings. (See *Fy. 9, Fy. 22.*)

What This Means: Mykonos is volcanic in origin and through its volcano has not erupted in a long time, it does vent on occasion. Just one week ago, it did just that, expelling a dense cloud of poisonous gas, which rolled down the slopes and blanketed the western half of the island. The cloud moved far too swiftly for the colonists to seek shelter and so it struck them in the midst of their work. They were killed instantly. As there are no clerics present who could *Speak with Dead*, the truth concerning what happened will not be known.

Once the bodies have been buried, work to better establish the colony will continue into the new year.

What the PCs Can Do: Although Mykonos has been surveyed, it was not done to any great depth. PCs may find work in providing more detailed maps of the island, or more specifically those regions closest to the village. Additionally, if one of the PCs is a mid- to high-level cleric, they might be able to communicate with the dead and thus learn what happened. If they do so, an expedition to the volcano will be organized, with the PCs playing an active role.

Ambyrmont 20, AC 1017: Tirenos Seeks Revenge.

Location: Sea of Floresque, Merry Pirate Seas. HW

Description: The Lucky Lass sails out of Floresque, preparing for a raid. Tirenos has learned of Morgan's departure ahead of time and has positioned his war galley, the Song of Halav, around the island to the south. His timing could not be better, as the Floating Continent of Alphatia casts its enormous shadow over the region this sleep. Tirenos's lookouts spy the Lass approaching as shadowfall arrives. Under cover of shadow, the galley closes, in an attempt to ram. The

Song of Halav, gaining surprise, is poised to smash the Lucky Lass to splinters. But at the last moment, Morgan's keen ears are alerted to the onrushing vessel. He quickly orders evasive action, as the galley strikes home. Tirenos attempts to grapple and board, but Morgan's crew cuts the boarding lines and repel them. The crews resort to missile fire, as Morgan is able to maneuver away into open water. The Lass escapes into the shadow. (See *Fy. 15, Fy. 20; Am. 27, Sv. 9.*)

What This Means: Tirenos the Bold is hoping to finish off Morgan once and for all with this well-timed attack. Morgan is caught unawares, but his quick action saves his ship. The ram glances off the hull rather than crushing it entirely. Morgan is lucky to escape in as good shape as he is. Even so, the Lass is in need of repair as the damage makes it vulnerable to further attack and less seaworthy in a storm.

What the PCs Can Do: Fight in an exciting sea battle between pirate ships in darkness. Alert PCs in Morgan's crew may take measures to avoid the surprise attack, allowing the ship to avoid damage altogether. If they are with Tirenos, they could succeed in boarding the Lucky Lass and cause even more damage.

Ambyrmont 20, AC 1017: The *Hammer of Life*.

Location: Barony of Two Lakes Vale, Icereach Range. NW

Description: While the undead forces of the Shadow Lord are conquering the valley bit by bit with great ease, an expedition led by Baron Maltus Fharo and the most valiant members of his guard march towards the Shunned Island with the last hope for the barony in their hands: the *Hammer of Life*. The baron is sure the *Death Stone* lies in the center of the Shunned Island, since it is there that the cloud has been sighted first. After charging through groups of weak skeletons and zombies, the heroes reach the Western Lake and then sail towards its main isle. Here they battle against ghouls and ghosts, but when Baron Fharo manages to get inside the cave where the *Death Stone* is

held, he has an eerie encounter. A huge black dragon, scales dropping from his writhing dead body, guards the evil artifact and in the ensuing battle, the unlucky baron perishes under the mighty blows of the undead dragon. His comrades are also massacred by the other undead and later the power of Entropy mocks their bravery by raising them as zombies and wights under the control of the wyrm. (See *Am. 4, Am. 12; Am. 26, Sv. 1.*)

What This Means: After they recovered the *Hammer of Life*, Baron Fharo and his followers knew they had only one way to stop the undead: to destroy the *Death Stone* and dispel the deadly cloud over their valley, as Odin told to the chaplain. So they marched to the heart of the dominion and reached the Shunned Island ready to die. Unfortunately, the energy of the Sphere of Death had long reanimated the former guardian of the *Death Stone* as an undead dragon controlled by Sylarion and Baron Fharo succumbed to this powerful foe. Now that the *Hammer of Life* is in possession of the forces of Nyx, nothing will stop them from overtaking the barony and turning it into a living hell.

What the PCs Can Do: It would be better if the PCs do not intervene in this event, since it serves to complicate the lives of the would-be heroes that will later come to save the doomed barony.

Ambyrmont 21, AC 1017: Bargle's Legacy.

Location: Estate of Achelos, Kingdom of Karameikos. OW

Description: Several elven homesteads in the Achelos Woods have been attacked by raiding bands of goblinoids. Captured raiders wear symbols identifying them as agents of the nefarious wizard Bargle the Infamous. This information matches with rumors that Bargle was rounding up his old cronies in the region last year.

What This Means: It's not Bargle they're working for, but his not-quite-as-infamous cousin Sverdlov. Sverdlov has been trading in on Bargle's reputation for the past year

and rallying hordes of goblinoids that were driven out of the Black Eagle Barony during the hin assault of 1010. He hopes to gain some measure of prestige in the region.

What the PCs Can Do: Bring Sverdlov and his hordes of ruffians to justice, of course.

Fourth Week

Ambyrmont 22, AC 1017: Surveyor Teams Are Leaving.

Location: Empire of Alphatia. HW

Description: A total of seven teams leave to survey the route of the canals—one from every end of the planned canals (one is planned with an intersection and three sections). Some ceremonies are inevitably held. The greatest one, of course, is in Andaire itself where Empress Eriadna herself holds a speech to inspire bravery and endurance in the men and women who will be a part of that endeavor. (See *Am. 5, Am. 16; Sv. 1, Sv. 10.*)

What This Means: Now the big enterprise is really started. All fans of the project are hoping that there will be no major problems; others, like Zallaras and Jolinar, hope for a disastrous end. The protective force, the 1st Marines from the Lakes, is far from being of the desired strength: until now most members are sailors who have volunteered to be part of the unit. Eriadna has used her power to secretly command some of her *skyships* to move into the interior of Alphatia, though. Due to the expanded ship-building project following the transition to the Hollow World she has now a number of ships which are not fit to sail the void, but are useful as patrols within the confines of the floating continent.

Ambyrmont 22, AC 1017: A Plea in Zeaburg.

Location: City of Zeaburg, Kingdom of Ostland. OW

Description: During one of King Finn Hordson’s audiences being held today, a guard quietly interrupts the proceedings and informs his liege of a delegation from the Alphatian territories that wishes to meet with him. Intrigued, he orders the guard to inform them that he will see them once his current audience is concluded.

Before long, a group of slightly bedraggled men is led before him—men who in appearance are much like himself, but who appear to possess a haunted look in their eyes. At his urging, they tell him who they are and why they are here. They share with him the saga of the lost *Jarldom* of Ystmarhavn and of the tribulations its people have stoically faced throughout the ages since its fall to the Alphatians. Now, they explain, the weakness of Baron Norlan has given them an opportunity to reclaim what is rightfully theirs, which they have tried to do. Unfortunately, they say, Norlan has called upon the aid of Alphatia to quell the rebellion and now many of their gains are being eroded away. In summation, the visitors plead urgently with him, in the memory of great northern warriors past, to send them aid in their fight against Norlan, “lest the fire of Ystmarhavn be quenched forevermore.”

King Finn, after hearing all of this, leaves the hall, saying that he will ponder the matter. (*See Am. 1, Am. 10; Ei. 2, Ei. 27.*)

What This Means: The Antalian petitioners knew they were taking a chance by approaching Finn directly in this manner, but they felt that there was no alternative. Once they were granted an audience, they presented the facts in the best way they knew—that of relating recent events as part of the saga of lost Ystmarhavn’s remnants. Carefully, they drew upon the warrior mystique still respected among many people of the Northern Reaches and presented their plight as an opportunity for Ostlander warriors to win glory and wealth and the gratitude of their almost-forgotten brethren across the sea.

From Finn’s perspective, this all comes as a bit of a surprise. Some inhabitants of the

Northern Reaches—those who are versed in their own history—are aware, to some degree, of territories they once ruled in what is now Alphatia. Ystmarhavn was one of those and although the specifics might not be known, its people are clearly kindred of a sort.

What the PCs Can Do: If they were part of the delegation, the PCs might be the ones to make the case for Ostlander aid against Norlan’s forces—this is a good opportunity to let your players do some serious roleplaying! If the PCs are Ostlanders, they might be present during this event, perhaps providing Finn with advice as to whether or not Ostland should aid the Antalians.

Ambymont 22, AC 1017: Pilgrimage to Glantri.

Location: City of Glantri, Principalities of Glantri. OW

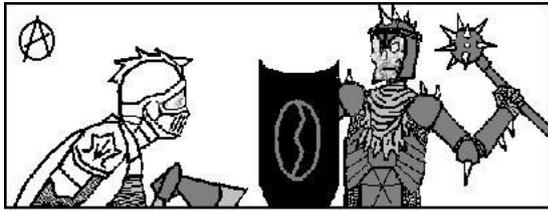
Description: Several devotees of the Immortal Valerias, hearing rumors of a manifestation of their patroness, have begun to trickle into Glantri City. When they are denied access to Belcadiz Manor, they protest and encamp themselves outside the property. The Glantrian Constabulary has to be summoned to take them away. (*See Fe. 15, Fy. 3; Ka. 26, Ka. 27.*)

What This Means: Driven by religious fervor, the followers of Valerias, Patroness of Passion and Beauty, have traveled to what some have come to believe a religious site of *Los Amantes*, despite the great risks of such a venture. The clerics of Valerias generally do not sanction such pilgrimages, especially with Glantrian laws against illegal clericism, but do not give any official words otherwise.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are connected with the Temple of Valerias, they may be tasked to safeguard their devotees into and out of this land of cleric-hating wizards. Alternately, Glantrian PCs might be inclined to watch the movements of these devotees, making sure they do not get into trouble.

Ambrymont 22, AC 1017: The Troubles Really Begin.

Location: Eagret Island, Nayce. AS



Description: The island base comes under attack from the sea by a large party of ghouls and zombies. Though caught a bit off guard, the troops hurry to their defensive positions to meet these attackers. On dry land and against soldiers unhampered by the effects of fighting underwater, the undead fare badly against the troops and their rudimentary defense works. The battle is tense but ebbs into a near rout as the undead are forced back into the sea, dragging whatever victims they can back with them. (See *Fy. 23, Am. 20; Am. 24, Am. 26.*)

What This Means: Given the ghoul attack on Torenal Site and subsequent troubles elsewhere, the matter is attributed to this undead threat. However, the cause is much closer than any would think. Pidimigd's failed attempt to control the undead at Bluenose has had a grievous side affect. The agonizing pain that the specter experienced has been felt by other undead throughout the sunken continent and they have felt an undeniable urge to strike at the living. The mysterious voice that has urged them in their search for the phylactery now instructs them to strike at the living.

Ambrymont 23, AC 1017: We Will Be Heard and Appeased.

Location: City of Bluenose, Kingdom of Arogansa, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: Queen Detteria Scarback agrees to see a group of Bluenose business owners. After an exchange of half-hearted pleasantries, the business owners begin voicing their concerns over the detrimental affects of the war. They cite that Arogansa's tourist trade has been hampered enough by the loss of the seas. A war only further

undermines their attempts to bring the tourists in. Detteria is silent and even looks a bit annoyed at their arguments.

Jhadix interjects and bluntly asks what Detteria expects to gain from the invasion. Power and glory are one thing, but economic gain is another. He just does not see anything economic coming out of the invasion. In fact he sees the war as being debilitating to the kingdom's struggling economy. He cites that any funds that the kingdom spends on the war could be better invested domestically in agriculture programs. He surmises that even if they manage to gain huge tracts of Eadrin lands, Arogansa will still have to invest the same funds to post-war recovery.

Detteria is quite impressed at the bluntness and vision Jhadix displays. She is likewise equally blunt in addressing their concerns. She tells them that she cares not for the frivolous matters that the business owners focus on. Arogansa has more pressing concerns than simple tourist attractions. Her concerns are with the kingdom's economy and ability to fill her treasury.

Detteria also offers another proposition. Pointing to a map of the two kingdoms, she asks them what is so missing from the current Arogansan landscape. Since those in attendance are name level or higher, they naturally respond that the ocean is missing. Nodding in approval, Detteria proposes that Arogansa recreate a large body of water. She points to the lower Thera River and suggests damming and dredging these areas to create a large lake flooding Eadrin lands, but creating beaches in Arogansa. The river was simply running over the continent's edge anyway. Any water runoff can be diverted to farms.

The prospect of a return to aquatic attractions is too much for the business owners to resist. Though Detteria tells them that they will have to fund such projects, they grumble, knowing it will be an exorbitant expenditure and a long-term project (they had thought Detteria was offering to have the kingdom finance it—they now see that she expects them to build

it for her). However, they fear that an extended war with Eadrin may turn away the tourists that are just now returning. Detteria tells them not to worry. Since Eadrin is being left to fend for itself, it has no threatening allies. Likewise, who cares about little old Eadrin? As long as the war is well way from Arogansan lands, there is no reason to fear for a decrease in tourists. In fact, Detteria suggests that they use the war in their promotion of attractions, siphoning off tourists who would have otherwise gone to Eadrin. What better entertainment than a day spent out in at the front watching battles?

The business owners warily accept the situation. Detteria dismisses them and returns her attentions to the war. Detteria correctly surmises that she has the support of the Bluenose merchants as long as the war goes Arogansa's way and does not affect them or their businesses. Until then, they may complain and gripe, but she doubts that the situation can become so dire that one of them will actually challenge her. Such things require too much effort. (*See Am. 2, Am. 11; Sv. 4, Ka. 15.*)

Ambrymont 23, AC 1017: Into the Cryptic Depths.

Location: Underneath City of Hattias, Duchy of Hattias, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Using a variety of clandestine and magical means, the Thyatians have managed to gather good information about the layout and inhabitants of the hidden sub-level below Hattias City. The chambers were shielded against *scrying* and *teleportation*, but planar travel allowed access to them. Once there, rogues and other stealthy types, operating on the Ethereal Plane, found the main chambers, apparently the abode of a lich. They also discovered that, to their surprise, the chambers seemed to be older than the Thyatian Empire itself. Not only that, the style of architecture and decoration was nearly identical to that used in Thothia, though death imagery is emphasized.

Having located what seemed to be the main chamber and threat, divinatory magics were then used to narrow down the location of the lich's phylactery—which he actually wears around his neck in the form of an inverted ankh. A small band of Thyatian heroes, selected by Demetrior Karagenteropolus, now make the transit from the Ethereal Plane to the Prime inside the lich's chamber, hoping to surprise and overcome the lich.

They are nonplussed when the lich—and his minions—are ready for them. A series of spells go off as each side tries to bring down the other's defenses and undead vassals of the lich swarm out of carefully hidden recesses that the Thyatians had failed to discover. But the lich himself is shocked when his powerful magical defenses are brought down with a *disjunction* spell, followed almost immediately by a flurry of weapon blows against him. The combatants grapple in melee until the lich is finally laid low and his phylactery is crushed, shattered by magical weapons. The entire chamber begins to shake at this point. The Thyatians grab their wounded and whatever else of value they can reach, including a large dark crystal prism and cast *ethereality* to escape. In their wake, the complex collapses behind them.

The tremors are felt even on the surface, in the form of a mild earthquake that shakes Hattias City briefly. (*See Kl. 24, Am. 3; Ka. 10.*)

What This Means: The complex and the lich, date back to the ancient Nithian Empire and the time of the arrival of the Thyatian people in the area at the turn of the 7th century BC. At that time, a small Nithian outpost existed where Hattias City now stands. With the Nithian Empire in its last stages of corruption, the Nithians of the area and their Toralai Neathar subjects were unable to prevent the influx of the three Thyatian tribes. A sorcerer-priest of Thanatos, prominent in the area, was instructed by Thanatos to create this warren. It was sealed off from the surface and largely forgotten, around the same time as the foundation of the city of Thyatis in BC 600.

From there, Thanatos used His lich servant over the centuries to manipulate things. His sorcerer-priest, acting clandestinely, using the *Dismal Prism*, further influenced the corruption and ultimate destruction of Nithia. Then they concentrated on influencing the nearby Hattians. This culminated in the Hattian Revolt of the early 4th century AC, the rise of the Storm Soldiers and most recently the Crown War. The *Dismal Prism* had been lost by the followers of Thanatos in the southern Altan Tepes Mountains during the final collapse of Nithia. It fell into the hands of a Thyatian group, the Stonecrafters, early in the history of the Thyatian Empire, but was recovered by servants of Thanatos during the first Hattian revolt. Thanatos now needs it to get back into circulation again for His own reasons and also knows that the Thyatians are starting to suspect someone or something was pulling the strings in Hattias behind the scene. So He set it up for His lich to serve as the fall guy and make the Thyatians think they had finally succeeded in eliminating the problem.

Thus He had the lich summon the pit fiend to cause further trouble in Thyatis, according to Thanatos's instructions. Thanatos knew that the pit fiend would rankle at this service (to a Chaotic Evil lich) and do something to get revenge—providing the clue that led the Thyatians to discover the lich's chambers. The Thyatians now think they have eliminated the source of all the problems in Hattias and to an extent they have. They have also recovered a dark and dangerous artifact, which they will try to destroy. But Thanatos has other plans for that. The Thyatian heroes will turn the prism over to the emperor, who gives it to his magist, Demetron, with instructions to try and identify it.

What the PCs Can Do: The characters can be the ones chosen, or if they are not experienced enough on their own they can be among those chosen, to face and destroy the lich. Make sure the *Dismal Prism* falls into their hands.

Ambrymont 23, AC 1017: Anchorage Burns.

Location: Town of Anchorage, Province of Anchorage, Republic of Esterhold, Nayce. SK

Description: After a lengthy siege, the Jennites are finally able to break through the Alphatian defenses and enter the town itself. The Alphatians fight hard, though and though the Jennites are victorious, they take serious casualties. The Jennites are furious and their reaction is prompt and harsh—Anchorage is burned to the ground and the Jennites take no prisoners.

Krael and Lyriander have fought hard to keep Anchorage from falling, but once again their efforts were in vain. They're both with a group of refugees who fight their way out of the city when they come under attack by several groups of united Jennites. Krael realizes that they won't be able to escape and stays behind to allow the rest of the refugees, including Lyriander to escape. The last thing Lyriander sees of him is when a Jennite warrior runs him through with a spear and while the wound is not fatal, some rebel Jennites take the opportunity to hold Krael down, cut off his head and then put it on a spear along with a board on which they write: "Proper treatment for traitors." (*See Fy. 12, Fy. 26; Sv. 2, Ei. 17.*)

What This Means: The siege of Anchorage lasted longer and claimed the lives of far more Jennites than the leaders expected. Although the Alphatians have offered little resistance, the Jennite offensive hasn't advanced as far or as fast as the leaders had hoped at this point and their harsh treatment of Anchorage is an indication of their frustrations. Slowly they're beginning to see that they're not just fighting the Alphatians—they're also fighting to bridge the differences that exist between the free Jennites and the rebel Jennites. In the beginning both sides were content with the prospect of hurting the Alphatians, but as they've fought together many of them have discovered that they are very different people, separated by centuries of Alphatian rule. Some free Jennites believe

that the Alphatians have forever cursed their brethren with their evil magic and some rebel Jennites are beginning to find that they have more in common with the hated Alphatians than with their barbaric brethren, which makes some hate the Alphatians even more. Thus they can continue their advances with renewed hatred for the Alphatians, but the strain is slowly beginning to show. Talin is soon forced to realize that the unification of free Jennites and rebel Jennites is in serious trouble, the dream of the former oppressed slaves to renew with their roots a fantasy. One thing is clear to many of the rebel Jennites—that they must find their own way for themselves, free of the Alphatians of course, but also not by clinging too strongly to their ties with the free Jennites. Many begin to feel, deep down inside, that they must find their way as a people by building their own nation, complex and terrifying as that might be.

What the PCs Can Do: Alphatian PCs might help a few Alphatians escape the destruction of Anchorage, but otherwise there is little to do except for the obvious battles. Jennite PCs could be put into some interesting role-playing situations as they begin to realize the differences between the free and rebel Jennites.

Ambrymont 24, AC 1017: Assassins!

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Emperor Eusebius visits the recently completed aqueduct mill system and plaza park, taking the opportunity to pass among the people and listen to their concerns in an effort to appear caring. A commotion breaks out when a band of children rush in, apparently with swords. The emperor's guards are momentarily distracted, thinking this might be a threat to the emperor's safety. While their attention is diverted, three women come to the fore of the crowd the emperor is passing among. They take daggers from their gowns and, before Eusebius can react, attack him. Two miss, but the third cuts a long gash alongside

his arm, which he raised to shield himself from the blow.

Eusebius draws his own sword to fend off the women, felling one as the guards rush back. They subdue the other two, taking them into custody for questioning and trial. The wound to Eusebius seems superficial and a cleric among the entourage *cures* the wound. The emperor waves to the crowd, which cheers, as his guards usher him into the imperial carriage for safety's sake, headed back to the palace in the Zendrolium. Once in the carriage, the emperor collapses; the cleric, suspecting poison is the cause, attempts to *negate poison*, but to no avail. Eusebius is delirious and near death as the imperial carriage pulls into the palace courtyard. (*See Fl. 11.*)

What This means: The children were orphans adopted by the women some months ago. The three women are all members of prominent families, who have suffered during Eusebius's reign. Two lost their husbands to the purges conducted by Eusebius early after he had become emperor, even though their only crime was not being among his supporters. The other, already a widow who lost her husband during the Great War, had her only son die as a result of the Thothian mummy rot and blames Eusebius for not solving the problem in time to save him. They got together to plan his assassination. Through their connections to the imperial bureaucracy, they learned of Eusebius's plans to visit the plaza today. The children were using toy (wooden) swords and had been told by their adoptive mothers that the guards would get a kick out of having them "play fight" with them. The children didn't know the rest of the plan and are shocked.

Though the emperor is magically protected against poison at all times (wearing a magical item and also having a cleric on hand just in case), the poison somehow pierced these defenses. The women had acquired a specially brewed and enchanted poison from a priestess of Talitha that is immune to such protections. Eusebius just barely survived.

The two surviving women will be tried and convicted of treason and attempted regicide. Eusebius will remain bedridden by poison for three days before recovering, having almost died. During that time, Lucianna Torion, the empress, takes the three children under her wing and they end up, in an odd twist, becoming pages in the imperial court.

What the PCs can do: Characters could be on hand for the event and with a little quick action foil the assassination attempt and become heroes. Such characters will be rewarded appropriately by a grateful emperor. Conversely, characters that are in opposition to Eusebius might try to take the opportunity finish him off. Note, though, that once the real action begins, the emperor's guards will be on the alert for further difficulties. Such guards consist of a large squad of master level characters with the best equipment the resources of an empire can provide. Would-be assassins will have to be quick and deadly to succeed and then escape.

Ambyrmont 24, AC 1017: From Caverns to Mines.

Location: Mining camps of Chapultepec and Tepetitlan, Azcan Empire. HW

Description: The mining centers of Chapultepec and Tepetitlan, which have always been a dangerous place as it borders on the Schattentalen caverns, are attacked by the elves from the dark. The local garrisons are never relieved by help from the Murasca Keep, as they expected they would be and as a result they are defeated. The mines are now claimed by the elves and all surviving Azcans from the mining communities are enslaved to work the mines until the time comes when they are sacrificed to Atzanteotl. (*See Fe. 11, Fy. 18; Sv. 7, Ka. 13.*)

What This Means: Murasca Keep never sent troops to defend the mining camps, as is its role, because the military there is largely loyal to the old regime. Soon after the beginning of the large-scale attack by the Schattentalen, many warriors sympathetic to the new clergy, or simply not supportive enough of Atzanteotl's ways, are arrested for

treason and sacrificed. The Schattentalen wisely leave the keep undisturbed.

Ambyrmont 24, AC 1017: A Timely Rescue.

Location: Principality of Bergdhoven, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: While returning to Kopstar from a secret rendezvous with Princess Juliana Vlaardoen, Sir Feldian Lehenard is suddenly attacked by a group of bandits. Outnumbered, the young officer nevertheless manages to make a solid showing against them, but it is only a matter of time before he falls before them. At that moment, he is suddenly rescued by several short, capable warriors—hin! Not stopping to question the presence of hin in Glantri (where they are largely persecuted), Feldian turns his attention to defeating the bandits. The enemies are quickly dispatched.

Feldian thanks his rescuers and is introduced to their leader, Jaervosz Dustyboots. He then interrogates the prisoners, but they are unable to directly implicate the man Feldian and Jaervosz suspect was behind the assassination attempt—the Black Eagle. Nevertheless, the two men strike up a friendship and a mutual agreement to bring von Hendriks to justice. (*See Fe. 7, Fy. 16; Ei. 2, Ei. 10.*)

What This Means: Jaervosz Dustyboots has been in Glantri ever since the escape of von Hendriks several years ago. He is determined to bring the Black Eagle to justice for crimes against the people of the Five Shires. He had been operating largely out of the Barony of Celedyl, but ever since the Black Eagle moved from the Great Crater and took up with Princess Juliana, Jaervosz has been following his movements in Bergdhoven. He hopes to be able to catch the Black Eagle unsuspected. It was while investigating that he heard rumors of this planned assassination attempt on Feldian. It seems the Black Eagle is greatly disturbed by Feldian's continued dalliances with Princess Juliana.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are aware of the assassination attempt, they can be the

ones to foil the Black Eagle's plans and ingratiate themselves with Feldian. In any case, Jaervosz Dustyboots hears of the attempt and makes contact with Feldian. He can use all the allies he can find in this land of hostile wizards.

Ambyrmont 24, AC 1017: More Trouble.

Location: Off the Coast of Kingdom of Surshield, Continent of Bellissaria, Nayce. AS

Description: The Naycese merchant ship, the Sassy Skimmer, comes under attack from a velya [*a variant of the aquatic vampire. Ed.*] and four wights. The undead quintet wreaks havoc with the ship's crew, killing five before breaking off their attack and disappearing with two additional crewmen. At the urging of the first mate the crew gathers up their fallen and tosses them overboard in a quickly organized burial at sea. (*See Am. 20, Am. 22; Am. 26, Sv. 1.*)

What This Means: The attack is initiated by Pidimigd's incantation. Previously this particular velya would have been content to prey on passing vessels in the night, either snatching lone lookouts through her *charm* power, shapeshifting, or by stealth. However, enraged by the intense agonies and subliminal urgings, she foregoes all pretenses of subtlety. The crew did the right thing by dumping the slain overboard as within days the corpses would rise as wights under the control of the velya. This is just the thing that an old salt such as the first mate would know about.

What This Means: PCs traveling by ship throughout the region may likewise be attacked by groups of disturbed undead.

Ambyrmont 24, AC 1017: Most Unwelcome News.

Location: Town of Lothar, Continent of Icaria. HW

Description: The messengers originally dispatched to Nithia return to Lothar, bearing the response from the *pharaoh*. Anxious to hear whether or not he will receive additional support, Uart-netter Semsu

breaks the seal and reads the message, only to learn that the *pharaoh's* officials are considering the matter to be one of great importance and that aid will be rendered as soon as possible. Dismissing the messengers, he retreats to his quarters and ponders matters further. (*See Am. 1, Am. 4; Ei. 8.*)

What This Means: Uart-netter Semsu is no fool; he knows bureaucratic double-speak when he sees it and he suspects that the *pharaoh* did not even receive his message. If this is true, then it is likely that he should not expect support anytime soon—unless there was some way the *pharaoh* could be made aware of the situation.

What the PCs Can Do: If they were entrusted the task of taking the message to Nithia in the first place, Uart-netter Semsu will grill them on the details of their reception—who spoke with them, what was said and what rumors they might have heard while in Tarthis. If the PCs were suspicious of matters themselves and if they share this information with the Lord of Lothar, his misgivings will grow and he may involve them in his future plans.

Ambyrmont 25, AC 1017: Princess Tanadaleyo Investigates *Skyships*.

Location: Colony of Aengmor, Republic of Darokin, Kingdom of Karameikos and Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: Princess Tanadaleyo, Governor of Aengmor, sends emissaries to Darokin, Karameikos and Glantri, to investigate the invasion of human *skyships* over Aengmor's skies. The Darokinian Diplomatic Corps is prompt to respond to these allegations, assuring that Darokin has no *skyships* or any intentions of intruding into shadowelf territories. The Karameikan ambassadors reply with less enthusiasm but their denials are as firm as they are cold. The Glantrian embassy refuses to officially comment until the Council of Princes convenes and release a formal statement. (*See Am. 14, Am. 15; Sv. 1.*)

What This Means: While Princess Tanadaleyo has serious concerns over the human intrusion into Canolbarth, she is also

quite willing to flex her political muscle. She hopes her diplomatic moves will establish Aengmor as a respected nation among the surface dwellers and establish her as the recognized ruler of the shadowelf nation.

The governments of Darokin and Karameikos react as they should, but actually, so does the Glantrian bureaucracy. Nothing less than sinister politics and scheming power plays are expected from the Glantrian wizards. Of course, this only hides the real fact that those *skyships* were Glantrian in origin, sent by the warden of the marches, Prince Malachie du Marais, to foil the plot of his nemesis, Princess Dolores Hillsbury, in her persona as the sorceress Synn.

What the PCs Can Do: This event is a natural aftermath of the Synn's *Shadow Over Mystara* plot from the arcade game of the same name. PCs working for any of these governments, as official agents or as spies, may find themselves in a multinational, cross-cultural game of cloak and dagger, whether or not their nations have any actual involvement in Synn's schemes.

Ambyrmont 26, AC 1017: Undead Horde Clashes with Zuyevans.

Location: Frontiers of Empire of Zuyevo, Western Yazak Steppes. WB

Description: The forces of *Don Claudio* clash with a Zuyevan army sent to intercept them. The battle is a slugfest, a deadly stalemate, until *Don Claudio* deploys his surprise reserve: a flight of five undead dragons. In the face of this sudden and fearsome force, the morale of the Zuyevan troops collapses and they flee towards the Yalu River. *Don Claudio's* undisciplined humanoid troops stop to plunder the enemy camp, hampering pursuit and most of the retreating forces manage to get to the river several days later and reach the safety of Kulikovo Fortress. The Zuyevan camp followers are not so lucky. (*See Am. 1, Am. 6; Sv. 5, Sv. 11.*)

What This Means: Zuyevo will next try and stop the advancing horde at the formidable Fortress of Kulikovo, where they

have gathered a large force of priests to try and defeat the undead. They hope that troops dispatched from the north will be able to reach the fortress before it falls.

Ambyrmont 26, AC 1017: Action at Bromstow.

Location: Village of Bromstow, Bishopric of Leominster, Kingdom of Bellayne. SC

Description: Eighty royalist footmen, under the command of Sir Jeremy Patchworth, ride into the village of Bromstow to find 600 parliamentary militia in mid-muster. Sir Jeremy quickly signals the attack and launches a hail of arrows into the massed throng. Caught completely by surprise, the militia panic and rout, fleeing to the southeast towards Leominster. The royalists move in and secure the town. (*See Fy. 27, Am. 17; Sv. 5, Sv. 12.*)

What This Means: The first time a military unit has used deadly force, the civil war is now in full swing. The victory is insignificant, as large numbers of parliamentary troops are positioned to take Bromstow should they desire and Patchworth's 80 men are hardly enough to stop them. Parliamentary commanders scoff at the attack—but Patchworth has opened the way for Edgwinton's Leominster defectors, bolstered by the royal Theeds regiment, to slip past Bromstow without being noticed, in the direction of Norchester.

What the PCs Can Do: Characters could participate in the skirmish if they are present, scouting out the enemy and acting as an elite strike force.

Ambyrmont 26, AC 1017: Leadership Called into Question.

Location: City of Freiburg, Territory of Heldann, Heldannic Empire. OW

Description: During a regular meeting with his senior officers, *Oberherr* Wulf von Klagendorf allows a few moments for everyone at the table to say what is on their minds and one knight, *Ordensgeneral* Heinrich Straßenburger, is very vocal in his criticisms

of the *oberherr*'s decisions taken so far this year. Before anyone can interrupt, he launches into a tirade concerning the ill-advised invasion of Helskir (which seems likely to be wrested from the order's control, according to rumors based on tales told by newly-arrived soldiers from the region), the appointment of the *grenzmarschallen* (a ploy to override the authority of potential rivals in Heldland), the overstepping of bureaucratic authority concerning the resettlement of Hattian immigrants and the "blatant waste of useful men against that heretic, Jaschke," when more strategic means are available. He adds that these acts are, to him, a sign of both incompetence and naked ambition, without a thought for the greater good of the Heldannic Order itself.

Furious at this insolence, *Herr Wulf* launches into his own tirade, stating that the expedition to Helskir had been approved based on field intelligence gathered by many of *Straßenburger*'s own underlings, which indicated that Helskir's strategic importance on the Isle of Dawn had dwindled in recent years, such that attempts to reconquer it might not even materialize if sufficient strength was shown by the order. Furthermore, the order could not afford to waste time in settling the Hattian migrants and bringing the errant County of *Wolkenberg* to heel, as the order's grip on Heldland is tenuous enough already. *Herr Wulf* closes by reminding *Straßenburger* of his obligations to obey his superiors within the order and threatens dire consequences should he ever step out of line again. Before anyone can react, *Herr Wulf* declares the meeting concluded and leaves the chamber. (See *Kl. 10, Am. 10; Am. 28, Sv. 2.*)

What This Means: Since the Heldannic Knights regained their clerical abilities in AC 1015, many senior members of the order have become very conscious of the need for any conquered territories to remain in Heldannic hands, otherwise the glory gained in conquering them for Vanya would be lost and they might lose their clerical powers once more. At the same time, many knights feel that it was the period of brutal

repression beforehand, during which other faiths in Heldann were subjected to an inquisition, which earned the order its punishment. Sentiments such as this have led *Herr Wulf* and others to adopt a more moderate stance towards conquered peoples—other peoples should be conquered, but they should also be shown the true greatness of Vanya by Her own merits (i.e. the valor of Her soldiers). At the same time, there are many knights who feel the Vanya is a capricious Immortal anyway and that showing any degree of mercy to the conquered is nothing less than weakness. There is a faction within the order which has become increasingly disillusioned with *Herr Wulf*'s policies; *Straßenburger* is one of them. Unbeknownst to *Herr Wulf*, he is also one of the knights who had conspired against him in AC 1015, urging that he be executed for treason while the *oberherr* was crusading in Davania.

Ambymont 26, AC 1017: Trouble Meets More Trouble.

Location: Eastern Sunken Arogansa, Nayce. AS

Description: The *Barracuda*, a pre-war rowed *submersible* galley, is on patrol. As they travel above the ruins of a country estate, lookouts spot the approaching forms of ten ghostly figures dashing through the water towards them. Sounding the alarm, the vessel's captain identifies the approaching apparitions as wights.

The captain orders the pilots to increase speed away from the wights, while hollering to his men the basics of the strengths and weaknesses of the creatures. His call is quickly answered and just in time as the wights catch up to the fleeing vessel. They pass through the hull, pausing to strike at a number of the occupants before fleeing through the hull to return to the exterior. They are unable to repeat this tactic as the spellcasters unleash a volley of spell fire through the submersible's view ports. This stuns the wights long enough to give the *Barracuda* time to put some safe distance between herself and the undead. The crew

of the *Barracuda* is fortunate as they lack the spellcasters and enchanted weapons to make a determined stand. (See *Am. 22, Am. 24; Sv. 1, Sv. 5.*)

What This Means: PCs traveling by *submersible* throughout the region may likewise be attacked by groups of disturbed undead.

Ambyrmont 26, AC 1017: Undead Nation.

Location: Barony of Two Lakes Vale, Icereach Range. NW

Description: Baron Fharo marches back into his old castle with his undead companions and attacks his old retainers, taking everyone by surprise. At the end of the battle, no living being remains in Castle Fharo and the undead baron sits on his throne waiting for new orders.

The situation in the other parts of the barony is not better, since the forces of Nyx have conquered almost the entire valley and enslaved its living population. Only a handful of humans have escaped this grim fate by hiding in the hills or forming barricades in some of the greater towns. But resistance is futile and they know only a miracle can save them now.

The Shadow Lord has taken possession of Wazor's own tower, hidden in the northern hills and from here he directs the troops in the final stages of the easy war. Sylarion in the meantime has discovered the *Hammer of Life's* dangerous properties and has tried to destroy it. Unable to crush the artifact, he has resolved to break it into three parts, which he then has hidden in three different locations in the barony, each one guarded by a powerful follower of Nyx. (See *Am. 12, Am. 20; Sv. 1, Sv. 10.*)

What This Means: The Barony of Two Lakes Vale has finally been turned into the promised land that Nyx wanted for Her undead children. This is but the first part of Her plan, for She has something bigger in mind in the months to come. The Shadow Lord and Sylarion are happy with the current situation and now both begin to think about the invasion of the nearby lands.

Since the *Hammer of Life* is an artifact, Sylarion wasn't able to destroy it easily. For this reason he has dismembered it and hidden it in three places, guarded by powerful creatures. [See *CM2 module to find out more about it. Ed.*]

Ambyrmont 27, AC 1017: Openness? In Buhrohur?

Location: Town of Makrast, County of Buhrohur, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description:

Following the arrival of more immigrant dwarves and their agitation for opening up Buhrohur,



Countess Gilla Blyskarats finally relents. She rescinds all the special laws limiting access to Buhrohur. The traditionalists are shocked when the influx of non-dwarves with their un-dwarven ways fails to materialize. Indeed, the people who take advantage of the new openness tend to be almost dwarf-like in their attitudes, admiring the same things the traditionalist dwarves do: inventiveness, gold, fighting, beard-stroking and being taciturn.

What This Means: The isolationism of the Buhrohuri dwarves is ending, sort of. Many of the dwarves will still be aloof around strangers, but visitors won't be hampered by restrictive laws. Gilla Blyskarats, the countess, was actually secretly supportive of removing the laws, as a result of her experiences adventuring outside Buhrohur among other Thyatians. But for political reasons she wanted to be seen as sympathetic to the traditionalists, while quietly waiting for the right excuse to rescind the laws.

What the PCs Can Do: Characters will now find travelling and adventuring in Buhrohur somewhat easier.

Ambyrmont 27, AC 1017: Fiorenza Offers Aid.

Location: Barony of Fiorenza, Hinterlands, Thyatian Empire. DV

Description: Justinian Silvestro, Baron of Fiorenza, informs *Exarch* Leilah ben Nadir that he will be able to take in up to 300 Milenian refugees, to resettle in lands which must be cleared, as well as recently drained swampland which should be tilled soon. (See *Am. 16, Am. 19; Sv. 1, Sv. 6.*)

What This Means: The Barony of Fiorenza was founded in AC 1011, by Justinian and his family and he was a capable enough ruler that he was able to make his dominion profitable within the allotted three-year time period. Since then, he has attracted more settlers from the Thyatian mainland, but not enough as he had hoped. He is confident that the Milenians would be able to integrate with the other settlers and aid him in his plans to develop the barony's economy still further.

Although Leilah will be happy about receiving an affirmative reply, it will be a Pyrrhic victory, as only one other dominion ruler indicated that he would be able to take in any refugees; the others claimed that they would not have enough resources, or that they were too busy developing their lands to spare any concern for displaced persons from outside the empire.

Ambyrmont 27, AC 1017: Morgan Shelters in Makai.

Location: Makai Island. HW

Description: Captain Morgan heads for Makai, as he deems it unsafe to return to Floresque at this time. He locates a safe harbor in Makai to shelter in and the crew proceeds with repairs. Once completed, the pirates spend the rest of their time frolicking with the natives. (See *Fy. 20, Am. 20; Sv. 9, Ei. 1.*)

What This Means: Makai is a safe haven for pirates. The friendly natives will enjoy their company. The repairs made here will only last temporarily; Morgan will have to bring the ship into dry-docks to make permanent repairs.

What the PCs Can Do: Besides working on repairs and feasting with the locals, this would be a good opportunity to run a primitive island scenario for the PCs.

Perhaps the Makai need assistance dealing with some local monsters that are threatening their village or pearl-diving cove.

Ambyrmont 27, AC 1017: They Must Be Stopped.

Location: City of Gask, County of Gask, Confederacy of Klagorst. WB

Description: The Reptile Knights are creating too much trouble in the region. In the months following the end of the Klagorst War, they have continued to spread chaos throughout the Klagorst region, up and down without respite, always raiding and killing and it seems impossible to stop them. In a heated debate in the confederated assembly in Gask, the Stygian representatives demand an end to this situation. The confederacy decides to ask the Adventurers' Guild of Grawyz to plan an expedition to deal with the matter. They promise a reward of 60,000 *zeurs* to the adventurers' guild if they solve the problem. (See *Fy. 4, Fy. 7; Sv. 1, Ei. 13.*)

What This Means: There is nothing secret here: the Reptile Knights are fighting in the name of Nhorg and creating effectively a lot of problems in the region, which is still trying to recover from the past battles. Making matters worse is the fact that the Reptile Knights seem to know everything about Nhorg's experiments and sometimes unleash magical creations that bring more chaos among the population.

What the PCs Can Do: It is time to start a crusade against the Reptile Knights. Or should they instead be among the knights, who wait for the hammer to fall? Or should they instead try to find the monsters and deal with them?

Ambyrmont 27, AC 1017: Avant Garde?

Location: City of Starpoint, Kingdom of Ambur, Floating Continent of Alpathia, Alpathian Empire. HW

Description: Azomog's latest play, *Of Skies Blue, Rivers Red*, opens in the Elshethara Theatre to a full house. Though the play is almost incomprehensible to any sober

person, it receives raves from the Starpoint theater community habitués. It is celebrated as an “innovative discourse in non-linear, free-style, open theater.” Many of those with more discerning tastes simply roll their eyes. (See *Nu. 18.*)

What This Means: Though Azomog hadn’t intended his play to be performed, he kept getting pestered by its admirers over the last several months about it. He finally threw up his hands and sold its rights to a producer. Though it was virtually impossible to direct and perform, much less understand, the audiences figure anything so incomprehensible must simply be on the cutting edge of modern Alphatian art and gush over it.

Common people with less refined tastes avoid the showings of *Of Skies Blue, Rivers Red* like they would avoid a plague carrier, however. Once the avant garde crowd and the actors’ relatives and friends have seen it several times, it folds. The habitués consider this a sign that the average people just aren’t ready for such high-concept art.

Ambrymont 27, AC 1017: Fire at the Lovecraft Asylum.

Location: Town of Rymskigrad, Principality of Boldavia, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: On the night of a raging thunderstorm, a fire breaks out at the Lovecraft Asylum. Terrified residents of Rymskigrad claim that several inmates had escaped, some of whom are probably very dangerous. The Boldavian authorities blame a freak bolt of lightning as the cause, but (as always) remain vague about the other details of the blaze.

Despite the relentless rain, smoke and fire is seen emerging from the asylum grounds until the morning, throughout the next day and well into the following night.

What This Means: The most famous inmate of the infamous madhouse these days, the Lady Sinaria Verlien, former Countess of High Sonden and the present High Mistress of Fire Elementalism, had tapped into the energy of the storm, as well

as into her own frail body and frayed mind, to power the spell that started the magical conflagration. During the blaze and the ensuing confusion, Lady Sinaria escaped. She will be making her way back to Flaemish territories and plotting her vengeance on her treacherous son, Lord Pieter Verlien, who arranged for her confinement to assume rulership of High Sonden.

What the PCs Can Do: The source of the fire is actually a small *gate* into the Plane of Elemental Fire and as such the blaze burns through earth and stone, ignites flammable objects (including living flesh) instantaneously and cannot be doused by mundane means. Although quite unlikely, the authorities of Rymskigrad or the Lovecraft Asylum may ask the PCs to help put out the fire or go after the escapees in the Boldavian countryside—a task that is definitely more dangerous than it seems.

If the PCs do not intervene, Prince Morphail Gorevitch-Woszlan of Boldavia sends his own wizardly minions to stop the blaze the next night.

Ambrymont 28, AC 1017: You Bring Me the Boy, I’ll Give You the Man.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: For the past four months Prince Gabrionus Torion has been taught swordsmanship by Vivianna Romanones, in between her other duties. While in the last couple years he has outgrown some of his awkwardness, he is still a shy and nervous lad. In addition, he is more interested in scholarly pursuits than being a warrior. His nervousness is hampering his concentration. But Emperor Eusebius expects Vivianna to succeed in teaching Gabrionus.

She makes a deal with Gabrionus; she will take some of the time to tutor him in scholarly endeavors, if he will work harder to concentrate during their exercises and sparring sessions. He agrees and she gives him several books to start with. She uses these discussion sessions and her whiles to loosen him up and encourage him and he

begins to make progress in both fields of study. (See *Fl. 27.*)

What This Means: Gabrionus is very intelligent, but somewhat lacking in social skills and confidence. One of the books Viviana gives him is actually a *tome of leadership and influence*, while another that she gives him later is a *manual of quickness in action*. She also works to develop his natural confidence and tutor him in etiquette and other interpersonal skills. He has led a shy and sheltered life, but is personable and not without natural charm and proves a natural student. Viviana knows that Gabrionus is somewhat infatuated with her. She is around twice his age (Gabrionus turned 18 a few weeks ago, she is in her mid thirties by birth date, though looking more youthful) and loyal to the empire. She is also ambitious and doesn't mind taking the chance to consort with members of the imperial family in the hopes of affiliating herself with it. She has never been truly in love before, but she finds Gabrionus to be sweet and endearing. She insures to sit close by him during the study sessions, occasionally brushing up against him and otherwise inflaming his ardor for her.

Ambyrmont 28, AC 1017: A Declaration for Straßenburger.

Location: Town of Altendorf, Territory of Heldann, Heldannic Empire. OW

Description: Hans-Joachim Kaltstetter, *Landmeister* of Altendorf, sends notice to *Oberherr* Wulf von Klagendorf that both he and his garrison have sworn allegiance to Heinrich Straßenburger, “the true *Oberherr* of the Heldannic Order.” Condemning *Herr* Wulf's recent policies, Kaltstetter calls him a cowardly man who lacks the courage to spill blood and prove his faith in the name of Vanya and dismisses the Heldannic Order's conquest of Polakatsikes as trifling. He adds that letters have been sent to other senior knights, urging them to do the same. (See *Am. 26; Sv. 2, Sv. 6.*)

What This Means: Heinrich Straßenburger has been active since his argument with *Herr* Wulf, stirring up

support for his stance that the current *oberherr* is unfit to lead the Heldannic Order. Only time will tell whether or not more senior knights will heed Straßenburger's call.

What the PCs Can Do: Predictably, *Herr* Wulf will be furious once he finds out what Straßenburger is doing and would not be above sending some loyal subordinates to find Straßenburger and bring him to Freiburg for questioning, or eliminate him. If the PCs are loyal to the order and know *Herr* Wulf, it is likely he will ask them to do it.

Ambyrmont 28, AC 1017: Bodyguards for Bensarian.

Location: Korrigan Forest, Kingdom of Wendar. OW

Description: After two weeks of meetings, the Genalleth elders deliberate to wait until the end of the year to expose Bensarian's machinations. They choose among their members the most trusted elves and give them the task to guard over Bensarian's body during the rest of the year, to prevent any assassination attempt at his persona. Then they have to *dispel* any magics upon his body on the first day of the new year, to free his mind and soul from the Onyx Ring wizard's yoke. This plan is to be kept secret at all costs, to prevent the Church of Idris from interfering with their scheme. (See *Fe. 18, Am. 16; Ka. 28.*)

What This Means: The wise elves want to counter Idris's treachery with another cunning machination. Instead of killing or removing the fake Bensarian from his place, they want to simply *dispel* the evil wizard's influence over the old sage. Once this is done, they will have a powerful ally in the right place to restore Wendar's political situation, unmask Idris's spymaster and chase Her cultists out of the kingdom. However, they also realize Bensarian must be protected at all costs, because in the meantime Idris may try to stage a fake assassination attempt to cast blame upon the elves, thus provoking a civil war inside Wendar. For this reason they have instructed

the chosen elven heroes to guard the sage's back until the end of the year.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are among the Genalleth's most trusted and resourceful heroes, they may be charged with this difficult task. The DM should then come up with events to keep the heroes' lives busy until the end of the year.

Topic of the Month: Shadow over Aengmor

By Balinor "Silverblade" Audriel.

May Rafiel preserve us!

Since my shadowelf brethren came to the surface and rightfully reclaimed our heritage of Canolbarth, nothing but tragedy has befallen our nation of Aengmor. With the wilting of the beloved trees, the civil war among my shadowelf brethren and the desecration of our sacred city of Aengmor, I wonder if Rafiel has not forgotten his favored children.

The latest catastrophe to befall the shadow elves comes from the realms of the humans. An evil sorceress who calls herself Synn, had trespassed into Canolbarth and sought to make it her base of operations for her wicked plots. With powerful sorcery, Synn built a dark fortress, guarded by magical wards, booby traps and dreadful creatures. With promises of gold and adventure, she lured many shadowelf mercenaries and warriors to participate in her sinister plans. (Rafiel forgive us for our own dark natures!) The shamans of Rafiel tried to warn us of the evils of Synn. Some even dared mention the name of the Entropic Immortal Atzanteotl—and that this sorceress was reeking with the taint of the Corrupter. And yet the shadow elves would not listen. Only when heroic adventurers from outside Aengmor returned from the Sacred Cave of Rafiel and revealed the horrors of Synn's plans, did the shadow elves realize their folly, but by then it was too late.

The sorceress had learned the secrets of the Magic Points of Canolbarth Forest and with these insidious energies, her own powers increased manyfold. With baleful magic, she summoned hordes of dread monstrosities—and, if the hushed whisperings are to be believed, even magically twisted the creatures of the forest into gruesome abominations! The already dark forests of Aengmor teemed with manticores, manscorpions, sphinxes and chimeras. Bands of kobolds, goblins, gnolls and ogres made their way from the Broken Lands into Darokin and into Canolbarth,

not only driven by the fighting over the Sacred City of Aengmor, but perhaps also summoned and organized by their evil mistress. From the rivers came troglodytes, lizard men, gator men, nuckalavee, hydras, velya and decapuses. The skies were blackened with gargoyles, harpies, chimeras and the chaotic dragons of green, black and red. From other worlds, displacer beats, hell hounds and beholders were summoned by Synn's evil beckoning. (One clairvoyant shaman of Rafiel even spoke of terrible visions of fiends from the Outer Planes seeking entrance into Mystara through Synn's machinations! Thank Rafiel this did not come to pass!) Yet even without the demonic threats from beyond, the denizens of Synn were dangerous enough.

Perhaps the most shocking of these horrors were the undead. Scores of skeletons, zombies and ghouls began emerging from Synn's dark fortress and whatever living creature they killed readily joined their ranks. The frightful name of Deimos, a lich from Darokin who was allegedly destroyed two years ago, was heard of again and some shadow elves claim to have witnessed him battling an adventuring party in the caverns underground, animating more undead minions and unleashing powerful necromantic magic. Whether Deimos was liege of these undead, or working with or for the sorceress Synn we cannot and we dare not know.

It was on the last days of the month of Days that the troubles of Aengmor reached their peak. Synn had apparently completed her dark fortress as well as her army of rogue shadow elves, humanoids, monsters and undead. As a horrific final act, she magically raised her tower on an island in the sky, much like the air wizards on the continent of Alphatia once did. It was a feat that was both amazing and horrifying. The fortress crackled with dark, evil magic and from it emerged deafening monstrous howls.

But something went awry...

At first, we thought the human flying vessels [skyships. *Ed.*] soaring above the treetops were allies of Synn, come to deliver

more minions for the sorceress—or worse, to invade Aengmor! And the more we thought it would happen when the manmade crafts began shooting *fireballs*, *lightning bolts* and *meteor swarms* into the trees below. But, as witnesses to events were to relate to me later, the vessels were actually bombarding the forest ground, presumably where the Magic Point was located. Although it would be impossible to actually destroy a Magic Point (the humans would be foolish to believe they actually could), the magical attack somehow disrupted the source of Synn's evil powers. In a brilliant flash of purifying light, Synn's fortress simply vanished.

Was it destroyed? Or was it merely transported into another place? And what of Synn? Did she perish? Or is this merely part of an elaborate plan, to deploy her foul denizens all over the surface world and spread her wicked influence like a veritable shadow over Mystara?

May Rafiel preserve us all!

Events: Sviftmont

First Week

Sviftmont 1, AC 1017: A-Hunting We Shall Go.

Location: Town of Grawyz, County of Valeryia, Confederacy of Klagorst. WB

Description: The Adventurers' Guild of Grawyz, under the leadership of Andrzej Vatacek, starts its expedition to find the Reptile Knights and put an end to their raids. There are 25 men, among whom are adventurers of the guild, bounty hunters and mercenaries, all of whom have been promised 1,800 *zeurs* if they succeed. (*See Fy. 7, Am. 27; Ei. 13.*)

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs want to fight against the Reptile Knights, they will have to be of high level. The Reptile Knights are all avengers of at least level 10 [*14 OD&D*], extremely well trained in the use of the axe and the long sword and are all in the possession of two or three magical items. It will take a long time just to find them and when that happens, the battle will be hard and several of the members of the expedition will probably die—hopefully, not the PCs.

Sviftmont 1, AC 1017: A Leader Addresses the Masses.

Location: City of Rardish, Kingdom of Randel, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description:

From the palace's battlements, Queen Karatnora speaks publicly to the people of Rardish. The message is read aloud throughout the kingdom.

“Men and women of Randel. The past few years have seen grievous injustices poured upon the warriors of this kingdom. Age-old traditions and



expectations have been thrown asunder, all in the name of peace and pacifism as dictated by the Immortal Alphatia. I praise your composure and discipline in standing fast amid an obviously slanderous administration. Sadly, these injustices have come from within our very borders and from the palace.

“However, I cannot and will not place all of the blame upon Junna. Much of the blame has to rest upon the shoulders of her clerics, who had grown fat and corrupt upon their newfound power and influence. She had resided among their ways for far too long; forgetting her duties and heritage as part of the Randel.

“However I cannot lay all blame upon the Order of the Immortal Alphatia. Though the Immortal preaches peace and prosperity, such doctrines do not need to submit totally to pacifism. In fact, peace and prosperity often go hand in hand with a stout sword arm, a volley of spell fire and a raising of the Randel battle standard.

“But in our recent history, the cohesiveness and cooperation of peace and prosperity and the Randel way have been forgotten in favor of pacifism. Those that would try to engineer the Randel to match their ideas of the ways of the Immortal Alphatia are no more. The corrupt and misguided actions of this clergy have been addressed and the direst punishments handed out. Though the effects of their misguided attentions will surely linger, we can and will rebuild.

“We are of Randel. We are fighters. We have survived far worse than this. If it does not kill us, it makes us stronger. Our military abilities and traditions are akin to a bird's ability to fly—you can cage it but it will always look towards the skies. Like a bird of prey, our wings have been clipped and our strengths weakened. However, our feathers will grow back out and we shall reclaim our birthright.

“So as I assure the Randel people that we will survive, let me also cry out to our neighbors, both allies, foes and others, that the Randel may be weakened and

diminished. However, proper funding and support make not a warrior people. Such matters are gained by birthright as much as they are gained by training. Though our armor is dinged and dirty; though our swords are dull and rusty; though our spell fire is diminished and lacks of practice, I assure you and our neighbors, that the Randel people can and will fight like the beguiled forces of old for every square foot of Randel land.

“We regret that we cannot offer similar military attentions to our besieged brethren in Eadrin. However, the Eadrin are a stout and hearty lot, I am confident that they can handle their own defenses. For the time being, we can only offer support and well wishes.” (See *Am. 14, Am. 18; Sv. 7, Sv. 11.*)

What This Means: The speech is well received throughout Randel. The speech itself is part of the damage control process for the whole matter with Junna. It is designed to remove the stigma of the whole ordeal away from Junna and from the mainstream followings of the Immortal Alphatia and to rekindle Randel patriotism and tradition. However this angle is undermined as key examples of Randel strength and past actions cannot be referenced to as they contradict the false memories that the bulk of the populace has. Finally, the speech is engineered to make Karatnora come off like a devoted militarist. This is needed as Karatnora has a reputation of being rather carefree and uncaring when it comes to traditional Randel militarism.

Swiftmont 1, AC 1017: First Survey Report Made.

Location: City of Greenwood, Kingdom of Foresthome, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: A mage from the surveyor team on the coast of Foresthome *teleports* to the capital and delivers the first report to the queen. According to this report it is possible to construct a short passageway from the Llyn River to the harbor of Tenoboa. This short section of the planned coastal canal avoids the dangerous area near the rim

waterfall, which would hinder ships sailing into the harbor. (See *Am. 16, Am. 22; Sv. 10, Sv. 14.*)

What This Means: Now that she has decided to allow canals in her kingdom Queen Kikania is determined to push forward her own project as fast as possible. She wants to get one or two of her harbors reconnected to the trade routes before the end of the year [*the Alphatian year does not end until Vaternont 28. Ed.*].

Tenoboa’s harbor used to be in the mouth of Llyn River, with access to both the river and the Alphatian Sea. With the relocation and the disappearance of the sea, the Llyn River now directly falls over the edge of the continent at the Llyn Waterfall and the channel here that used to be broad and calm is now rough and unfit to navigation, with most of the port facility destroyed or unused. The dam is to prevent the worst of the waterfall and create an artificial harbor where the old one used to be, thus reconnecting Tenoboa to the rest of the Llyn River system and, when the Rim Canal is built, to the other rim settlements as well.

Swiftmont 1, AC 1017: A Call for Help.

Location: *Exarchate* of Davania Superior, Hinterlands, Thyatian Empire. DV

Description: Communities all over southern and western Davania Superior have been trying for weeks to cope with the influx of large numbers of Milenian refugees from the Meghala Kimata Plains. Although the local bureaucracy is reasonably efficient, it is small in scale and used to handling the needs of Thyatian citizens in the region, not several thousand newcomers lacking food and shelter. At first, local temples and charitable organizations were contacted, but soon afterwards even they could not help in this monumental task. Many refugees were to be moved to Raven Scarp, but threats from Siobhan’s army prevented any large-scale movements for weeks, leaving the problem in the hands of towns and villages and straining their resources ever more.

Compounding this has been a string of attacks against the Milenians by Thyatians

and Thyatianized Hinterlanders, as feelings of resentment against the newcomers begins to rise. Seeing the situation deteriorate rapidly, *Exarch* Leilah ben Nadir sends a personal message to Emperor Eusebius, asking that he provide aid to his southern dominions in handling the influx. (See *Am. 19, Am. 27; Sv. 6, Sv. 17.*)

What This Means: Although the Hinterlands are better able to handle colonists than they were even ten years ago, the arrival of over 30,000 refugees during the first half of the year has taxed the administrative structures to a standstill. The infrastructure to handle such a population increase simply does not exist and few dominions can afford to take in any of the migrants, being more concerned with establishing themselves. So long as the situation persists, food shortages will become more common, as will disease and strife as locals come to resent the presence of the Milenians, who, to some people, appear to be sponging off of everyone else.

What the PCs Can Do: If one or more of the PCs is a dominion ruler in the Hinterlands, they will have received by now a personal letter from Leilah ben Nadir, asking them to take in as many Milenian refugees as they can. If they can and agree to take in some of them, the PCs will have to cope with resettling them, as well as dealing with culture shock and trying to integrate them with the rest of the residents of their dominions. If they refuse and it is shown that they can handle an influx, Leilah will pull rank and order them to comply—which might pave the way for tensions in the future.

Sviftmont 1, AC 1017: More Elven Intrigues.

Location: City of Glantri, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: The emissary of Princes Tanadaleyo of Aengmor has not yet received an official reply from the Council of Princes about the intrusion of Glantrian *skyships* over Aengmor's territories. The chancellor of princes, Prince Urmahid Krinagar

convenes a closed-door meeting with the Council of Princes. In the end, Prince Urmahid and Princess Carlolina Erewan are seen meeting with the shadowelf emissary, who then returns to Rafielton appeased. The matter of the *skyships* is never discussed again. (See *Fe. 20, Am. 15; Am. 25, Ka. 22.*)

What This Means: Prince Urmahid is caught between a rock and a hard place. On one hand, he is fully aware that it was Prince Malachie, the newly-chosen warden of the marches, who sent the *skyships* to Aengmor. On the other, his admission of such would endanger Glantri's already tenuous diplomatic relations with Aengmor and other Old World relations. Prince Urmahid calls on all the other princes to thresh out the matter—and as expected, politics and intrigue ran high.

Prince Malachie remained adamant that the *skyship* maneuvers were for a secret, but fully justified, military mission (he could not yet directly link Princess Dolores Hillsbury with the sorceress Synn!). Princess Dolores Hillsbury, of course, pointed out that the “new and untested” warden of the marches had so far not presented to any good cause for his move—save perhaps to outshine his predecessor.

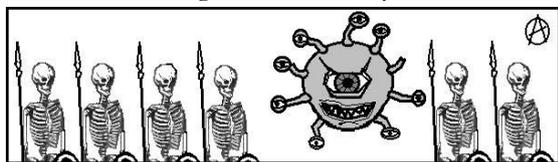
Meanwhile, Princess Carnelia de Belcadiz questioned the significance of their diplomatic ties with Aengmor, which in turn elicited a reaction from her rival, Princess Carlolina Erewan, whom she rightfully suspected of harboring secret alliances with the shadow elves. In the end, the good-natured Princess Carlolina volunteered to speak with the shadowelf emissary, promising to use her good graces with these elven brethren on behalf of the Council of Princes.

At the end of the meeting, several princes of Glantri began to reconsider their opinions of former allies and enemies. Both Prince Urmahid and Prince Malachie are genuinely taken in by Princess Carlolina's selfless act, while *Prinz* Jaggar von Drachenfels, the former warden of the marches, is not totally unaffected by Princess Dolores's

insinuations of Prince Malachie's grandstanding.

Swiftmont 1, AC 1017: Under Assault Again.

Location: Eagret Island, Nayce. AS



Description: Lookouts raise a cry of alarm to the naval base's garrison. Talmata's vigilance prevails as the troops turn out to the refurbished defenses. Before them they see an army of figures emerging from the sea and walking across the beach towards the base. The attackers are obviously undead; their staggering walk and the preemptive stench denoting their nature far in advance. There are numerous mundane undead present, mostly animated skeletons, zombies and ghouls. More powerful undead are mixed within their ranks and appear to be leading them in their assault. Talmata and his more experienced officers begin identifying them from the battlements; skeletal warriors, undead beholders, wights and specters are all seen.

The undead silently form up in rudimentary ranks and begin a bizarre march on the base. Though they manage to scale the walls several times, they are unable to maintain any foothold on its interior. As the undead assault begins to fall apart, they begin falling back out of missile range. They form up to begin another assault.

A renewed assault does not immediately come. Instead, a lone figure emerges from their ranks and strides boldly towards the walls holding a rudimentary flag of truce. The figure stops at the base of the walls, his features showing themselves clearly to the defenders. He is an imposing figure wearing battered plate armor of a darkened hue. His features are skeletal with eyes burning red. Slung on his back is a large spiked mace.

The death knight scans the walls with his unnatural eyes. Spotting Talmata, he points at him and offers a proposal. In a hollow

voice, he states that this matter can be resolved with a contest of champions. If he wins, the island is his. If the Alphatian champion wins, his forces will depart.

Talmata contemplates the offer. He knows that the battle is not decidedly in their favor. Likewise, he is aware that the undead can fight on without rest and merely wear his men down. Since he will act as champion, he is unwilling to place all of his men's lives on his success or failure.

As if it has sensed the cleric's thoughts and apprehensions, the death knight interjects that he would prefer to not battle Talmata, a cleric of the Razud faith. However, as he made the challenge he cannot stipulate the identity of the Alphatian champion. In light of this, he adds that if Talmata names someone beside himself as the champion he will add another aspect of the challenge: if the Alphatian champion falls, he guarantees the safe evacuation of the garrison.

Though the word of an undead may be subject to ridicule, Talmata senses that the offer is sincere. He is actually more worried that the undead will continue their assault if their presumed leader falls than if he succeeds. It really depends upon his second in command. Talmata decides that the matter is worth the risk. He gathers his most able warriors and puts the matter before them. He decides upon the fighter Garrek, a longtime friend and compatriot.

Talmata announces his decision and his champion. The death knight agrees to the opponent and restates the conditions. He formally announces to his undead troops and their commanders that the deal has been struck. He then states that he, Faruza the Fallen, has ordained it as so and that his forces shall oblige by the decision. In response, the undead nod their heads in stoic subservient approval.

That said, Faruza and Garrek meet outside of the base's walls and square up for combat. Faruza immediately surprises Garrek by saluting him and wishing him good luck. Puzzled, Garrek starts to return the remarks but is stopped in mid-sentence. The death knight tells him that he deserves

no similar praises or goodwill. To further halt conversation he begins the battle.

The two champions begin their contest of arms, each making probing attacks to feel out the opponent's strengths and weaknesses. Soon after, the combat intensifies as the two begin testing their strengths and assessments of their opponent. Initially, the two appear to be evenly matched with neither showing an apparent advantage. However, the death knight begins to gain an advantage as Garrek becomes fatigued and goes on the defensive.

The battle appears to be lost when the heavy mace of Faruuzā knocks the protective shield of Garrek from his arm. The undead warrior pauses momentarily to survey his impending victory. However victory goes to Garrek as he brandishes his battle ax with both hands and begins a fanatical assault on the death knight. Under the barrage of ax blows Faruuzā is forced back as he tries to dodge and parry his opponent's blows. However, he cannot meet each attack and steadily the blade of Garrek racks up hit after hit upon the dead flesh.

Finally, the death knight drops to his knees. Looking up at Garrek and his raised battle ax, he tells him to finish it. Garrek obliges and with all of his remaining strength sends the broad blade into the form of the death knight. The blade connects, nearly severing the undead's head. The decaying flesh collapses to the ground, the dark eye sockets attesting that the death knight is no more.

Though victorious, Garrek turns to the undead that surround him. Their dead gaze ferries between the form of their fallen master and that of his slayer. They pause for a moment unsure what to do. Fearing treachery on their part, Garrek takes a defensive posture and moves back towards the walls. Behind him he can hear the sounds of his fellows cocking crossbows and loosening weapons in their scabbards.

The undead decide to oblige their master's commands. They begin withdrawing from the walls, back to the beach and out into the surf. As the defenders open the main doors

to pull Garrek in, he collapses in their arms. The man is overwhelmed with exhaustion and emotion. He is immediately carried to his quarters and attended to by Talmata's clerical spells.

With rest and medical attention, Garrek will survive the battle. Likewise, the base will not be harassed any further this day. Scouts are sent and report no signs of any undead on the island.—the undead have honored the deal their master had brokered. Later, Garrek will ask Talmata about this Faruuzā. Talmata will vaguely tell him that he had once known a cleric named Faruuzā; an honorable man, he had lost much with the burning of Aasla. It had been thought that he had perished during the Great War. (*See Am. 22, Am. 26; Sv. 5, Sv. 13.*)

What This Means: Faruuzā is a death knight, his undead existence being a result of atrocities that he committed after losing his family in the fire storm that razed Aasla during the Great War. Before his undeath, he had been a devoted cleric in the service of the Immortal Razud. Recently he has come under the sway of the mysterious voice that is leading the undead in the area. Without any purpose, he was easily caught up in the matter. The mysterious voice appointed him as the commander of the assault on Eagret Island.

As the battle went from idea to actual practice, he had had second thoughts on his allegiance. Residual loyalties to the Alphatian Empire and the Razud clergy have pestered his resolve. However, it is his seeing Alphatians led by Talmata being barraged by his forces that he decided on a course of action and he offered the champions' battle to decide the matter. The battle "winner take all" contest is a farce; Faruuzā had no thought of actually winning. However, he knew that the mysterious voice would be watching and knew that he must proceed with caution.

He rationalized that Talmata would want to offer himself as the champion of the living. However, Faruuzā did not want to take up arms against his former clergy members. Likewise he was not overly keen

on his death coming at the hands of one of them. Thus the proposal was staged so that it offered him his means of an honorable death on his own terms without being overly obvious that he was throwing the fight.

Garrek did fairly well against the death knight, but had Faruza desired he could have won the day. In the battle he abstained from using several of his unnatural abilities that his nature provided him. He never really pressed his attacks. When Garrek lost his shield, Faruza essentially gave up any pretenses of winning. The living fighter was just too tired and too overmatched.

In time, Garrek will realize that his victory was a hollow one. He will confide in Talmata his suspicions. Talmata will eventually divulge the story of Faruza and surmise that his death was a final act of sacrifice, probably to end his undead existence in an honorable manner.

As for Faruza's undead forces, they do oblige the final command of their leader. It will be some time before the mysterious voice can find another undead sergeant powerful enough to act as her general and maintain control over so many undead at one time. For the time being, the undead will return to operating in smaller groups under the guidance of undead masters. Also for the time being, the nature and identity of the mysterious voice will remain a mystery.

Swiftmont 1, AC 1017: Monzag Resistance Collapses.

Location: Kingdom of Monzag, Converted Lands. WB

Description: The capture of Puzstòck and Szekçarüt by the Master's allies (the Antasynians and the Dark Wood nomads) results in the collapse of the Monzag resistance. The rebel Monzag Wizard-King, Balàzs Khuen, refuses to admit defeat and is killed in a glorious last battle. The nomads that the Master recruited earlier this year from the Dark Wood begin to settle their new conquest, taking property and women from the locals. The common people of Monzag are persuaded by Hulean agents that the uprising was not a freedom movement,

but an effort to sell them out by oppressive and uncaring lords to a foreign power (Zuyevo). (*See Fl. 15, Fy. 16.*)

What This Means: This was an inevitable result of the Master's machinations. He weakened the Monzag from within by pitting their aristocrats against each other and he directly financed the nomads and Antasynians in their battles against the Monzags. The Zuyevans were not actually involved in efforts to destabilize Monzag and Antasyn, but their well known goal of seizing the Bylot Hills is craftily used by the Master to convince people that Zuyevo was behind the insurgency. Several of the lords who submit to Hule and surrender "confess" their supposed involvement with Zuyevan agents, which further lends further credibility to the Hulean version, which is spread among the common folk through adept use of minstrels and bards.

Swiftmont 1, AC 1017: The War Machine Rolls Relentlessly.

Location: Countryside, Kingdom of Arkan, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: Despite the recent successes of Wolf-Hunter and his Wolf-Pack, the Stonewall war machine marches on without mercy or remorse. Though they have been harassed along the way, the Arkan resistance has been insufficient to really slow down their advance, let alone stop it. (*See Am. 4, Am. 16; Sv. 4, Sv. 7.*)

What This Means: The Stonewall army is moving forward at an alarming rate—if they continue at their current pace, they will reach the city of Ceafem within the next two weeks and put it under a siege that it probably would not be able to withstand for long. Unless something is done soon, Arkan will surely have lost the war!

What the PCs Can Do: The Wolf-Pack will obviously continue with its tactics, but unless the PCs are incredibly powerful, there is little they can do to stop the advance of the entire Stonewall army.

Swiftmont 1, AC 1017: Is There Ever End to Disgrace?

Location: Barony of Two Lakes Vale, Icereach Range. NW

Description: Sylarion receives a visit from Ulslime, a devoted priest of Nyx, who has been charged with a special task by the Night Mother. Sylarion begins to harvest as many living and undead beings as possible, providing them to Ulslime for his experiments.

Meanwhile word of Two Lakes Vale's situation has spread in Norwold and adventurers are coming from every corner to gain fame and honor from this seemingly impossible quest against the forces of darkness... much to the delight of the Shadow Lord's sadistic tastes. (*See Am. 20, Am. 26; Sv. 10.*)

What This Means: Nyx sent Ulslime to complete Her mischievous plan in Two Lakes Vale. He is to create something that will definitely turn the tables in favor of the undead of the whole world, so She will take revenge upon all those so-called champions of Good who have killed so many of Her dear children in the past centuries.

What the PCs Can Do: Save the day in the Barony of Two Lakes Vale, what else? The DM can follow the encounters described in CM2 *The Death Ride* module with the above-mentioned changes. If the party is of high level, the adventure can become more challenging if the DM puts at least one of the components of the *Hammer of Life* under the Shadow Lord's close watch.

Swiftmont 2, AC 1017: Too Late To Help.

Location: Eastern Jungle Coast, roughly 200 miles east of Colony of Davania Inferior. DV

Description: Continuing their eastward voyage, Julius Ambrosius's exploratory flotilla notices an island early in the morning, situated not far from their current position, upon which can be seen evidence of habitation—evidenced by piles of splintered wood, overgrown fields and orderly piles of

stone. Intrigued, but at the same time cautious, Julius orders the ships to head for the island.

Before long, they arrive at their destination and proceed to circumnavigate the island, a task that is completed well before sundown. Seeing that there is at least a couple of hours of daylight left, Julius sends a detachment of marines to secure the beach, while he and a select group of explorers come ashore. Though a quick survey of the island reveals nothing dangerous, it is not long before the party identifies the wood as having once been the planks of a ship, as well as boards from barrels. Within the tumbled pile of stone is found two skeletons, as well as a rusted tin box containing a salt-stained logbook.

Skimming the book, Julius informs his companions that the skeletons they see are the remains of two Thyatian explorers, whose vessel, the *Stinging Bee*, ran aground in a storm, killing the remainder of the crew. The men were marooned here until their deaths, almost 22 years previously. Closing the book, Julius asks the resident cleric to say a prayer for the fallen, while the others turn the collapsed shack into a makeshift grave. (*See Fy. 18, Am. 9; Ei. 13.*)

What This Means: The Jungle Coast is dangerous for many reasons, not the least of which are its treacherous shores. Over the years, many ships sank during the storms that batter these shores regularly, or ran afoul of the coral reefs and sandbars. The *Stinging Bee* is one such vessel, missing for over 22 years. Julius plans, once he returns to Thyatis, to inform the relevant authorities of his discovery—one ship, at least, will be missing no longer.

For the time being, Julius will have his men explore the island and collect whatever interesting samples they can find. They will rest here for the night, before continuing their voyage.

Swiftmont 2, AC 1017: Hockstein Declares for Straßenburger

Location: Town of Hockstein, Territory of Heldann, Heldannic Empire. OW

Description: Adelard von Bohm, *Landmeister* of Hockstein, issues a declaration of support for Heinrich Straßenburger, stating that he has no faith in the current leadership of the Heldannic Order. He states further that his forces will be at Straßenburger’s disposal. (*See Am. 26, Am. 28; Sv. 6, Sv. 21*)

What This Means: Support for Straßenburger’s rebellion against the leadership of *Oberherr* Wulf von Klagendorf appears to be growing.

Swiftmont 2, AC 1017: Jennites March.

Location: Countryside between City of Skyfyr and ruins of Town of Anchorage, Provinces of Blackrock and Anchorage, Republic of Esterhold, Nayce. SK

Description: With winter approaching and the Jennites wanting to drive off the Alphatians before it’s too late, the united Jennites hasten to reach the second-most hated Alphatian city on the Esterhold Peninsula—Skyfyr! (*See Fy. 26, Am. 23; Ei. 17, Ka. 13.*)

What This Means: Once winter comes, the Jennite advance will be halted because the free Jennites must settle for the winter to keep their vital herds alive and since the siege of Anchorage took more time than expected, the Jennites have to make up for the lost time on their plans for conquest. Skyfyr in Blackrock is a particularly important target for them, both because it was built on the ruins of an original Jennite city that the Alphatians burned to the ground when they first invaded the area centuries ago and because the harsh Alphatian aristocrat Xanthus used to rule there—therefore the Jennites cannot allow the Alphatians to remain in control of that area. Blackrock is also a place of special interest to Talin because the governor of the province is his own brother, Kalin, who has sided with the Alphatian Favian Vern and his concepts of democracy.

What the PCs Can Do: There is little to do here except the obvious planning of the coming battles, scouting missions and the odd encounter with monsters.

Swiftmont 3, AC 1017: Ierendi Joins Western Defense League.

Location: City of Darokin, Republic of Darokin. OW

Description: Ambassadors from Ierendi and Darokin, working with agents of the Western Defense League, formalize agreements allowing the Kingdom of Ierendi to join in alliance with the other member nations of the league. Like the other members—which currently include Darokin, Karameikos, the Five Shires and Vestland—Ierendi agrees to provide mutual aid in the event of major invasion or war in the Old World region. (*See Fy. 10.*)

What This Means: Ierendi’s alliance with the Western Defense League should give any nation pause before attempting to invade the isles or any of the league nations along the Sea of Dread. The unspoken desire is to forestall any attempts by the Empire of Thyatis to try furthering its colonial efforts in the Sea of Dread. The Republic of Darokin also recalls the threat of the Hulean Sea Reavers of a few years back—though their threat has ended, Darokin remains keenly aware of the damages they caused. Having the powerful navy of Ierendi on their side should help to end any such threats in the future.

Swiftmont 3, AC 1017: Pullout from Heldun.

Location: Region surrounding City of Helskir, *Exarchate*/Kingdom of Heldun, Thyatian Empire and Nayce, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: After many days of mustering troops and prisoners, the Thyatian and Naycese troops proceed to leave Helskir, while the Heldunian force remains behind to maintain order. Despondent prisoners are marched aboard the Naycese vessels resting in the harbor and forced below decks, while captured clerics, still recognized as aristocrats under Naycese law, are detained in spartan, if tidy, crew cabins. Across town, the Thyatian columns march south, led by the victorious Antalian Guard, followed by several ranks of bound

Heldannic prisoners and the other imperial regiments, with the *tuldum* regiment taking up the rear. (See *Am. 12, Am. 17; Sv. 6, Sv. 10.*)

Swiftmont 4, AC 1017: The Mincer.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: A young and beautiful lady, Alexandra Kralomene, is found dead in her bedroom in the city of Thyatis. She is half-naked and horribly mutilated. The first suspect is her former husband, Senator Aemilian Cratides.



Alexandra was a courtesan. The Thyatian authorities are pretending to suspect the husband, but this is the third woman of this profession to die violently and horribly in the last several months and they have made every effort to prevent the news of the killings becoming known. They can't keep this one quiet, however and public attention is very caught up in this killing. Alexandra was widely known for her beauty, intelligence and her luxurious parties, as well as for her man-eating skills. Several of the most prominent figures of Thyatian military, diplomacy and politics had fallen for her beauty. She was 34.

As for The Mincer, he gains that appellation because of the horribly mutilated and chopped-up state in which he leaves his victims. After he's done with them, they end up resembling minced meat more than human beings. (See *Va. 14; Sv. 17, Ei. 26.*)

Swiftmont 4, AC 1017: A Requests For Aid.

Location: City of Archport, Kingdom of Eadrin, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: Using magic, King Idon II

contacts the royal courts of Randel and Theranderol, requesting assistance in his war with the Arogansan invaders. Karatnora respectfully informs Idon that the best wishes of the Randel people are with the Eadrin in their fight with the Arogansans; however, at the present time Randel cannot afford any assistance to their friends. At best she can assemble some small volunteer units to act as displays of Randel resolve in the matter.

Karatnora does offer a bit of encouragement to the beleaguered ruler. She tells him that Randel's forces are growing with the return of monarchical attention and from returning demobilized imperial troops. She stresses that if Eadrin can hold out for a given time, perhaps Randel forces can be sent to aid them. Karatnora suggests that something should be known by the Day of Dread.

Queen Eldrethila likewise declines sending aid. Her kingdom's interests are not necessarily dependent upon the well-being of Eadrin. Even though her people have traditionally been at odds with the people of Theranderol, she has her doubts that they would support such intervention. Instead she cites that her best contributions could be in maintaining a strong military presence along the Theranderol/Arogansan border. This should tie up a good number of Arogansan troops to meet this possible assault into their own lands. If the situation turns utterly sour for the Eadrin, she invites the royal family and aristocracy to come to her kingdom for safety. (See *Am. 23, Sv. 1; Sv. 4, Sv. 9.*)

What This Means: Idon is a bit discouraged at this lack of support. Were the circumstances not so grim, he would not have even petitioned his neighbors. He can understand that Randel, the most likely kingdom to intervene, is weakened militarily and has its own hands full with Bettelyn threats—that Karatnora is sending even a token force is a great surprise. Theranderol's lack of assistance is not a surprise—the motive of a common dislike and rivalry to the Arogansans are weak excuses for the Theranderol forces to intervene on Eadrin's

behalf.

Idon knows that Eadrin will have to soldier on by itself. Whatever help his neighbors can offer, both directly and indirectly, will have to suffice. With most of his regular armed forces still in imperial service, Idon plans out a defense that capitalizes on his own available troops. Intelligence reports tell that Arogansa is fielding a rather large invasion force, but it is poorly trained and poorly equipped. With his own available troops being in excellent shape, Idon is confident that quality will overcome quantity. The trick will be in placing these troops in positions to strategically meet and counter each Arogansan attack without being outflanked.

What the PCs Can Do: Eadrin needs heroes and mercenaries.

Swiftmont 4, AC 1017: Thothia Doubles in Size.

Location: Kingdoms of Ekto and Trikelios, Nayce, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: The Thothian troops garrisoned in Ekto and Trikelios, since those cities were taken back from the Thyatians in AC 1012, are reinforced by fresh troops from Edairo. *Pharaoh* Ramenhotep XXIV declares that to counter the threat posed to the city-states by the rampaging araneas from the Great Escarpment and by the followers of the false *pharaoh* Haptuthep, the cities are to be reintegrated into the Thothian Kingdom.

The local militaries, which were already heavily dependent upon the Thothians, are fully merged into the Thothian army. King Tristan and Queen Stillian approve the annexation and become governors and lose their seats on the Nayce Council. Life goes on as usual in Ekto and Trikelios. (*See Kl. 12, Fe. 14; Sv. 5, Sv. 7.*)

What This Means: Ever since the Thothians freed the Alphatian city-states of eastern Isle of Dawn from Thyatian occupation, those cities have been closely aligned with Thothia and have relied on their strong neighbor for their security. Although he had extensive control over them, *Pharaoh*

Ramenhotep saw more political advantage in maintaining their independence; now, though, the situation has changed and the *pharaoh* sees more benefit from annexing the city-states.

The change in attitude is brought about by several factors. To begin with, there are the araneas and Haptuthep, who both threaten to raid the city-states on their way to the heart of Thothia and Thothia needs to reinforce its control over that route down from the Great Escarpment. This is the official reason for Thothia asserting control over the region.

But most importantly, *Pharaoh* Ramenhotep needs a strong move to reassert his authority and prestige, which are being challenged by Haptuthep. Although he is an open man who wishes to lead his nation to a bright future and who wants to work with the Alphatians of Nayce, his position has been seriously weakened by the appearance of Haptuthep. Despite his best efforts, the influence of Thothia at the council has been diluted over time and Representative Ragmon is no longer the de facto head councilor he was in the early years of Nayce. Meanwhile, Thyatis has regained strength on the Isle of Dawn, as it restructured its dominions, intervened in unified Heldun and even treacherously claimed a stretch of land just south of Thothia [*the Thyatians claim this move is perfectly faithful to the treaty and indeed it has not been challenged by Nayce or even Thothia. Ed.*].

The annexation of Ekto and Trikelios is an aggressive move on the part of the *pharaoh*, intended to remind various groups that the Thothians are no pushovers and are to be reckoned with, something that has been forgotten since the Thothian counterattack only a few years back. To Nayce it is a warning that Thothia is still to be reckoned with, else it might go on its own and become a major power by itself, weakening Nayce a great deal. To Thyatis, it is a reminder, if they have forgotten, that they are still capable of striking at them if they keep pushing the limits. Internally, it is an attempt at undermining Haptuthep's arguments by embracing them.

The cultists of Thanatos, who had previously established a main base of operations in Ekto, are not displeased by the change. Though it undermines any possibility that they might in any major way control the city's political scene, their potential for action in Thothia is suddenly much better and their necromantic activities will be less visible in the context of Thothian mysticism.

Swiftmont 4: The Silence of the Wolves.

Location: Village of Ronung, Kingdom of Arkan, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: Wolf-Hunter has brought his group, the Wolf-Pack, to the front lines where they are to try and sneak into the enemy camp, steal their plans and maps and eavesdrop to their plans if they get a chance. *[Ronung is roughly below where Skyreach used to be. Ed.] (See Am. 16, Sv. 1; Sv. 7, Sv. 11.)*

What This Means: With things going so badly for Arkan, Wolf-hunter has decided that they must learn more of Stonewall's plans for invasion. The invaders are currently moving across the Arkan countryside at an alarming rate, so this must be done soon before the kingdom falls. In order to discover them, drastic measures and great risks are called for.

What the PCs Can Do: Join the Wolf-Pack and steal Stonewall's plans, of course. This will be difficult, but if the PCs do well, the DM should allow them to learn more of Stonewall's plans. If, for example, a thief is prepared to take the risk and sneak into Selcomad's headquarters to listen to his battle plans, the DM should allow this to reveal some strategic information, though the thief will obviously also risk capture. Wolf-Hunter and a good portion of the group should be allowed to escape, though. PCs on Stonewall's side won't do much here, though they might catch one or two of the more careless spies.

Swiftmont 5, AC 1017: Underocean Reacts to Trouble.

Location: Sunken Alphatia, Nayce. AS

Description: As vast hordes of undead continue to pour out of the Bluenose area, apparently as a result of the magical surge detected there, Underocean proclaims that this is proof that the Alphadon are hostile. The Underocean forces around Torenal Site break camp and head for Bluenose, while Juliast orders further forces from Underocean sent south. Both armies are ordered to terminate with extreme prejudice any undead they encounter, including Alphadon.

Over the next few days, the tritons will engage and destroy in excess of three thousand undead as their forces converge on Bluenose. Underocean ignores protests from the Nayce Council on this unilateral action. *(See Am. 26, Sv. 1; Sv. 12, Ei. 14.)*

What this Means: The people of Underocean have a very understandable prejudice against undead. They have lost patience with waiting for Nayce's permission to destroy what they see as abominations.

Swiftmont 5, AC 1017: Royalist Army Gets a Surprise.

Location: City of Norchester, Earldom of Penwick, Kingdom of Bellayne. SC

Description: Roughly 1,200 elite royalist regulars and 3,000 reserves under Edgwinton's command take up positions on the plains of Norchester and demand that the city garrison surrender to their king. Duly, the gates are opened and with much pomp and fanfare Brigadier Colwys-Hinton of the 3rd reserve leads his men to the southern gates in triumph... where he is met by the battle-hardened dwarves of the Coldstream Guards.

Lord Mortimer prudently moved the guards from the northern border to Norchester in readiness for the king's assault. The fact that the guards are the only Bellaynish regiment to employ *smokepowder* weaponry makes the surprise that much more devastating. When the gates open the

royalists are subjected to a storm of musket fire that decimates their ranks. Colwys-Hinton is a sitting duck on his horse and is killed outright in the first volley. The royalists beat a hasty retreat out of range while a withering barrage thins the ranks of the reserves.

Edgwinton, later that day, gets more bad news—apparently a sizable parliamentary force is headed out of Leominster towards Bromstow. Not wishing to get caught between hammer and anvil, he orders that the royalists pull back as speedily as they are able, hoping to get to the ruins of Oldsbury before the parliamentarians cut him off. (*See Am. 17, Am. 26; Sv. 12, Sv. 14.*)

What This Means: Norchester will prove to be a tough nut to crack with the Coldstream Guards dug in there—the unit had a nearly legendary ability to weather the attacks of the goblinoids in the last war. The royalist reserves took quite a mauling too in their first fight, which dents their morale somewhat.

What the PCs Can Do: Royalist-aligned PCs could infiltrate Norchester and try to undermine its defenses prior to an attack. Parliament-aligned characters could scout out the enemy force and try to sabotage its efforts.

Swiftmont 5, AC 1017: The Small and the Large.

Location: Kingdom of Hillvale, Nayce, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: King Quicklimn of Hillvale and the merchants of the city are worried about the Thothian annexation of the other city-states, Ekto and Trikelios. The king turns to Nayce for reassurance that they will remain independent. (*See Sv. 4; Sv. 7, Sv. 13.*)

What This Means: Though Thothian presence in Hillvale is nothing like it was in Ekto and Trikelios, the king wonders why *Pharaoh* Ramenhotep didn't annex his nation as well, leaving it as the only independent city-state of the Isle of Dawn, surrounded by three giants: Thothia to the south, the bloc of Thyatian exarchates on the other side of the isle and the hybrid nation of Heldun to

the north. The powers that be in Hillvale wonder if they can compete, economically as well as militarily, against those expanding neighbors.

Swiftmont 5, AC 1017: Kulikovo Besieged.

Location: Kulikovo Fortress, Zuyevan Empire. WB.

Description: The horde of *Don* Claudio surrounds and lays siege to the grim Fortress of Kulikovo on the banks of Yalu River. The troops are dispirited when the *turning* efforts of their priests seem to be ineffective. *Don* Claudio has his troops prepare to assault the fortress, constructing scaling ladders and siege artillery, while the dragons harass the Zuyevans. The Zuyevans are heartened, however, when one of their most able priests manages to destroy an undead dragon with a *holy word*. However, the priest himself is then slain, as the other four dragons concentrate their attentions on him. (*See Am. 6, Am. 26; Sv. 11, Sv. 27.*)

What This Means: The undead are difficult to *turn* because they are backed by a greater power.

Swiftmont 6, AC 1017: A Call for Allegiance.

Location: City of Freiburg, Territory of Heldann, Heldannic Empire. OW

Description: *Oberherr* Wulf von Klagendorf dispatches messengers through the Heldannic Territories, including Heldland, ordering them to obtain pledges of allegiance from the order's assorted *ordensgeneralen* and *landmeister* in an effort to determine the loyalty of his underlings. (*See Am. 28, Sv. 2; Sv. 21.*)

What This Means: In the wake of Hockstein's and Altendorf's declarations for Heinrich Straßenburger and their promises of military support, *Herr* Wulf needs to know who among the ruling knights will support him. He has also received reports of peasant uprisings in a number of towns and villages, protesting what they see as favoritism towards the newly-arrived Hattian

migrants from Thyatis (who received tax freedom and cash settlements in exchange for settling in Heldland and other border regions, while earlier settlers received nothing).

Swiftmont 6, AC 1017: Alphatian Census.

Location: City of Ionace, Ionace Island, Nayce and City of Andaire, Kingdom of Alphas'ar, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. AS, HW

Description: The results of the census, which was initiated one year ago in both Nayce on the surface and Alphatia in the Hollow World, are still not available. Empress Eriadna is furious that she still does not know exactly the population numbers and the distribution within the kingdoms of the floating continent, which were affected by the sinking and the relocation, but in a manner still undetermined. She orders that the census's report be on her desk by the end of the [*Alphatian. Ed.*] year. The Nayce Council, while also anxious to get the result of the census being carried in its various member kingdoms, is too embroiled in its internal politics to issue an order similar to Eriadna's.

What This Means: Though the Alphatians have at their disposal magical means, slave-ownership declarations and agents roaming the wilderness of the territory, they have been unable to completely map out the population present in either Nayce or the floating continent. The main difficulty is, as often is the case in Alphatia, the aristocracy's lack of cooperation with the authorities, either because they are too busy to help with such insignificant matters, or because they want to keep some information secret. Magic scrying and counting has been unable to penetrate some well-protected estates' magical barriers and mundane means of investigations have often been kept at bay with other kind of magical or physical barriers. Some wizards who wanted to keep the location and personnel of their estates (which can amount to a large retinue) secret

volunteered the information, but most did not bother.

What the PCs Can Do: More investigators are needed to complete the census. This generally means traveling to the most wild and dangerous places of Alphatia and interrupting a wizard in his or her research—or appear to break into his or her estate. A dangerous job, well-suited for PCs, especially challenging to a mundaner-only party.

Swiftmont 6, AC 1017: Protests in Minrothad.

Location: City of Minrothad, Trader's Island, *Exarchate* of Minrothad, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: The Council of Guild Masters convenes, with the Thyatian *Exarch*, Demetius Vannopolus, present. Past meetings had all been cordial and cooperative, but this one is different. Several prominent guildsmen protest the changes that the Thyatians have brought upon their way of doing things. Furthermore, they say that while they have come to respect Vannopolus himself, they object to the highest reigning official in Minrothad not being from the isles. Some go further, claiming the Thyatians engineered the entire Linton affair as an excuse to take over Minrothad by treacherous guile. This causes many of the others to lapse into embarrassed silence for a moment.

This allows Demetius Vannopolus to interject. He calmly reminds the guilders of the various benefits that they have had on account of their ties to Thyatis and how well the guilds have prospered from the relationship. With every change there comes some unsettling things, as he reminds them the Thyatians know all too well themselves. But he asks them if, overall, with the good and the bad taken together, aren't they better off now than they were before? Some of the guildsmen mutter disagreeably, but none speak up to say they are worse off. Before any can do so, Vannopolus goes on to say that, as for his own appointment as *exarch*, it was always meant to be purely temporary to

begin with, to last just long enough for things to calm down. Enough time has passed and he says that, if the guild masters can come together to agree upon a suitable replacement, he will step down and recommend to the emperor that this person be made *exarch*. He goes on to say that the emperor has already promised him personally that he would ratify whatever choice the people of Minrothad submitted to him.

The guildsmen seem satisfied with that and the politicking begins among them for the right to be the next *exarch*. Many hope that then, if only they personally can take power as *exarch*, they can restore things to the way they used to be while still retaining the benefits of association with Thyatis. (*See Va. 16, Fl. 9; Sv. 27, Ka. 15.*)

What This Means: Things have changed considerably inside Minrothad in some ways, despite a conscious effort by the Thyatians to pretend that changes weren't being imposed. But with membership in the Thyatian Empire, the guilds lost their monopoly status in their home islands. To be treated as Thyatian merchants in the rest of the empire, they had to allow Thyatian merchants free access to the isles, in effect suspending the monopoly laws. This still benefited the guilds overall—since they had great and privileged access to imperial markets and were generally able to remain dominant in Minrothad as well. But the fact of competition meant that if the old (monopoly) Minrothaddan guild was charging more for goods or services (the monopoly rents they were used to) than a Thyatian competitor was, this gave the buyer an alternative source. That helped the buyers, but it irritated the selling guilds, even as they profited overall due to superior access to the large Thyatian market. Thus the old cartelization of Minrothad was undermined.

Most of the people of Minrothad came to admire Demetius Vannopolus's judgement and fair-mindedness, as well as respecting him personally because he showed no favoritism and seemed like a decent and honest man, a neutral arbitrator in the

rivalries and disputes of the fractious guilds. But it rankles almost everyone that the nominal ruler of Minrothad was an outsider. This is just part of the greater issue, which is that membership in the Thyatian Empire threatens the traditional insularity of Minrothad. Coping with this will definitely be a continuing friction point.

Now, though, the leaders of the guilds are distracted from these concerns by the scramble to become *exarch*. With this position, many hope to turn back the clock (except with respect to the things they see as beneficial; they hope to keep preferred access to Thyatis's imperial markets, while closing their own again), but with even greater fervor they hope to settle old scores among their rivals in the guilds.

As for the Thyatians and Vannopolus, they hope to use their influence to end up with an *exarch* that is agreeable to them. If all else fails, they will support Oran Meditor for the position. While they're reluctant to see the old ruler in the job, because he is a strong-minded man and it will be difficult if not impossible to pull his strings as a puppet (they would prefer someone more pliable), they realize that he is generally more amenable to openness to outside influences and the kind of changes the Thyatians themselves want to impose on Minrothad than most of the other guild masters are. While the Thyatians would prefer a pliable front man that would be the mouthpiece of his Thyatian advisors, they will promote Meditor as a compromise choice if this proves impossible.

What the PCs Can Do: An ambitious Minrothaddan character could try to become the next ruler of the guilds! Bribery, promises to various other guilds and persuasiveness will be key in any such attempt.

Swiftmont 6, AC 1017: Asteriela Returns to Helskir.

Location: City of Helskir, *Exarchate*/Kingdom of Heldun, Thyatian Empire and Nayce, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: Amid much fanfare and joy, Queen Asteriela of Heldun parades triumphantly into Helskir, surrounded by elite soldiers of the new Heldunian army. Before taking up residence in the palace, she makes a point of touring the entire city and inspecting some of the hardest-hit portions of it. In an effort to become close to her people once more, she also takes the time to speak with many of the people she encounters along the way. (*See Am. 17, Sv. 3; Sv. 10, Sv. 16.*)

What This Means: Now that the allied forces have departed, taking the Heldannic prisoners with them, Asteriela decided to step into the breach and resume control. Conscious of her image, Asteriela toured the city to make a show of being actively interested in the safety of Helskir and its residents (which she is, but visibly being so doesn't hurt), as well as showing the people that she can be a caring monarch. She is aware that much needs to be done to restore Helskir to its former self and she will rely on the hard work of her people in order for this to happen; by reinventing herself as a strong, but caring ruler, she feels that her people will follow her as they once did Eruul Zaar.

Swiftmont 6, AC 1017: An Imperial Solution.

Location: City of Raven Scarp, *Exarchate* of Davania Superior, Hinterlands, Thyatian Empire. DV

Description: *Exarch* Leilah ben Nadir receives an official response from Emperor Eusebius, informing her that, when she is able, she is to ship as many Milenian refugees as are willing to travel to Hattias, where they will be resettled. Relieved at the news, she orders messengers to spread the word throughout the Hinterlands and she enlists the aid of any Kastelians residing in the region in informing the refugees themselves. (*See Am. 27, Sv. 1; Sv. 17, Sv. 26.*)

What This Means: Although the Hinterlands exists on the periphery of the empire, Emperor Eusebius knows that it is an important foothold in Davania, as well as being a source of some of the more exotic

trade goods exported to other nations. Should the domestic situation in the Hinterlands become too unstable, colonization might be hindered or, worse yet, the empire's position in that part of the world might become compromised.

Another consideration is that, since the end of AC 1016, a considerable number of Hattians have emigrated to the Heldannic Territories, ostensibly because of the colonization drive in Heldland. Many Thyatian officials, however, suspect that the outcome of the Crown War, which saw Hattian predominance in Hattias come to an end, likely played a major role in their decisions to move. Regardless, considerable tracts of Hattias are currently uninhabited and the resettlement of the Milenians to the region would be a boon.

What the PCs Can Do: Thyatian PCs may find themselves enlisted in spreading the word to the various dominion rulers, as well as making arrangements to ship the Milenians to Brun.

Swiftmont 6, AC 1017: Return of the Dark Lady.

Location: Tower of Night, Milenian Empire. HW

Description: Vix, the dark-skinned champion of the Zargosians, returns to the dark group's lair after two years of adventuring in distant lands. She is astonished by the changes that have taken place in her absence, as the worshippers of Zargos have apparently succumbed to the influence of a foreign wizard, an Alphatian by the name of Zandor. Vix develops an instant dislike for the haughty Alphatian mage, who seemingly has become the most important persona here during her absence.

She questions Caracanomnos, the supposed leader of the Zargosians, about the role of Zandor in their secret society and how come he orders the necromancers around and is obeyed. Caracanomnos explains the partnership between the Zargosians and the escaped archmage Zandor, i.e. that with his magical knowledge he will help them decipher the *Book of Zargos*

and finally achieve their goal. (See *Sv. 9, Ei. 2.*)

What This Means: You leave your secret society for a couple years in the hands of your trusted lieutenant and look what happens! That is what Vix thinks and she isn't thrilled by the idea of working hand in hand with a powerful foreign wizard—she only expects foul play. In any case, the Alphantian shouldn't become a central figure in the organization, but be subservient. She fully intends to confront Zandor.

Swiftmont 6, AC 1017: Grab That Thief!

Location: City of Ranak, Empire of Nithia. HW

Description:

The markets of Ranak are full of commotion—an incredibly dexterous thief has plundered no fewer than twenty stalls within a few moments! So shocked are the local guardsmen that the scoundrel is able to escape unimpeded.



What This Means: Nothing more ominous than a local thief, who has luckily (for her) come across a *ring of quickness*, which functions much the same way as a *haste* spell. Being an intelligent person, she put the ring to good use and is now conducting a string of thefts which leaves the local authorities utterly confused—for now.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are in the area and are known to the authorities, they might be asked to track down the thief and bring her to justice. This event is left open-ended, to allow the DM some flexibility to fit it into his or her own campaign. The thief could be a fallen young noble from another city, trying to recoup her losses, or a wanderer from another land, eager to fleece the locals for some extra money. Regardless, the PCs, with their abilities, should be led on an interesting chase.

Swiftmont 7, AC 1017: Whose Shrine Is It Anyway?

Location: City of Titlapoca, Azcan Empire. HW

Description: Several lesser priests of Quetzalcoatl are found murdered within their temple and several sacred items missing or destroyed. The temple itself has been desecrated. (See *Fy. 18, Am. 24; Ka. 13; Ka. 14.*)

What This Means: Many temples dedicated to Atzanteotl have been desecrated by the new priesthood, so this is payback. The choice of Titlapoca, the city *Tlatoani* Otziltipac governed and started the revolution from, is symbolic.

Swiftmont 7, AC 1017: Sailing the Savage Seas.

Location: Town of Kladanovic, northwestern neck of the Serpent Peninsula. SC

Description: After bolstering the town's defenses, the Thyatian expedition sets sail for the north. They leave some men and ships behind to secure the town and begin opening the trade lane. The rest of the expedition sails north along the coast, towards Slagovich. (See *Kl. 8, Kl. 14; Sv. 13, Ei. 5.*)

What This Means: The expedition actually has instructions to contact Hule and the Savage Baronies, but are not exactly prepared for the reception they might receive in the Savage Coast. The earlier expedition of the Ironclad brought back some information on trading opportunities but also the dangers of the *Red Curse*. The commander has instructions to gather more information on this obstacle and how to protect against it before proceeding on.

What the PCs Can Do: These seas are filled with potential dangers, encounters with a pirate vessel from the Savage Baronies might be their first introduction to the unique aspects of that region.

Swiftmont 7, AC 1017: Shake the Council.

Location: City of Ionace, Ionace Island, Nayce. AS

Description: The Council of Nayce, informed of the Thothian annexation of Ekto and Trikelios only after it is a done deal, are both surprised and furious. There is nothing they can do, however, as the targets of the move do not consider themselves victims, but accept it before relinquishing their seats at the council as they are now represented by Thothia.

Interrogated about Thothia's intentions regarding Hillvale, the one remaining independent city-state, Representative Ragmon assures that Thothia has no intention to annex it, unless Hillvale were to need help as it did when the Thyatians conquered it. Since Hillvale isn't directly threatened by the araneas or by Haptuthep, he says and as long as Thyatis doesn't threaten it, there is no reason for Thothia to act militarily in Hillvale.

Commander in Chief Karszamon is furious, though and says he will dispatch the troops stationed on Eagret Island, where their assignment is to patrol the border between the Sea of Dawn and the Alphatian Sea, to defend Hillvale against any attempt at conquest, by anyone. (*See Sv. 4, Sv. 5; Sv. 13, Sv. 15.*)

What This Means: The Thothians certainly did get the Council of Nayce's attention. Their nationalistic attitude isn't to the taste of everyone, though, as the Alphatians are used to treating them as equals, but also expect them to be quiet and supportive. Karszamon is especially infuriated.

Swiftmont 7, AC 1017: Foresthome Intervenes in the War.

Location: Town of Arregghi, Kingdom of Arkan, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: A large army from Foresthome under Commander Trallans arrives from the southern border in

Foresthome. At first the people of Arregghi are anxious, but Commander Trallans soon meets with the town leader and assures him that the army has come to aid Arkan against the invaders from Stonewall because Queen Kikania is not prepared to have Arkan be settled by invaders who might target any nation next. (*See Sv. 1, Sv. 4; Sv. 11, Sv. 19.*)

What This Means: Naturally, news of this will immediately be brought to King Qinn in Ceafem. The army was actually sent from Foresthome some time ago, but it took some time getting here because Foresthome is such a large forested land without roads to Arkan.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs can have followed the Foresthome army here or bring the news of their arrival to King Qinn. If they are with Stonewall, they can bring General Selcomad the first news of the Foresthome army.

Swiftmont 7, AC 1017: The Invasion Begins... Finally.

Location: The Bettelilyn Line, Kingdom of Bettelilyn, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: With preparations complete after a long delay, General Taghist orders his troops to cross the border into Randel and begin their assaults on the fortresses of the Randel Line. The invasions begin on an ominous and foreboding note as Bettelilyn columns become bogged down in the no man's land that is the border. In spite of this, Taghist adheres to the original battle plan at the insistence of his queen, though in his private moments he wonders to himself whether she wants Bettelilyn to be defeated. At other moments, he just wonders if the Immortals have stacked the deck against his nation. His fatalism and lack of confidence does little to help his troops.

In spite of the delays, the day sees his forces achieve some successes. His forces have established siege lines around the fortresses to isolate the border defenses. Other troops formations are moving into the Randel interior. Taghist leads the primary invasion force. (*See Am. 18, Sv. 1; Sv.*

11, Sp. 13.)

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs can act as scouts for either side.

Second Week

Sviftmont 9, AC 1017: Monastery of the Studium Endowed.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Gallia Pulchera, a wealthy widow, dies and in her will all her wealth and properties are used to create a trust or endowment for the establishment of a scholastic clerical order in the City of Thyatis. Pulchera's husband died several years ago. Both her sons were killed in the Great War and her only daughter died of mummy rot, leaving her with no direct family. So she created this endowment in her will as a way for her family's legacy to live on.

Her family estate consists of a complex of several buildings inside the city of Thyatis and some lands along the Mesonian River, as well as some rental buildings in the blocks. The large family *domus* and attached buildings will be used as the monastery proper and the other properties used to generate income to help support the facility.

Shortly after the will is read, an organization known as the Justiciar Institute matches Gallia's grant to the new Studium and also endows the monastery with an unusually good collection of theological materials. They also step forward with an offer to help the new monastic community identify promising potential members, aiding in recruiting and thus doing much to shape the nature of the Order of the Studium. (*See Kl. 6, Am. 19; Ei. 2.*)

What This Means: The monastic community that will evolve out of this will concentrate on the study of theology and training of new clerics. It will fall under the authority of the Church of Thyatis and not be dedicated to any single Immortal, but rather include clerics of most of the

Immortals that are of significant stature within Thyatis (except the outlawed ones). The Studium will also have a hospice for the indigent (work and pray in exchange for room and board), an orphanage and a parochial school for the young.

No one's quite sure what the Justiciar Institute is, but some begin to quietly investigate the matter.

What the PCs Can Do: Characters with similar interests might take oaths of membership to join the Order of the Studium. As a relatively new organization opportunities to reach significant positions of influence and authority might be easier here than with more established orders. Also, the Studium will quickly find itself on the forefront of the study of theological and mystical matters in the city of Thyatis and will be a good place for characters researching priestly magics to search for knowledge.

The Studium will also evolve into a foundation that will likely generate adventure opportunities for characters, sending them on tasks that will aid the Studium in promoting its values, achieving its goals and acquiring both knowledge and objects—or at least keeping such things out of the wrong hands.

Characters can also investigate the background of the so-called Justiciar Institute.

Special Note: For those who are converting from old editions of the rules sets to the new 3rd Edition rules, this is also an opportunity to introduce priest-related changes within the context of the game world.

Sviftmont 9, AC 1017: The Beauty and the Fallen Emperor.

Location: Tower of Night, Milenian Empire. HW

Description: Vix summons Zandor to confront him about his status in the Zargosians' organization and the results of his researches on the *Book of Zargos*. Reluctantly, Zandor meets with the

beautiful, but not magically-gifted, ebony warrioress. They are wary of each other, suspicious and rather disdainful, so that the ambiance is tense.

After a while Vix realizes that Zandor has been using the resources of the Zargosians to study several spells, including many that were unknown to them, but that he has not been studying the unholy *Book of Zargos* at all. Though he has shared the spells discovered with the Zargosians, he has failed to do what he was supposed to, so that his help, even if not to be dismissed, is unlikely to any great extent to achieve the group's goals. Besides, Vix suspects that Zandor has been keeping some of his magical findings to himself and that he will betray them eventually. Vix orders Zandor to start studying the *Book of Zargos*. (See *Sv. 6; Ei. 2, Ei. 12.*)

What This Means: Vix is right about Zandor, he has neglected to share with the Zargosians the most interesting results of his researches. Besides, he has been stalling research in the fields that are of utmost importance to them, especially the *Book of Zargos*, in the hope of either gaining control of the sect, or failing that using their resources as much as he could and leaving with the fruits of his researches to another, more hospitable place—and ultimately on to regaining what is rightfully his, the Alphatian Empire. Obviously, the return of Vix has dashed his master plan, so that he switches to plan B. He controls himself though and after cursing silently about the lack of the most useful spells in this barbaric place (especially *teleport*), he returns to his studies and starts planning his leaving. To soothe Vix's suspicions, he even agrees to begin studying the *Book of Zargos*. Needless to say, he hates Vix for foiling his plans and this is a reciprocal feeling.

Swiftmont 9, AC 1017: The Incidental Tourist.

Location: Near Town of Deipan, Lower Thera River, Kingdoms of Arogansa and Eadrin Border, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: While on patrol, an

Arogansan riverboat spots an approaching river galley sailing slowly down the river. Though his crew would be greatly outnumbered by the galley's crew and rowers, the Arogansan captain challenges the galley. His challenge is met by the typical objections. The Arogansan vessel pulls alongside to haggle with the galley's captain on the matter.

The Arogansan officer is surprised to be told that the galley is a private vessel of the Randel royal family. The vessel is sailing down the river to the Arogansan town of Ascopal. From there, they will journey overland to stay in the resort town of Dhobig. The Arogansan officer is still suspicious; the coincidence of a Randel vessel traveling the same river course that leads to the Eadrin capital is too apparent.

The officer continues to demand permission to board—and the Randel captain continues to object. The two begin arguing the point with some very obvious threats. A resolution is only found by the interdiction of the galley's royal passenger, who arrives on the deck from her quarters. Princess Junna calmly tells the Arogansan officer to cease his requests. If he is so intent on boarding, then he shall have that right. Junna assures him that there are only her armed escort, her personal servants, the galley's rowers and crew aboard the vessel.

Surprisingly the Arogansan responds that there is no need to board and further inconvenience the former queen. He is well aware of Junna's debacle as queen of the Randel and her artistic preferences. He seriously doubts that she is a threat and loses interest in examining the vessel's cargo. Plus, he also has certain reservations about enraging an Alphatian noble of a royal lineage. He surmises that the royal family has chosen to ship her off to another kingdom as a form of political exile while they are busy dealing with the Bettelilyn. (See *Sv. 1, Sv. 4; Ei. 26, Ka. 11.*)

Swiftmont 9, AC 1017: Milenian Merchant Victimized.

Location: Southern Atlss Ocean. HW

Description: Alexis the Lawless, Captain of the Grey Lady, a heavily-armed frigate, strikes at a Milenian merchant ship. The merchant galley is unescorted, en route to Huitlaktima on a trading venture. The galley is bombarded with artillery and then boarded, as it is no match for the pirate ship. The cargo is taken along with any slaves who wish to defect and join Alexis's crew. The others are left drifting at the mercy of the sea. (*See Am. 20, Am. 27; Ei. 1, Ka. 12.*)

What This Means: Alexis is a follower of Vanya, who delights in pirating Milenian ships and port towns. Suffering only minimal casualties, he makes off with a prize of exotic spices, which will fetch a fair price back in Baraga. Milenians generally use slaves to row their galleys; occasionally, some will be bold enough to leave that life and sail with the Merry Pirates.

What the PCs Can Do: Help raid the merchant ship.

Swiftmont 10, AC 1017: A Strange Theft.

Location: Village of Dawnhaven, *Exarchate*/Kingdom of Heldun, Thyatian Empire and Nayce, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: The people of this coastal village on the Western Sea of Dawn awake to find something amiss—all of their largest sailing vessels have been stolen! A quick search indicates that nothing else has been taken, but the loss is perplexing. (*See Sv. 3, Sv. 6; Sv. 16, Sv. 25.*)

Swiftmont 10, AC 1017: Thyatian Vessel Reaches Thonia.

Location: City of Serison, Thonian Empire. SK

Description: After circumnavigating Esterhold, the Thyatian exploration ship reaches Serison, the capital of Thonia. They conduct some trade in the port and try to arrange an audience with the Thonian Emperor, but are put off. Since it is late in the year and the seas in the area are already starting to get rough, the captain decides to winter in Thonia. This proves to be a somewhat regrettable decision, as the

Thonians look on the Thyatians with disdain and the area is particularly unpleasant. Eventually, an audience is arranged with the Thonian Emperor, but he is haughty and contemptuous of the Thyatians as well and little is accomplished.

The Thyatians do manage to establish trade with Thonia, but are expected to keep to themselves and the other “barbarians” in the Foreign Quarter reserved for such lowly persons in an unfashionable district of Serison, near the harbor and the tanneries. (*See Kl. 27, Fe. 21.*)

What This Means: The Thonians are even more contemptuous of other people than the Thyatians, priding themselves on the age of their civilization. Since they hold the Alphatians in a minimum of high regard, they think even less of the younger Thyatian Empire. When some of the members of the Thyatian delegation try to claim a connection between the Thyatian people and ancient Thonia as a means of bridging this gap, that only serves to further irritate the Thonians. These attitudes of condescension are, though, largely absent from the trading class of Thonia, so the Thyatians are able to make some contacts there and thus establish a basis of commerce. But in part because of the relative openness of the Thonian merchants to outsiders, they themselves form a sort of despised underclass within Thonian society, being seen as tainted by such contact and not quite good Thonians. Thus, strong ties to the merchant class of Thonia further isolates the Thyatians from any political ties to the Thonian elite.

Realizing that under these circumstances it could be a long, dreary winter in Serison with little to show for it, the Thyatian captain decides to send out an exploration party into Skothar, to try and make contact with the rumored dwarven enclave in the Mountains of Thorin. He goes along with this party, leaving his lieutenant and a few men with the thankless, tedious task of staying in Serison to watch over the ship and try to improve relations with Thonia.

What the PCs Can Do: Characters are probably likely to take as instant a dislike to

the Thonians as the Thonians will to them. However, starting any unpleasantness is probably an unwise thing for them to do—being on their best behavior is the only way of achieving anything here, which will further rankle the characters, no doubt. The party will probably do whatever it takes to be brought along on the captain’s expedition to the Thorin Mountains and leave the Thonian cities. Outside the cities, in the Thonian countryside, the party will find the serfs of Thonia sullen and insular, but the people at crossroads inns and taverns will be passingly hospitable.

Thonia is a land of fading glory but rich heritage, so any expeditions into, for instance, the ancient ruins of the old settlements under modern Serison might be rewarding. But finding any Blackmoor-era technologies or magic items will be difficult, as none of the current Thonian settlements actually existed during that time, but were instead founded later by refugees from the cataclysm that destroyed the old civilization.

Swiftmont 10, AC 1017: It’s Alive! Or Isn’t It?

Location: Barony of Two Lakes Vale, Icereach Range. NW

Description: Ulslime reports to Sylarion he has finally concluded his experiments. The old priest introduces the vampire elf to three human beings that look at him with uninterested gazes. At Ulslime’s offer to taste their blood, Sylarion bites one of the humans, but he is surprised when he discovers he’s not drinking blood, rather a sticky milky white substance that oozes from the wound. Ulslime explains the vampire that these are the last of Nyx’s children, the death leeches and that they will help the undead overtake the whole of Norwold! (*See Am. 26, Sv. 1.*)

What This Means: The death leeches created by Ulslime are the final touch in Nyx’s vengeance upon the world of the living beings. The death leeches are undead creatures because they are powered by negative energy, yet they have been created by magically crossing human beings, lesser

undead and doppelgangers. They can simulate the breathing and eating of the living creatures, even though their bodies are without organs and they assimilate everything they ingest like a gelatinous cube does. Their bodies are much like a big amorphous amoeba in their original forms, with hundreds of veins and tendons running through them. They are able to assume the exact shape and features of every creature (from small up to large size) they kill by assimilating it, thus masquerading as perfect undead replicas of the living beings. Also, they can walk in the sun, cast a reflection and a shadow and radiate a mild amount of heat from their body, becoming virtually impossible to detect as undead. But their most fearsome ability is that they can provide nourishment for those undead who prey on bodily fluids and carrion simply by giving away part of their body slime, regenerating it later on through ingestion of simple foods and liquids (this obviously includes devouring living beings). They reproduce by cellular duplication: once they kill a living being, they can either assimilate it (thus gaining the ability to assume his or her shape and features) or they can inject a small fraction of their slime in the corpse. After 24 hours, the corpse gets reanimated as a new death leech, which is now living inside it, having assimilated the body.

Nyx wants to use the death leeches to infiltrate all of the human and demihuman communities and replace their living members, thus becoming bridgeheads for a later invasion of the other undead spawn.

What the PCs Can Do: At this point they must absolutely stop Nyx’s plans of conquest, discover the death leeches already created and stop Ulslime from creating others before they spread to other regions. And finally they must locate the *Hammer of Life* to destroy the *Death Stone*, then they can begin to push back to hell the army of darkness that still occupies Two Lakes Vale.

Swiftmont 10, AC 1017: Surveyor Team Attacked.

Location: Snake River, Kingdom of Foresthome, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: The surveyor team following the Snake River upstream is attacked by five griffons. The protecting sailors manage to kill two and hurt the others so severely that they flee. Some team members are injured but nothing the clerics could not heal easily. The morale in the team remains good. (*See Am. 22, Sv. 1; Sv. 14, Ei. 2.*)

What This Means: The Alphatian interior is a dangerous place and the attack was an absolutely normal incident. Nobody is really surprised or worried.

Swiftmont 11, AC 1017: Kulikovo Assaulted.

Location: Kulikovo Fortress, Zuyevan Empire. WB

Description: The undead horde of *Don* Claudio assault Kulikovo Fortress in the dark of night. Their nocturnal attack does not catch the defenders by surprise, as they expected such a maneuver. However, the defenders are still hampered because they are unaccustomed to fighting in darkness, while the undead are not debilitated at all.

The defenders manage to hold their own, however and it seems like they will beat back the attack and survive until dawn, when they hope relief will arrive. They even manage to destroy another of *Don* Claudio's dragons, as well as decimating his undead hordes, though they take severe casualties themselves. But then, just as dawn begins to approach, a demon of terrible power bursts among the Zuyevans from within the very heart of the fortress. It slaughters the defenders of the citadel's main gatehouse, allowing the attacking forces to swarm into Kulikovo. Resistance crumbles and the defenders are slaughtered. (*See Am. 26, Sv. 5; Sv. 27, Ei. 3.*)

What This Means: The demon was Joramurak, who had been sent to cause havoc in Zuyevo by the Master of Hule

earlier this year. The Master had made contact with it before *Don* Claudio's horde reached Kulikovo Fortress, directing Joramurak to use its magical powers to disguise itself and infiltrate the fortress, to strike at the best moment of opportunity. After the battle, Joramurak *teleports* back into the heart of Zuyevo, where the demon continues to unleash *gated* fellows and undead upon the empire's core areas.

Don Claudio's forces, especially his undead troops (which were used as shock troops in the assault), took severe casualties in achieving their victory. But he immediately begins to replace his losses by *animating* the slain Zuyevans. He takes special pleasure in turning the many slain Zuyevan priests into undead minions. However, he is unable to replace the lost undead dragons.

When the Zuyevan relief army hears of the fall of the fortress, it pauses on the opposite side of the Yalu River, in the city of Sharya, to await reinforcements from within the empire.

Swiftmont 11, AC 1017: Amphibious Assault.

Location: City of Jahore, *Mumbyket* of Putnabad, Kingdom of Sind, Hulean Empire. OW

Description: The Hulean occupying force in Jahore wakes this morning to see a large armada of ships off the coast. Flying overhead are a half dozen airships, amid swarms of aerial cavalry. At distant range the airships open up with their artillery, attempting to clear the walls of defenders.

While thus engaging the attentions of the Hulean forces, hundreds of Thyatian frogmen, hardened from battles against the Twaelar, advance along the sea floor, stealthily sneaking into the harbor of Jahore. It quickly becomes apparent to the Hulean commander that he won't be able to defeat the invaders without reinforcements, so he orders his forces to withdraw towards Jaibul while the Sindhi forces delay the enemy.

Once outside Jahore, however, a horde of Urduk nomads appear. At first the Hulean forces think they must be friendly, but the

nomads attack them and the Hulean troops are forced to withdraw north.

In Jahore, the Sindhi troops of Putnabad put up only token resistance before submitting. By the end of the day *Maharaja* Ashupta announces that he pledges his loyalty to Chandra Ul Nervi, but is accepting advisors and assistance from the Thyatian Empire in exchange for giving them basing rights and preferred trading status.

Once Jahore is secured, the Thyatian forces begin withdrawing. Those troops will return home, to celebrate a triumph as a result of the conclusion of the Twaelar War. The Urduk nomads, with some Thyatian military advisors, will remain in Putnabad as mercenaries serving Thyatis and an agreement is signed with the *maharaja* and a separate one with Jaibul, committing Thyatis to defend them if they are attacked. (See *Sv. 15, Ka. 8.*)

What This Means: The forces of Hule continue to suffer setbacks in Sind and will soon be expelled from all of Putnabad. This is actually part of Hosadus's long term plan, however. Meanwhile, his agents persist throughout the liberated areas of Sind. He is not as happy with someone else poaching off "his" nomads, though and will take steps to ensure the Thyatians do not gain influence over any more of the Urduk tribes in the Great Waste.

For Thyatis, the imperative was almost the opposite as for Hule. Eusebius is intent on creating the impression of renewed imperial strength. This he is doing by picking his fights carefully to achieve a succession of quick victories. They have also made a pact with the Black *Raja* of Jaibul. Jahore will become an entrepôt dominated by Thyatian merchants rather than the traders of Darokin, bringing renewed friction between the two, as the Darokinians had begun to see Sind as their market.

The Thyatian troops withdraw because Thyatian forces are still very limited in this period and they can't afford to leave garrisons. So they leave a few military advisors and concentrate on having Jahore and Jaibul build up their landward defenses.

Thus they hope that in case of crisis, the defenders will be able to hold out until reinforcements arrive from Thyatis.

Jaibul is playing a game of intrigue with both Hule and Thyatis. Right at the moment, they are cozying up to Thyatis, but they are maintaining their contacts with the Huleans as well.

What the PCs Can Do: Characters might be involved in the invasion, but will probably find many more opportunities in the field of counter-espionage, rooting out the agents and influence of Hule. Hulean spies and infiltrators continue to have a strong presence throughout Sind.

Swiftmont 11, AC 1017: Foresthome Army Arrives.

Location: City of Ceafem, Kingdom of Arkan, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: The army from Foresthome arrives to the capital and Commander Trallans meets with King Qinn and General Lotaran. They inspect the troops of Foresthome. General Lotaran finds the behavior of his new allies a little odd, but King Qinn won't hear of his doubts and is extremely happy to have found new allies in this time of need. (See *Sv. 4, Sv. 7; Sv. 19, Ei. 12.*)

What This Means: Lotaran questioned several soldiers, but found that often they refused to respond and just looked to Commander Trallans. He finds this a little curious, but decides that King Qinn is probably right—Arkan is lucky to have any allies at all, or they would surely have been doomed. King Qinn himself is far too happy to take any notice at all.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs explore the matter, they will find attitudes similar to the ones Lotaran noticed. If they're among the Foresthome troops themselves, they will have their orders to say as little as possible.

Swiftmont 11, AC 1017: Statue of Solarios *Invictus* unveiled.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: At the center of one of the new plazas in the city of Thyatis built over the cistern between the Zendrolium and The Heart, a statue of Solarios the Unconquered is unveiled. Carved out of a single huge slab of marble by the renowned artist, Michelius Angelinios, it is instantly recognized as a masterpiece.

What This Means: This is one of the signs of the expanded recognition and reverence Ixion (Solarios) has in Thyatis. The work was commissioned by several wealthy patrons and supported by Eusebius as part of his policy of beautifying the Queen of Cities and making it a showcase of his rule. This has been one of his dreams ever since the Great Fire of AC 1012, if not before—he wants to leave behind many monuments and grand buildings as a lasting legacy of his reign and make The City the jewel of Mystara.

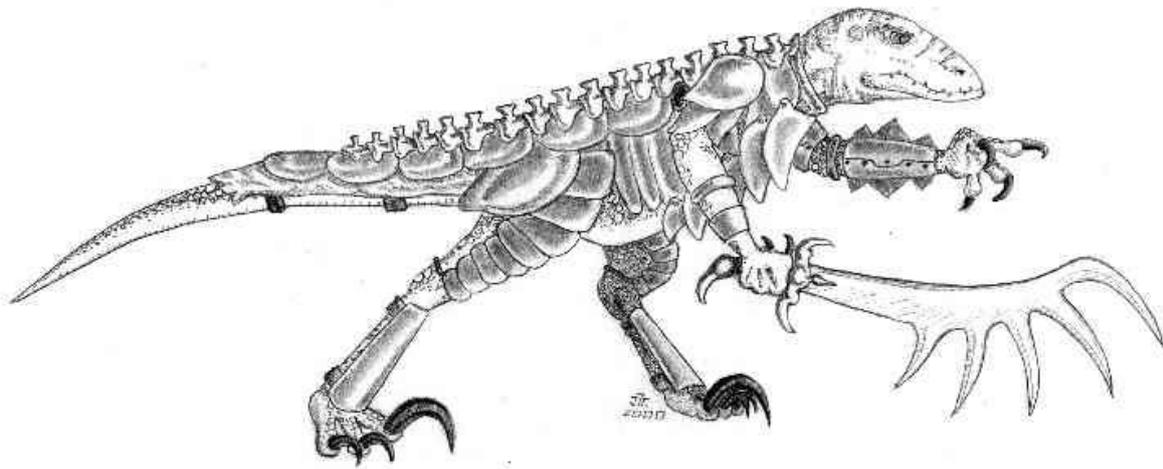
What the PCs Can Do: Characters wanting a monument to their own glory might hire Michelius Angelinios to depict them in art. Conversely, he might approach particularly striking characters to model for one of his works, especially if they have done something particularly heroic that have brought them public attention and acclaim.

Swiftmont 11, AC 1017: A New Evil Arises.

Location: City-State of Kastelios, Serpent Coast. DV

Description: In the middle of an otherwise calm day of trading along the docks of Kastelios, a battered and scorched personal sailing vessel, bearing the colors of Dorian Giannapoulos—a known merchant of some repute—, lurches aimlessly into the harbor. The sight of the ship, its sails burnt severely in several places and its apparently abandoned state, arouses more than a little interest and concern. As the dock hands manage to secure the ship to the nearest pier, the onlookers' sense of curiosity slowly turns towards fear, as, scattered about on the small ship's deck are the decaying remains of the crew.

Taking control of the situation, a squad of city guardsmen boards the ship and proceeds belowdecks to determine if anyone is alive down there. Within moments, loud shouting is heard, accompanied by the sounds of frenzied struggles. Within moments, the guardsmen return to the deck, bringing with them a wild-eyed man dressed in burnt clothing, his mouth almost frothing as he raves about “mighty lizard armies rising in the west, bringing foul magic and unspeakably evil things.” Everyone present recoils in shock as they recognize the wretch's identity—none other than Dorian Giannapoulos himself, seemingly aged before his time. His diatribe continues as the



guardsmen drag him to the nearest city watch guardhouse, where he will be held until his family can claim him.

What This Means: Dorian was a small-scale merchant who, convinced that there was great wealth to be had in the western reaches of Davania, focused his exploratory and trading efforts there, when most Kastelian merchants look towards Yavdlom, Sind and increasingly Thyatis as their main markets. He would set sail in his small ship for weeks on end, sometimes coming home with all sorts of strange goods—some of them exceedingly beautiful, others simply strange. Of late, he had been exploring the coasts of the Amalur Lowlands, a vast territory of mixed jungle and swamps lying west of the Adakkian Mounts, as well as certain portions of the Adakkian Sound itself.

The Amalur Lowlands is known to the Kastelians as being inhabited by lizard men and troglodytes, the former ruling over the latter. Apparently, Dorian encountered something terrible, something that he did not expect to see (having made the trip a couple of times before with no incident). Unfortunately, whatever it was, the poor man's mind has become unhinged. Word of this incident will spread over the following days and the public will begin to ponder actively what is going on in the west.

What the PCs Can Do: PC clerics or mages may have access to certain spells which could either calm Dorian's mind, or probe it to a sufficient depth to determine what it was that disturbed the man so much.

Swiftmont 11, AC 1017: Taghist Blinks.

Location: West of Town of Dmireton, Kingdom of Randel, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: Since crossing the Randel Line and entering Randel lands, General Taghist's invasion force has met little opposition except at the forts, none of which have fallen. Aside from a few Randel scouting parties, there has been no contact between the invader and the invaded, because Taghist has not pressed the attack

against any of the forts. With the town of Dmireton so close, Taghist is placed in a difficult position. Normally the town would be an inviting target, but it is well garrisoned and the *skyships* there are those imperial vessels under Dogrel's command. Taghist is indecisive and does not wish to attack Dmireton, partly because his main army is not as strong as it could be, due to the many forces detached from it besieging various Randel fortresses. (*See Sv. 1, Sv. 7; Sv. 13, Sv. 17.*)

What This Means: He also has several other factors to think about. To use his forces to lay siege to the town would take up time. He had expected that the Randel would have marched to meet his forces by now. Without a decisive battle Taghist feels that establishing a siege on the town will also place his forces in a precarious position. If Randel troops are in the area they could trap his forces between their forces and the defenders of Dmireton.

Though Taghist dislikes leaving the town in his rear area where it will still form an anvil against which his forces can be beaten, as well as a focal point for raids harassing his supply lines, he sees no way around it because he's too indecisive to attack it. He decides to continue his southern march and instead target the town of Telsadun. In his opinion, Telsadun is a relatively soft target. Since it has traditionally served as a rest and recreation town for the troops deployed to the Randel Line the defenses should be slight. From there he can marshal his forces for a push on Dmiliburg and for a possible addressing of Dmireton.

Taghist is hopeful that the Randel forces will show themselves soon. He would rather meet them out in the open and not when his forces are busy in urban assault. Once the regional Randel forces are dealt with, the invasion can be carried out at Taghist's leisure. Also, the mystery in their lack of presence is a bit unnerving—Taghist and his officers had expected a Randel response from the offset of the invasion.

Swiftmont 12, AC 1017: The Taterhill Races... Again?

Location: City of Glantri, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description:

After several months of palm-greasing, favor-giving, promise-making—and not a few threats—the Council of Princes convenes to vote on the new Duke of Taterhill. Only two candidates offer themselves up for the position: Marquis Alasdair McAllister of Dunvegan and (oddly) Baron Gerrid Rientha of Egorn. (Lord Gerrid had tended to the affairs of the Archduchy of Westheath during the confusing years of the Great War with Alphatia and Harald encouraged him to try and win the new title). Lord Alasdair wins the title, largely due to the irregularity of Gerrid's proposal, but only barely. He will be the new Duke of Taterhill.



Signor Antonio di Tarento succeeds McAllister as the new Marquis of Dunvegan and is in turn succeeded by *Doña* Isabella de Montebello as the new Countess of Glenargyll. Any other prospective candidates either refused to run for the position, or weren't taken seriously in their proposals (like the mad Viscount Innocenti di Malapietra).

Complications arise when the title of Viscount of Castelbianco comes up. All three candidates—Baron Gerrid Rientha of Egorn, Baron Pieter Vandehaar of Oxhill and Baron Vincienzo di Randazzi of Ylourgne—receive sufficient votes for the title. Final selection will go before the House of Lords.

Finally, there is voting on a new noble to fill whichever of the baronial positions is vacated. Several candidates are proposed, among them Lathan Aendyr (son of the presumed late Prince Volospin), an orcish

wokan and Danira Voshane, a prominent sorceress. When the votes are tallied, Danira Voshane is the winner (and joins the ranks of nobility who are also secretly members of the Brotherhood of the *Radiance*).

The council is disbanded for the day. (*See Sv. 20, Ei. 5.*)

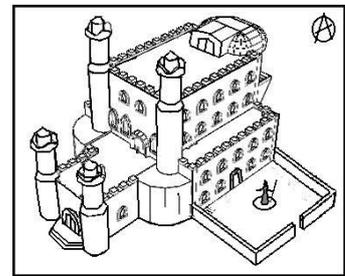
What the PCs Can Do: If nobles in Glantri, or eligible for nobility, this is a perfect time for them to attempt to further their own political ambitions within the nation.

Swiftmont 12, AC 1017: A Surprise at the Council.

Location: City of Ionace, Ionace Island, Nayce. AS

Description:

The Nayce Council Hall is filled to capacity as the various Naycese kingdom rulers convene to



discuss the political infighting. Often Underocean's recent unilateral military action is brought forth as an example, though King Juliast declines to comment on the issue. However as matters are brought forth, the attendees begin arguing amongst themselves. Even the council falls into anarchy as the council representatives fall in to support their kingdoms' rulers.

As the more orderly council representatives try to bring back a sense of order within the ranks of the council representatives, the sound of the council chamber's main doors slamming is clearly heard in a resonating boom. The intrusion draws their attentions and stares as the figure strides towards them. Their sudden silence is only broken by the sounds of his feet tapping across the marbled floors.

Stopping before the council representatives and kingdom rulers, Master Terari glares at each of them with a face bearing distinct disappointment. Shaking his head slowly he solemnly berates them for their conduct. He cites that individualism

and diversity have always been paramount to Alphatian society, but what he has just witnessed is more reminiscent of childish tantrums. (*See Sv. 1, Sv. 5; Ei. 14.*)

Swiftmont 12, AC 1017: Royalists Are Reinforced.

Location: Village of Bromstow, Bishopric of Leominster, Kingdom of Bellayne. SC

Description: Edgwinton's advance force is met by Lord Rodney's cavalry. Rodney, not a man to wait around, left Oldsbury and galloped to Bromstow as quickly as he was able to assist the royalist forces.

Lord Rodney is eager to hurt the parliamentarians and overrides Edgwinton's urges to move to more defensible ground to the west. The royalist army will hold here and meet the parliamentarians head on! (*See Am. 26, Sv. 5; Sv. 14, Sv. 15.*)

What This Means: Between the two of them, the royalist commanders can field around 5,000 soldiers, with a high percentage of cavalry; drawn from the rakasta nobility, most of these cavalymen have excellent weaponry and know how to use it, although they have not fought together as a military unit before.

Swiftmont 13, AC 1017: News From the Line.

Location: West of Town of Dmireton, Kingdom of Randel, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: General Taghist is informed that the sieges of the Randel Line fortresses are not going well. Though the fortresses are still encircled and isolated by the besieging Bettelilyn forces, their attempts to take them by force have been disappointing. The officers almost unanimously report that the fortresses' defenses are too tough for the forces available to them, since no one Bettelilyn contingent has been given sufficient support. This is the result of the division of resources among too many targets. Even magic has been ineffective as the defenses are heavily warded. Their warmages have taken a good number of

casualties. Many are now refusing to continue their spellcasting assaults.

Taghist contemplates turning his column around and reinforcing the sieges on the forts. However, he feels that he has already committed his forces. He can aid the sieges better in preventing the fortresses from being relieved or reinforced. Likewise, turning back could doom the invasion, as the costs of taking the fortresses could dissuade Llynara from continuing the war. And if the war ends at the Randel Line, Bettelilyn would at best gain only the border regions. (*See Sv. 7, Sv. 11; Sv. 17, Sv. 21.*)

What This Means: The Randel Line is an old series of fortresses lining the no-man's-land that marks the Randel/Bettelilyn border. The Randel have created these fortresses with longevity in mind; using the years to constantly enchant the defenses against magical assault. The defenders are some of the kingdom's best troops, just like all the other soldiers of Randel. In their defensive positions they are much more formidable than previously thought.

The refusal of the Bettelilyn mages to commit is based on their feeble support of the war. As long as the battles were expected to be easy, the mages were happy to contribute; however, as mages are wounded and even killed they are losing their motivation to fight. There really isn't a lot for them to gain in risking their lives on the fortresses. Plus, the troops are all dispirited by what they see as a hopeless war.

Swiftmont 13, AC 1017: Port of Call, Port of Intrigue.

Location: City of Slagovich, Gulf of Hule. SC

Description: The ships of the Thyatian exploratory trade expedition reach the city of Slagovich. They stock up on provisions, trade goods with local merchants and while the sailors explore the port's taverns and flesh-pots, the officers and agents begin to seek out information on the Savage Coast and its peculiar dangers and opportunities. (*See Kl. 14, Sv. 7; Ei. 5, Ei. 17.*)

What This Means: The merchants of Slagovich have considerable experience trading with the Savage Baronies. However, they're reluctant (at best) to share that knowledge with potential competitors. The Thyatian agents will have a hard time getting the information they want and it will take longer than they expect. Those involved on the other side may attempt to take more drastic steps to prevent the Thyatians (and their Minrothaddan allies) from achieving their objective.

What the PCs Can Do: Information gathering in the face of subtle opposition and thugs-by-night. Various intrigues conceived and plotted by either side may involve the PCs somehow. As this is a good way to introduce outside characters into the Savage Coast, however, it should be difficult but not frustrating for them to get the information they need.

Swiftmont 13, AC 1017: Hillvale Reinforced.

Location: Kingdom of Hillvale, Nayce, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: Naycese troops, recalled from their assignment on Eagret Island, arrive in Hillvale. The forces of William Hazard also return to Hillvale, as further deterrent. The Thothian troops that were stationed in Hillvale remain in position. (*See Sv. 5, Sv. 7; Sv. 15, Sv. 19.*)

What This Means: Commander Karszamon is convinced the Thothians will finish the job and annex Hillvale, completing the tri-polarization of the Isle of Dawn. To prevent this from happening and thwart Thothia's attempt at becoming a major power within Nayce (and possibly be tempted to leave the new Alphatian empire and hinder it), he moved an important contingent from the nearest place, Eagret (Heldun is demilitarized except when it's attacked by the Heldannic Knights and the rest of Alphatian part of the Isle of Dawn is Thothian).

Swiftmont 13, AC 1017: Legacy of Nennaya-Sherat.

Location: City of Selenica, Republic of Darokin. OW

Description: A Vestlandic wizard, in town to study artifacts from the tomb of the Nithian Queen Nennaya-Sherat that are in the possession of a local sage, makes a strange discovery. The catalog of items the sage purchased from gravediggers back in 1011 does not match the sage's actual inventory. After an exhaustive search of the sage's home, the pair can only conclude that several items have been stolen by unknown means. More alarming is the fact that a wizard must have been involved, as the items were enchanted with powerful sorceries and had been kept under special protection from theft. (*See Nu. 12.*)

What This Means: The items were stolen by the same person who is responsible for the attack on the Ylari wizard Istakhr, back in Nuwmont. The mysterious thief is indeed a powerful wizard and has left few traces of his crime.

What the PCs Can Do: The sage will be anxious to recover the items and could enlist the PCs to help track down the thief. Unless they have powerful magic of their own, however, it will be nearly impossible to find him: he has used his own powerful magicks to effectively erase his tracks.

Swiftmont 14, AC 1017: Reconstruction of the Harbors Begins.

Location: Town of Tenoboa, Kingdom of Foresthome, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: The first construction work of the canal project begins today. A construction team starts building up the wall that shall hold back the water in the harbor. The overseeing engineer is Lord Abolon, who has erected houses, dams and bridges all over the empire. Many commoners will install wooden forms for the dam, then some mages will cast *iron walls* into this form. Afterwards the form will be filled with mud by the workers. Finally the mud will be transformed into solid rock by mages again. The estimated time to finish the work is two months. (*See Sv. 1, Sv. 10; Ei. 2, Ei. 17.*)

What This Means: Of course the work could have been done with a lot more magic, but as everywhere on Mystara it is a question of price. Queen Kikania has chosen the cheaper method. Besides, the time won is not really important in this case, as the harbor's use is limited as long as there is no canal. For Lord Abolon it does not matter; he is intrigued by this project and he will use exactly as much magic as the queen is willing to pay for.

What the PCs Can Do: They could be part of the work team, especially if they are mages.

Swiftmont 14, AC 1017: A Tough Swamp to Crack

Location: Swamps along the River Torion, Hinterlands, Thyatian Empire. DV

Description: Thyatian forces fighting the Thratian Hinterlanders bump up against a difficult obstacle, the swamps southwest of Raven Scarp along the River Torion. Having occupied and begun to fortify the hills to the north, the Thyatians attempt to press south, hoping to conquer everything as far as the river and push back the resisting Thratians in order to secure the Thyatian-inhabited parts of the Hinterlands.

But the swamplands are proving difficult indeed. The Thratian warriors in them are elusive and there are few areas where the Thyatians can set up permanent strongpoints to control the swamp region. Thus, though the Thyatian patrols are able to pass through, the Thratians just reoccupy the area after the Thyatian soldiers have gone. (*See Fy. 9, Fy. 25.*)

What This Means: This is a setback in Thyatis's efforts to pacify the Hinterlands and end resistance to their control of the area. In this particular case, Emerond is aiding the Thratians, covertly. Emerond does not mind contact and trade with Thyatis, but is leery of seeing the empire become overly strong and threatening. Thus, while befriending the Thyatians on one hand in order to have good relations with their new and powerful neighbor, they are helping the Thratians (with whom they are also

friendly) by sending them nature-shaped items. None of these items are weapons, but they give the Thratians a leg up in the swamps, helping them hold out against the Thyatians. Thus, while the Thyatians continue to advance in the jungles, the Thratians achieve a stalemate in the southern swamps.

What the PCs Can Do: Thyatian characters might come up with an innovative way to break the stalemate.

Swiftmont 14, AC 1017: Tri kard's Replacement.

Location: City of Haldemar, Kingdom of Neatharm, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: King Tri kard announces that the military mage Stolander will take his place as General of Neatharm. The decree makes official what has been in practice since Tri kard had been given command of the kingdom. Stolander is a militarist mage that has served the Neatharm military since the early days. His most notable achievement was his command of the *skyship The Topsy Tyrant* and her role in the defense of the young settlement against Heldannic Knight attacks during the Great War. (*See Nu. 8, Am. 1; Sv. 27, Ei. 14.*)

What the PCs Can Do: Since Stolander is detailed in *Wrath of the Immortals: Book II The Immortals' Fury*, it is possible that PCs that participated in that campaign could have contact with him. Depending on that history, PCs could be called upon to perform duties for Neatharm or its military.

Swiftmont 14, 1017: Battle of Siren Hill.

Location: Siren Hill, West of Village of Bromstow, Bishopric of Leominster, Kingdom of Bellayne. SC

Description: Despite reconnaissance from both sides, the two armies only realize how close they are to each other when a party of royalist quartermasters at Bromstow organizing billets for the men clash with their parliamentary opposite numbers doing the same.

Edgwinton initially places his army on

Siren Hill, a ridge with a commanding view of the battlefield a few miles to the west of Bromstow. Although a famous observation post, the wooded area is completely unsuitable for cavalry; seeing this, Edgwinton then orders his men to line up at the foot of the hill. By 2 o'clock the parliamentary army, numbering 6,000 men, almost entirely composed of militiamen from Leominster under the command of Richard Croft, is 800 yards away from the royalist forces.

At 3 o'clock, the battle begins with the parliamentary cavalry moving forward to take possession of the hedgerows between the two armies—valuable cover from archer fire. Wasting no further time Lord Rodney orders his own cavalry units to charge the parliamentarians down. The superior quality of the royalist cavalry quickly becomes evident, as before too long the parliamentarians are pushed back across the front, being hotly pursued by Rodney's men. The retreat becomes a rout and the parliamentary cavalry flees back towards Bromstow.

However, the royalist cavalry choose to continue the chase and engage the parliamentary baggage train rather than return to dispose of the parliamentary foot. Croft pushes the parliamentary infantry into the tree line at the base of Siren Hill where his men are met by some of the choicest royalist units. At first the more hardened veterans of the royalist forces throw back assaults by the poorly trained militiamen of Leominster, but then Croft hurls himself into the forefront of the fighting. He manages to carve his way through the royalist ranks and rallying his men behind him, presses against the royalist guards around Edgwinton himself, capturing the Banner Royal. A royal counterattack pushes the parliamentary foot backwards, recapturing the banner, but the Leominster militiamen fighting alongside Croft put up stout resistance, giving the royalists a bloody nose.

By this time both armies are in chaos, with units uncertain in the gathering darkness who is friend or foe and launching volleys of

arrows at any who showed opposition and any bodies of horse or foot returning to the scene of the battle. Into this confusion, royalist catapults volley showers of boulders, causing havoc for both sides. Before too long, exhausted, the two sides manage to disengage.

The next day, the two armies remain on the field, though each is battered. Blythe-Jackson is shocked by the number of corpses on the green pastures between the two armies and decides to pull his forces back to Leominster, leaving the field to the royalists. (*See Sv. 5, Sv. 12; Sv. 15, Sv. 20.*)

What This Means: The royalists have split the two parliamentary cities of Norchester and Leominster, but once again it remains to be seen if their position is tenable, with the army vulnerable to attack from both the north and south.

To all intents and purposes the Battle of Siren Hill was a drawn fight, but national opinion sees it as a victory for the royalists. Celebrations are held in Theeds and King James predicts that Leominster will be returned to the royal fold by the end of the year.

Meanwhile, in Leominster, Blythe-Jackson has other plans...

What the PCs Can Do: Characters who are present can fight for their side, either making the victory more decisive or helping more of their side escape the battle.

Third Week

Swiftmont 15, AC 1017: Vanya Visits Richard Croft.

Location: Parliamentary Army Headquarters, outside the City of Leominster, Bishopric of Leominster, Kingdom of Bellayne. SC

Description: Richard Croft, one of the parliamentary general staff, receives a divine visit this night. A pious follower of Belbion, he wakes having believed that his patron visited him in his dreams. Even more full of righteous fervor than normal, Croft

hurriedly sets to personally training the Leominster recruits over the next few months. (*See Sv. 12, Sv. 14; Sv. 20, Sv. 27.*)

What This Means: The Immortal Vanya has had a hand in inciting the conflicts of Bellayne (it is at Her urging that Blythe-Jackson led the nation into civil war) and She was observing the battle at Siren Hill with great interest. Richard Croft's performance, leading his untrained soldiers against the disciplined royalist pikemen, struck a chord in Her, reminding Her somewhat of Her own mortal life, holding off the advancing Milenians with Her warriors. Vanya hopes to replace Tarastia as the main Immortal worshipped in Bellayne by helping the parliamentary forces win—and Croft, She decides, will be the instrument that She will use to do it.

Swiftmont 15, AC 1017: Hosadus Offers Negotiations.

Location: City of Sayr Ulan, *Mumbyket* of Sindraestan and City of Jahore, *Mumbyket* of Putnabad, Kingdom of Sind. OW

Description: Emissaries from the Master of Hule arrive at the camps of the Sindhi and Thyatian armies, bearing offers of negotiations from Hosadus. He proposes a cease-fire and negotiations for a peace treaty in Sind. Chandra ul Nervi ponders the arrangement with his Darokinian allies for a while, but he finally agrees to start peace talks. The Thyatians quickly follow suit. (*See Am. 19, Sv. 11; Ka. 8, Ka. 12.*)

What This Means: Hosadus is using his recent defeat in Putnabad to advance his schemes. He knows that although Thyatis has defeated his army, fighting Hule isn't a high priority for Eusebius. On the other hand, Sind will want to negotiate because their own forces are stalemated. During the negotiations, each side will try to gain the most possible advantageous position for itself.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs can take part in the negotiations as part of either side's team.

Swiftmont 15, AC 1017: Beach-landing on a Desert Island.

Location: Eagret Island, Nayce. AS

Description: A small force lands at the just-deserted Eagret Island and claims it in the name of Thothia. (*See Sv. 7, Sv. 13; Sv. 19.*)

What This Means: Since Karszamon announced at the council that he would transfer troops from Eagret to protect Hillvale, the Thothians only had to watch for their departure and move in.

Swiftmont 16, AC 1017: Judgement Day for the Traitors.

Location: City of Helskir, *Exarchate*/Kingdom of Heldun, Thyatian Empire and Nayce, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: Amid much public interest and speculation, Queen Asteriela makes a public pronouncement to all her subjects massed before her. In a clear voice, she proclaims that all citizens of Heldun, regardless of their ethnic origins, who willingly aided the Heldannic occupiers, "are hereby and in perpetuity held in our eyes to be traitors of the realm and enemies of the people." Without emotion, she pronounces a sentence of death for all traitors, to be carried out immediately. Her statement is greeted by much jubilation and banner-waving.

That afternoon, the collaborators are led from the goal and beheaded in the still-ruined market square. Their heads will be placed on stakes and lined atop the parapets of the inner wall. (*See Sv. 6, Sv. 10; Sv. 25.*)

What This Means: This is another move on the part of Asteriela to show her people that she is a strong ruler and a decisive one. She is well aware that, since the death of her husband, the late King Eruul Zaar, she must assume control quickly to assure that Heldun as a whole remains stable.

Swiftmont 17, AC 1017: Another Murder in Thyatis.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Another aristocratic lady is found dead in her bed. This time, it is Euriale Korrigan, wife of the senator Georgos Korrigan. Now the population is aware that a vicious killer is stalking the streets of Thyatis. (*See Sv. 4; Ei. 26, Ka. 11.*)

What This Means: Korrigan is the real murderer this time. He has access to the information on Iacovus The Mincer and studied his style in order to get rid of his hated wife. He hopes his position and the confusion and excitement spreading through the city due to the killings will prevent him from being caught. He intends to wait a few months and then marry the cousin of Euriale, Licia, with whom he planned the murder. He made some mistakes, though and investigators will eventually discover the discrepancies.

What the PCs Can Do: Characters can be involved in this investigation, too and will have to notice clues that someone other than Iacovus committed the murder in order to find out that Korrigan was responsible for it.

Swiftmont 17, AC 1017: Strategic Meeting of the Generals.

Location: City of Errolyn, Kingdom of Theranderol, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: In a meeting of the senior officers of the army of Randel, General-Major Quoos presents an idea he and his subordinate officers have worked out: they propose to connect the Thera River and the Greenlake River by a canal. This would create a waterway from the ruins of Sundsvall to Errolyn and farther to Rardish or Archport. The advantages for economic and military purposes would be remarkable. Should Queen Eldrethila agree to the project, it could start right away. The permission by the Queen of Vertiloch should really be no problem as she is Eldrethila's mother anyway. General-Lieutenant Olmon, the senior general of Theranderol, decides to ask the queen as soon as possible. (*See Kl. 15, Am. 1; Sv. 21, Ei. 5.*)

What This Means: Theranderol is not so well known for its military history as other kingdoms, but it has the Randel Wall and the Theranderol and Arogansan Lines at the borders with their potentially hostile neighbors, a reminder of past disputes that keep the Theranderol generals alert. The senior staff now has developed a strategic vision to transport personal and supply between Vertiloch and Theranderol; as there are other canal projects to link the northern rivers together, this would link Theranderol with the rest of the new waterway system. General-Major Quoos is responsible for the logistical problems of the army and so he has worked out a still rough idea.

Swiftmont 17, AC 1017: Land Grants Announced.

Location: City of Raven Scarp, *Exarchate* of Davania Superior, Hinterlands, Thyatian Empire. DV

Description: In recognition of the continuing pressures imposed by the flow of refugees from the Meghala Kimata Plains, *Exarch* Leilah ben Nadir announces that land grants will be issued for the regions surrounding Raven Scarp and other major centers in Davania Superior, for those Milenian refugees who wish to settle in the Hinterlands. (*See Sv. 1, Sv. 6; Sv. 26, Ei. 20.*)

What This Means: Contrary to Leilah's hopes, a solution to the refugee problem was found much later than she had hoped and both she and her advisors came to the conclusion that part of the resettlement effort might best be accomplished in the Hinterlands. As a result of this declaration, land will be made available outside urban centers to allow those Milenians who wish to do so to settle.

Swiftmont 17, AC 1017: Randel Reacts.

Location: North of Town of Telsadun, Kingdom of Randel, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: Bettelwyn scouts report sighting a large body of Randel troops. Taghist is pleased that the Randel have

finally shown themselves, however he is displeased that his scouts only give vague reports and did not properly estimate their numbers, composition and exact position. Taghist sends out more scouts with orders to fill these requirements. In the meantime he orders the column to halt and assemble for battle. (*See Sv. 11, Sv. 13; Sv. 21, Sv. 24.*)

What This Means: Taghist fully expects that the Randel are well aware where he is and where he is going. He will wait for them, considering passivity his best strategy. By the crude estimates of his scouts he feels certain that he has a distinct numerical superiority. Likewise he feels that his troops are in better shape and better led, thanks to Queen Junna's ineptitude. His one worry is that the sighted Randel formation is may not be the full complement in the area, As the Randel tend to march in scattered units and converge on an enemy force. Taghist hopes that his scouts will find any other Randel formations moving about in the area.

The truth is that the Randel are sending four formations to intercept Taghist. Two are regular army regiments. The third and fourth formations are militia and garrison forces scrambled from Telsadun and Dmiliburg. These two latter formations compose the bulk of the Randel forces moving against Taghist's formation. Even with these Taghist retains a numerical superiority.

These Randel units are being sent to counter Taghist's advance, not destroy it. With their armed forces in a sorry state, the Randel High Command has adopted a strategy to draw the Bettelny out and overextend their logistical chain. They will bleed the invaders before counterattacking. They have no plans about attempting to launch their own counter-invasion of Bettelny, they merely want to drive the Bettelny forces out of Randel.

Randel cannot afford a protracted war that will erode its already weakened military further. They want to save as many of their troops as possible to use as the foundation of a rebuilding Randel military. They are going to destroy the leadership of the

Bettelny invasion force, eroding its fighting ability before committing to more customary land battles. The real attack on Taghist's forces is to come from a far more covert source. The Randel High Command has already moved Randel heroes into Telsadun to prepare for an attack on the invaders' officers.

What the PCs Can Do: The Bettelny need their best scouts, while the Randel send their best assassins (called heroes and patriots, of course) to wreak havoc in the enemy command.

Swiftmont 19, AC 1017: Lost Patrols.

Location: Countryside, Kingdom of Arkan, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: Several scouting patrols of the Stonewall army have gone missing over the last few days. (*See Sv. 7, Sv. 11; Ei. 12, Ka. 15.*)

What This Means: This is once again the work of the Wolf-Pack. During the recent infiltration of the Stonewall army's camp, Wolf-Hunter was able to learn that Stonewall is taking the main road directly to Ceafem and he also learned some of the planned areas the patrols will cross. The Wolf-Pack have ambushed and killed or captured several of these since then.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs with the Wolf-Pack can help catch the patrols, while PCs with the invaders can try to find out why the army's patrols go missing.

Swiftmont 19, AC 1017: He Who Controls the Military.

Location: City of Ionace, Ionace Island, Nayce. AS

Description: Representative Ragmon informs the Council of Nayce that Thothia has claimed the empty island of Eagret and intends to send settlers there. The other councilors are shocked, but unable to speak in a single voice. Karszamon is even more furious at the Thothians and claims that the island is a military outpost and can't be owned by any single member nation of

Nayce, only by the central authority; but the Thothians stand by their position. (*See Sv. 13, Sv. 15.*)

What This Means: There is little Karszamon can do short of attacking the Thothians. The Thothian troops are acting outside of their constitutional boundaries, as national troops are supposed to be under the authority of the commander in chief and not a national figure.

Karszamon's lack of ability at military strategy is, once again, evidenced.

Thothians are not particularly known for being bold settlers, so it remains to be seen whether the island is actually colonized. Settling was only a pretense though, not the actual intent of the military action.

Swiftmont 20, AC 1017: Who's the Viscount?

Location: City of Glantri, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: The House of Lords convenes to vote on the succession of the Viscounty of Castelbianco. With three candidates to select from, it is expected that it will be very difficult for any of them to get the requisite number of votes to be chosen. Not surprisingly, none are able to muster enough support for their position. As a result, the candidates must go to Dueling Court in order to secure their title. As none of the three seems willing to back down from their objective, Supreme Judge Dolores Hillsbury declares that this shall be a three-way duel, with all contestants competing against one another at the same time. The duel date is set for two weeks hence. (*See Sv. 12; Ei.5.*)

What This Means: A rather unusual event in Glantrian politics. The three-way duel will be the rage amongst the Glantrian nobility and peasantry alike. Seats will go for hundreds of *ducats* apiece and there won't be a vacant spot in the arena. The students and faculty of the Great School will begin to make immediate plans for the duel, setting up the arena and making sure there are ample obstacles for the different contestants. In the betting parlors, Baron Gerrid Rientha

is the hands down favorite, with Baron Pieter Vandehaar coming in second. For their parts, Lord Gerrid and Lord Pieter make plans for the duel—the former practicing his magic, the latter making deals and plotting with his allies to try and swing the odds in his favor. Meanwhile, underdog *Signor* Vincienzo will be busy studying his opponents and trying to put on as good a display as he can.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are Glantrian barons, perhaps they are among the candidates to be selected for the new title (in which case there may be more than three duelists contending for the title!). If students at the Great School of Magic, they can participate in the preparations for the duel—setting up magical traps, creatures and other obstacles for the contestants (and perhaps being approached by those in the employ of Baron Pieter Vandehaar or his allies to help fix the contest for him).

Swiftmont 20, AC 1017: Privateers Called Out for the King.

Location: City of Theeds, Earldom of Theeds, Kingdom of Bellayne. SC

Description: Following the clashes at Siren Hill, the king puts out word in Theeds—the temporary royal capital—of the need for brave sea-captains to stand forward for their sovereign in this, his hour of need, against certain treasonous and disloyal subjects. The results are less than expected, but the royal navy receives several positive responses from the local sailors—a most welcome result, since all of the navy's light ships disappeared in a storm not so many months ago. (*See Sv. 14, Sv. 15; Sv. 27, Ei. 12.*)

What This Means: Ships take a long time to build, the royal navy must husband them all. The king is growing suspicious of Vilaverde and hopes to expand his navy to deter Vilaverdan involvement.

The royal navy is still no match for the sea might of Vilaverde, but Vilaverde is a long way away and the king hopes to at least give them food for thought.

What the PCs Can Do: Characters loyal

to the king, interested in adventure on the high seas, or just looking for an excuse to loot other ships, can sign on as privateers and receive a letter of marque and reprisal from the royalist faction, somewhat legitimizing their piracy.

Swiftmont 21, AC 1017: Report to the Queen.

Location: City of Errolyn, Kingdom of Theranderol, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: General-Lieutenant Olmon makes his regular report to his queen. Among other matters he presents the planned canal. Queen Eldrethila likes this idea as trade and tax revenues will increase. The general and the queen agree to ask Lord Torn. The lord is a member of the Grand Council and, being from Theranderol, he has always been a friend. Now he has to get in touch with Lord Soltturnun to get more information. As the leader of the planning staff the queen appoints one of her advisors, Lady Tyrona. (*See Am. 1, Sn. 17; Ei. 5, Ei. 15.*)

What This Means: Eldrethila's mother, Empress Eriadna, is using the services of the Navy of the Lakes for planning her own new canal. As this seems to work quite well, the queen wants to benefit from the experience. The general has no objections although he would have preferred to keep the planning in the hands of the army.

Swiftmont 21, AC 1017: Good and Bad Tidings.

Location: City of Freiburg, Territory of Heldann, Heldannic Empire. OW

Description: After almost two weeks of preparations for a possible military conflict, amid rumors of mobilizations of troops loyal to Straßenburger, *Oberherr* Wulf von Klagendorf receives word from his underlings as to their loyalty. The *landmeister* of Kammin, Pflenzen, Landfall, Oceansend and Grauenberg have reaffirmed their loyalty to the current *oberherr* and have pledged to fulfill their oaths of fealty to him

through military support if necessary. Furthermore, the *freiberren* of Treptow, Nordberg, Klagen, Kaltstein, Blauendorf and Seelitz will also lend what assistance they can, though the three Heldland dominions warn that, due to continued raiding on the part of Count Helmut of Wolkenberg, they will require most of their forces to remain at home.

Unfortunately, the *landmeister* of Forton and Thurgau have cast their lot with Straßenburger, stating that they will support Straßenburger by any means necessary. This bad news is compounded by the fact that, aside from a few ragged survivors arriving by ship in Ambyrmont, the expeditionary force sent to Helskir appears to have been destroyed—including *Ordensgeneral* Anna von Hendriks. *Herr* Wulf knew some of the senior knights serving in that group and felt he could count on their support, if he needed it. (*See Sn. 2, Sn. 6.*)

What This Means: The latest defections have effectively given Heinrich Straßenburger control over large swaths of the heartland of the Heldannic Territories and allow him to threaten Grauenberg (which is cut off from other loyalist regions), Kammin, Landfall and the coastal holdings near Vestland—should he decide to take over the order by force. *Herr* Wulf, on the other hand, can count on the loyalty of Freiburg and the coastal regions of Heldann proper, the border fortresses near Ethengar (plus Grauenberg) as well as almost all of Heldland. Unfortunately, the support of Heldland may not mean much, as it is sparsely populated compared to the heartland and is still a largely untamed region, which may need the bulk of its forces to maintain order. Straßenburger's region is concentrated geographically, well-settled and has a higher population density, thus giving him access to more troops and resources. Clearly, it is uncertain who would have the upper hand.

What the PCs Can Do: Depending on their own opinions of *Herr* Wulf, PC dominion rulers could support him, or they could ally themselves with Straßenburger. This is not a decision to be taken lightly; if

they end up siding with the loser, they will lose their lands at the very least—and possibly find their lives forfeit. A situation could even arise where a group of PC rulers might support opposing factions, leading to increased tensions. Regardless, this scenario provides an opportunity for PCs supporting either side to engage in espionage, to determine what the other side is doing.

Swiftmont 21, AC 1017: Outcry in the Senate.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: The imperial senate, upon receiving a report of the cost of the *Devil Ray*, reacts in surprise. Many, led by Leana Scaurus, begin to protest that the funds could have been spent more productively and efficiently on other things. Marzia Venobis, the senator appointed by Retebius, argues that for the cost of the one *Devil Ray*, the entire Retebius Air Fleet (she doesn't use the now-official terminology, air cavalry) could have been mounted on dragons. Others counter that she's over-dramatizing the cost and that at any rate there aren't that many dragons available, plus it would take some time to train them even if there were. But the point remains that the ship cost more than a whole flock of dragons would have cost at prevailing prices. Furthermore, Irene Pallathakis reminds everyone that the ships of the entire imperial navy cost only marginally more than the one *Devil Ray* costs.

After considerable debate, the senate gets the emperor to agree to suspend construction of *Devil Rays*. The Thyatian airship program will continue, but will concentrate on less expensive ships and additional funds will be directed to the Retebius Air Cavalry, as well as other projects (like economic development and reconstruction). Further efforts will also be made to integrate the air cavalry with the *skyship* forces, to create force-multipliers that make both forces more effective and efficient, thus making them more valuable

(and thereby justifying the expense devoted to them). (*See Am. 5.*)

What This Means: The Thyatians aren't used to spending millions of gold pieces on expensive toys, unlike the Alphatians. While *skyships* have their uses and will definitely be a major component in the imperial armed forces in the future, hugely expensive ones just are not deemed worth the cost. Especially at a time when the empire's resources are still somewhat strained.

The designers on Borydos will go back to the drawing board, concentrating on developing a smaller, cheaper vessel. This will result in the construction of the *Spitfire* class, named after a famous squadron of dragon-knights who fought in the Great War against the Alphatian war machine's *skyships*. Meanwhile the original *Devil Ray* will be fitted out as an exploration cruiser and construction of the less versatile, but much less expensive, *Sky Dromonds* will continue on Terentias and now in the city of Thyatis itself.

What the PCs Can Do: Thyatian characters might be hired to go fetch dragons and other mounts, to help rebuild the cheaper but efficient flying armada of Thyatis—the Retebius Air Fleet.

Swiftmont 21, AC 1017: Where Are Our Eyes? Where Are Our Hearts?

Location: North of Town of Telsadun, Kingdom of Randel, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: Taghist is growing concerned over recent events. Of the plethora of scouts that he has dispatched, only a handful have returned. Those that have returned report no contacts with enemy forces. Taghist is fairly certain that these missing scouts have met with the Randel and have either been captured or killed, which doesn't surprise the disillusioned man. Though he does not know where the Randel forces are, the lack of contact by some scouts tells him where they are not. (*See Sv. 13, Sv. 17; Sv. 24, Ei. 2.*)

What This Means: The losses among the scouts are easily recognized. Taghist is

increasingly concerned as his remaining scouts are becoming hesitant in their searches for the enemy. Some perform half-hearted patrol sweeps within a few hours' ride of the Bettelwyn camp. Others are coming down with convenient illnesses, such as upset stomachs.

Fourth Week

Swiftmont 22, AC 1017: More Followers of Gareth... Or Are They?

Location: Southeastern Barren Plain. OW

Description: Several tribes of the Urduk nomads are approached by groups of priests who tell about their Immortal, Gareth. They tell the Urduks how Gareth protects His followers against the ravages of power-hungry oppressors and other Immortals. The Urduks, who have long been oppressed by the Sindhi, listen on with interest. After the priests are done talking, many Urduks are offering prayers to this new Immortal. (*See Nu. 1.*)

What This Means: The priests who approached the Urduks are not followers of Gareth. They are in fact priests of Bozdogan, sent by the Master of Hule to "convert" the Urduks and to gain increased influence over them. The Master is using Gareth's name to gain more followers for himself and for Bozdogan.

Swiftmont 23, AC 1017: Mists near Maelstrom.

Location: Sundsvall Maelstrom, Nayce. AS

Description: Mists form in various spots of the Alphatian Sea in the vicinity of the Sundsvall Maelstrom. The origin of the mists remains mysterious and they are gone the next day. (*See Fe. 10, Fy. 16; Ei. 18.*)

Swiftmont 24, AC 1017: Off With Their Heads.

Location: North of Town of Telsadun, Kingdom of Randel, Floating Continent of

Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: General Taghist's camp is rocked by a series of covert raids by Randel heroes. The raiders seem to come from nowhere and wreak havoc upon the dispirited Bettelwyn forces, killing troops and setting fire to tents and supply caches. The Randel raiders withdraw from camp before the startled Bettelwyn can mobilize to meet them. As the damage is assessed, it is quickly realized that the raids were well planned out—the supplies were specifically targeted and the bulk of the troops killed are officers. Among the casualties are General Taghist who has his right hand amputated by the blade of one of the raiders. He accepts this fatalistically as his lot. (*See Sv. 17, Sv. 21; Ei. 2, Ei. 20.*)

What This Means: The raid has been carried out by Randel adventurers and by Randel's own elite forces. Honed by years of covert raids they easily infiltrate the encampment and hit predetermined objectives—supplies and command organization. The raiders are pretty successful in their attempt, managing to destroy weeks worth of supplies and to kill several key officers and wound many more.

As a mage, Taghist's amputated hand is a serious hindrance. Without both hands, he cannot cast spells normally. And without his spells he loses a good deal of the prestige of his position. The raid has left his cadre of spellcasters woefully weak. He does not have the mages or clerics available to cast the spells needed to restore his hand. The bitter irony is that with both of his hands he could cast the spell himself.

Swiftmont 25, AC 1017: Bornbank Clanholds Raided.

Location: Southern Clanholds, Kingdom of Vestland. OW

Description: A large raiding party from the northern border clanholds of Soderfjord roars into Vestland, pillaging and looting. They make it all the way to the town of Vanger before Bornbank clan warriors are able to muster their forces and drive them back across the border. *Jarl* Ceowulf

Rotolfson of the Bornbank clan sends immediate word to his liege, King Bergthor, proclaiming the raid as an act of war by the Kingdom of Soderfjord. (*See Ei. 3, Ei. 20.*)

What This Means: Ragnar the Stout of Soderfjord was grudgingly acknowledged king in AC 1012. Since then, he has done little to justify his leadership in the eyes of many of the Soderfjord *jarls*. One of his rivals, *Jarl Guthorm Brittle-Bone*, has decided the time is ripe to attempt to oust Ragnar and take his place. To this end, he has convinced his fellow *jarls* of the northern border clans to participate in this raid. The northern border *jarls* of Soderfjord have long desired the fringe regions of the Bornbank clan, claiming they rightfully belong to Soderfjord.

What the PCs Can Do: The Bornbank clan has suffered raids from their neighbors for many years and many of the clan members are former mercenaries adopted into the clan to help in its defense. The PCs may already be members, or may join up and be allowed the full benefits of clan membership—so long as they help fight off Soderfjord raiders.

Swiftmont 25, AC 1017: An Inauspicious Homecoming.

Location: Town of Kammin, Territory of Heldann, Heldannic Empire. OW

Description: During a slow day in the port town of Kammin, the dockworkers note with interest a small number of sailing vessels, bearing no flags of any sort, making their way towards the port. After their supervisors are alerted, word spreads quickly and a small contingent of soldiers is dispatched. As the ships draw nearer, it soon becomes apparent that the occupants are all Heldannic soldiers and knights, some of whom are injured. Orders are issued and by the time the ships dock, arrangements have been made to tend to the wounded, while *Landmeisterin* Julia von Kolmburg looks on.

Within an hour, the injured are removed to suitable quarters, while the able-bodied officers deliver reports concerning the

reasons for their unscheduled arrival in Kammin. Even von Kolmburg, however, is surprised when *Ordensgeneral* Anna von Hendriks arises from below decks of one of the ships and delivers her own version of events to the *landmeisterin*. Before long, all present are made aware the Heldannic Order has been defeated by the combined might of Thyatis and Nayce.

Taking everything in, von Kolmburg invites the *ordensgeneral* to dine with her, as much has happened in the Heldannic Territories since the ill-fated expedition to Heldun began last year. (*See Sv. 16, Sv. 21; Ka. 12.*)

What This Means: *Ordensgeneral* Anna von Hendriks and a group of roughly 40 knights and soldiers, managed to escape the palace in Helskir and make their way through the countryside to the village of Dawnhaven, where, they knew, they could steal a number of sailing vessels to make their way to Heldann. Being a principled leader, Anna did not wish to cast *word of recall* in order to return to her dwelling, as she would leave behind many of those who accompanied her to Heldun and remained with her still out of loyalty. Thus, they had to rely on mundane means to escape.

Unbeknownst to Anna, however, the unity of the Heldannic Order is no longer assured. Those loyal to Heinrich von Straßenburger, knowing that the well-known *ordensgeneral* was generally loyal to *Oberherr* Wulf von Klagendorf, might try to eliminate her should they become aware that she survived the fall of Helskir. *Landmeisterin* Julia von Kolmburg, being a dominion ruler (and therefore more immersed in the politics of the land) as well as a supporter of the current *oberherr*, will inform Anna of the potential dangers awaiting her in Heldann and will urge her to avoid detection as much as possible.

What the PCs Can Do: If they were Heldannic Knights or soldiers serving Anna during her escape from Helskir, this is probably the main way by which they can return home.

Swiftmont 26, AC 1017: First Ships Depart.

Location: City of Raven Scarp, *Exarchate* of Davania Superior, Hinterlands, Thyatian Empire. DV

Description: A small flotilla of Thyatian vessels sets sail for Pilion, Hattias, bearing over a thousand Milenians who have accepted the offer to settle there. (*See Sv. 6, Sv. 17; Ei. 20.*)

What This Means: When they heard about the offer to settle in Hattias, the Milenians accepted for the most part. Not only were they told about the opportunities to farm their own lands, or to resume their crafts in safety; they were told that this new land was far away from the ongoing conflict between Mivosia and the Heldannic Knights. Most of the refugees saw their homes and livelihoods destroyed by war; there is really nothing holding them back from finding a new home elsewhere.

This is the first such movement; others will follow as more ships become available and as the situation in the Hinterlands becomes clearer (the authorities are still not sure exactly how many Milenians have fled to the empire, though they do know that the inflow is continuing).

What the PCs Can Do: If they are Milenian, this could be one way for the PCs to go to the Old World. Otherwise, Thyatian PCs might be tasked to protect the Milenians from the various dangers of the Sea of Dread.

Swiftmont 27, AC 1017: Sharya Assaulted.

Location: City of Sharya, Zuyevan Empire. WB

Description: In a massive assault in the depths of the night, hordes of zombies, jujuzombies and other undead swarm out of the river and assault the docks of Sharya, where the city's defenses are thin. The attack comes as somewhat of a surprise to troops used to dealing with a normal enemy, but since the undead don't need to swim they

were able to crawl along the river bottom until they were ready to assault the town. Most of the undead leading the attack are former soldiers from Kulikovo Fortress, which further disheartens the defenders of Sharya. *Don* Claudio orders his remaining three undead dragons to assault the defenders from the air, tearing through the defenses. As the walls crumble, more and more undead swarm into the city itself, where house-to-house fighting commences as the people of Sharya fight for their lives. The dragons bombard the city with inflammables (flaming pitch casks which were captured at Kulikovo), setting numerous fires which burn large sections of Sharya to the ground.

But imperial forces and the people of Sharya refuse to give in, fighting back tenaciously. In bloody fighting they grimly overcome the assaulting undead and by morning have eliminated *Don* Claudio's assault force. His undead dragons fly back to Kulikovo Fortress. Much of Sharya has burned to the ground, however and there are thousands of dead littering the streets. (*See Sv. 5, Sv. 11; Ei. 3.*)

What This Means: *Don* Claudio hoped to conquer Sharya, which would open the way for an advance to Zuyevo's capital, Zuyganev. His failure to take Sharya is a major setback for him. Indeed, this isn't his only setback. Most of the humanoids which are with his army came looking for loot and the victories over the Zuyevan armies as well as the booty captured at Kulikovo Fortress has satiated their current greed. They are not interested in a long war against Zuyevo and begin to drift away, leaving *Don* Claudio with a force of 3,000 undead troops, 1,000 humanoids and his trump card, the dragons. This is enough, perhaps, to hold Kulikovo against the inevitable counter-attacks, but it is not enough to invade the empire.

Don Claudio feels betrayed and he has been. The Master of Hule does not intend to send further support to him. He wanted to knock Zuyevo off balance and curb their expansionism, but he never saw *Don* Claudio succeeding in conquering Zuyevo. He expects the demon, Joramurrak, to continue

to undermine Zuyevo and destabilize it, which is all Hosadus wants for now.

Swiftmont 27, AC 1017: Recruitment.

Location: City of Haldemar, Kingdom of Neatharm, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description:

With a definite need for an increased military presence and a boost to the population, King Tri kard issues a decree targeted towards the numerous demobilized troops of the Alphatian military. The monarch offers tracts of land in exchange for colonization in the Kingdom of Neatharm. Tri kard is aware that his kingdom sits on the proverbial front line of any Hollow World conflict. Drawing upon the Norwold precedent, he decides that the kingdom needs a very strong military and wise and able-bodied nobles. He sees the military as his primary recruitment pool. With the imperial forces demobilizing, he hopes to entice many of the released troops to settle in Neatharm. (See *Am. 1, Sv. 14; Ei. 14.*)



Swiftmont 27, AC 1017: Meet the New Boss...

Location: City of Minrothad, Trader's Isle, *Exarchate* of Minrothad, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: After weeks of political maneuvering, it is announced by the *exarch* and the Council of Guilders that, surprise of surprises, Oran Meditor will replace Demetius Vannopolus as the next *Exarch* of Minrothad. Emperor Eusebius and the Thyatian Senate have already sent their approval of the choice. Meditor will take office as *exarch* officially on Kaldmont 23, the first day of Minrothad's Midwinter Festival. (See *Fl. 9, Sv. 6; Ka. 15.*)

What This Means: It quickly became apparent to Vannopolus that the guilders

were having none of the nonentities the Thyatians were promoting for the job. The Thyatians themselves absolutely abhorred the prospect of some of the other candidates becoming *exarch*, so they pushed for Meditor. While many of the guilders have grudges against Meditor, he was their ruler before and is the one with the broadest general support.

What the PCs Can Do: A PC might have managed to become *exarch*, or otherwise been involved in the scheming.

Swiftmont 27, AC 1017: Aldhythe Castle Switches Sides.

Location: Aldhythe Castle, Bishopric of Leominster, Kingdom of Bellayne. SC

Description: Aldhythe Castle has been under the pro-parliament commander Lord Frederick Epping since the start of the dispute. Late on this night, royalist soldiers stage a bloodless coup, disarming their colleagues who refuse to cash in their lot with the king and throwing them out the castle gates. The leader turns out to be Sir Basil Epping, son of Frederick, who sadly orders that his father be detained under house arrest until he can be delivered to the king's justice. (See *Sv. 15, Sv. 20; Ei. 12, Ei. 25.*)

What This Means: Aldhythe Castle has been used as the residence of the monarch many times in the past and as such it is an exceedingly well built fortification—one of the largest castles on the Savage Coast—including a full range of magical wards. While the small garrison poses little threat to any nearby parliamentarians, the castle does control the only clear southern road to Renardie from Leominster. As parliamentarian forces are already stretched to deal with the king's offensive around Bromstow, it seems that Sir Basil will be Lord of Aldhythe for some time—and a thorn in the side of parliament.

Swiftmont 27, AC 1017: Renegotiations in Kastelios

Location: City-State of Kastelios, Serpent Coast. DV

Description: Having removed the Twaelar war from consideration and developed alternate routes to the Hinterlands, the Thyatians are seeing less and less need for their current deal with Kastelios. Most trade vessels headed towards the Hinterlands have taken either the eastern route passing near Ochalea or, with the Twaelar war ending, the direct southern route through the eastern Thanegioth islands, to avoid paying the onerous fees mandated by the Kastelios treaty. Most of the ships passing near Kastelios just do so to pick up Milenian refugees to transport to Thyatis, as part of Eusebius's plan to repopulate the empire. But this traffic provides little income for the Kastelians.

With this as backdrop, knowing the empire has greater leverage with which to bargain this time, Eusebius sent Helena Delanarius back to Kastelios after the end of the Twaelar War, to negotiate a new arrangement. She points out that with the fees set at 20% of the value of goods passing through Kastelios, traffic that might otherwise dock in the city is avoiding it. Thus the Kastelians are receiving less income than they would if the rate was lower, encouraging more Thyatian (and Minrothaddan) merchants to dock here. She also points out that with unrest in Davania growing, the Kastelians would profit from a closer alliance with Thyatis.

She proposes several modifications to last year's agreement. First, that instead of receiving 20% of the value of all goods passing through Kastelios, the rate will instead be 10%. In the case of goods destined for imperial ports (for example, in the Hinterlands), the Thyatian government will pay it directly (in effect, giving Kastelios the *commercia* tax on these goods). In the case of goods destined for other ports, the fee will be split, with half paid by the Thyatian government and half by the trader who owns the goods. In the case of goods

destined for Kastelios, the trader will pay the entire amount in question. In exchange, the Thyatians ask that a section of docks and warehouses be set aside for their use, with the usual dockage and warehouse taxes waived in this district. This would, in effect, create a Thyatian Quarter. The funds provided will help subsidize Kastelios's army and navy in these dangerous times, she says. Helena also proposes increased military cooperation—in addition to joint patrols of the Sea of Dread along the Davanian coast between Kastelios and the Hinterlands, Thyatis will pledge to come to the aid of Kastelios should it be attacked.

The Kastelian Assembly finds this proposal fair and reasonable and quickly accepts it. (*See Fy. 19, Am. 20.*)

What This Means: Helena Delanarius's hands were tied in last year's negotiations, because the Thyatians needed the agreement much more than the Kastelians did. The situation is somewhat different this time, but Delanarius is also more reasonable, proposing terms that will benefit Kastelios as much as Thyatis. The Kastelians are thus much more favorably inclined, as her proposal last year, which would have amounted to virtual annexation of Kastelios, irritated them. Now, the Kastelians are interested in a deal, since the situation in Davania has become much more unsettled and they could use increased income to help them deal with the influx of refugees, as well as an ally in case they are attacked. Such an alliance might even deter potential attackers, keeping Kastelios free from war.

The Kastelians can turn over docks and warehouses that have been largely used by Thyatians anyhow. Kastelios will thus become a link in the expanding trade network of the Thyatian Empire and with more trade passing through both will benefit. Traders headed to (or from) Yavdlom and the southwestern coast of Davania will make Kastelios a regular stop. The merchants of Kastelios itself, growing active themselves, will find a prosperous niche as intermediaries in this trade. They will also make money shipping and selling goods to support the Thyatian war effort in

the Hinterlands, especially during the winter months. These things will further increasing the prosperity of Kastelios.

What the PCs Can Do: Higher-level PCs (Thyatian or Kastelian) could take part in the discussions.

Sviftmont 28, AC 1017: Spirit Herd in Julinius.

Location: Town of Julinius, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Every night from Sviftmont 28 to Kaldmont 2, the city of Julinius is the theatre of an eerie event. Several herds of translucent cows pass through the city and are seen by a good number of surprised citizens, some of whom are terrified by the site. They do not harm anyone, however and simply pass through the city from one side to the other. The best explanation seems to be a spirit manifestation of the cattle that died suddenly of disease earlier this year. (*Fe. 1*)

Events: Eirmont

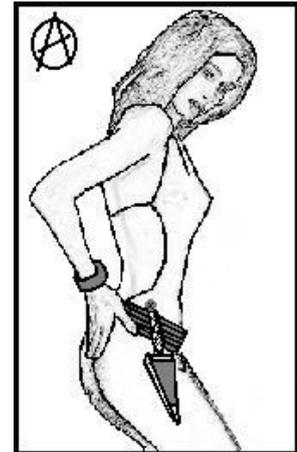
First Week

Eirmont 1, AC 1017: The Sisterhood Strikes.

Location: Waters south of Town of Puerto Morillos, Merry Pirate Seas. HW

Description:

The cutter *Vanity*, one of many ships owned by Handlebar Emilio, is hailed by a distraught crew of women at sea. They are struggling with the sails of their brigantine, the *Damsel's Revenge*.



The *Vanity* sails in to help and are greatly amused at the sight of the women sailors. Of course, they enthusiastically offer their assistance, flirting and romancing the entire time. Suddenly, the women turn on them and quickly capture their ship, showing no quarter in battle. Those who surrender are flogged and then thrown into the sea. The *Vanity's* captain is whipped ruthlessly by Felicia Marlinspike and then towed behind the *revenge* until drowned. (*See Am. 27, Sv. 9; Ka. 12.*)

What This Means: Felicia is putting her Sisters of the Sea into action. She has been brooding over King Emilio's reputation as a womanizer and has declared her own private war on all vessels that bear his colors. She is a vicious woman not to be trifled with. Her temper flared at the demeaning manner of the *Vanity's* crew, so she made them all pay with their lives. Now the sisters have another ship to assist with their cause. Felicia will begin searching for more women sailors to crew the *Vanity*.

Eirmont 2, AC 1017: Forget What—Whose Is It?

Location: Tower of Linden, Principality of Bergdhoven, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: After several days of sickness, Princess Juliana Vlaardoen can no longer deny the truth of her situation: she is pregnant. She is frantic and unable to decide what to do. The servants are already beginning to suspect something is wrong with her; the Black Eagle and Feldian are demanding to see her; and she cannot possibly turn to her uncle, who would be scandalized by the knowledge. She knows that she cannot keep things secret for long, but she is wracked with guilt, torn by love and has no one to turn to. (*See Fy. 16, Am. 24; Ei. 10.*)

What This Means: This is an unexpected and unfortunate development. If the child is the Black Eagle's, then he has finally gained a foothold of sorts in the nobility of Glantri. If it is Feldian's, then the Black Eagle will not rest until the man is destroyed and the knowledge is kept hidden forever.

Eirmont 2, AC 1017: Zargosian Too.

Location: Tower of Night, Milenian Empire. HW

Description: A horrified Zandor discovers that he has contracted the disease that plagues the Zargosians. He is understandably furious and though he isn't sure yet he suspects a magical plague brought by the relic he has finally started to work on, the *Book of Zargos*. It will be almost impossible to get away from the Zargosians now and his only hope is to delve even more into the *Book of Zargos*, as it may contain the cure to his condition.

Vix, content that Zandor is now one of them and thus forced to keep on working for them—and this time, for the benefit of the Zargosians and not just his own—feels confident about leaving the Zargosians again to pursue her own path for a while. (*See Sv. 6, Sv. 9; Ei. 12.*)

What This Means: The disease is brought on by the *Book of Zargos*: victims become susceptible to the sun's rays, losing one hit point per round of exposure. Those afflicted by the disease also slowly change over time: their skin pales, their eyes become sunken and their lips pull back from their teeth in a sort of parody of a grin. In the end, victims look like undead. Zandor has become vulnerable to the sun's rays, but does not yet change to look like an undead.

Eirmont 2, AC 1017: First Spade Has Been Dug.

Location: Town of Tenoboa, Kingdom of Foresthome, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: Queen Kikania opens the beginning of work at the first section of the rim canal from Llyn River to Tenoboa harbor. Again it is a crew under Lord Abolon that will do the work. (*See Sv. 10, Sv. 14; Ei. 17, Ka. 2.*)

What This Means: Of course this is an important day for the whole canal-building project—the work on the first section has really begun now. And the project continues...

What the PCs Can Do: The foes of the project might use the day for open protest. The PCs might be hired to keep a close watch on troublemakers. This is more difficult than it sounds as the real foes are aristocrats who will hide in the background, letting hired commoners do the actual protest for them. To find out for whom a protesting servant is working could help—but perhaps not, if the initiators went to the trouble of concealing their meddling.

Eirmont 2, AC 1017: Justiciar Institute Exposed?

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Investigations of the so-called Justiciar Institute have produced more questions than they've answered. The foundation is based in a small but elegant, classical building in the heart of the city of

Thyatis. It is run by a small but dedicated staff. The chairman of the foundation is an elven woman, a forester by the name of Aseanna Halasophora, who is well-regarded in the highest social circles of the empire and is believed to have studied for a time under the tutelage of Demetron, the Magist of Thyatis. The foundation is supposedly governed by a body of councilors, but with the exception of Halasophora no one has been able to discover their identities or how they gained the position.

The Justiciar Institute was first registered as an institution on the Flaurmont 22, AC 1012—which happens to be the day Emperor Thincol Torion was buried. Since then, till this year, the foundation largely kept a low profile. Their official purpose is to spread and renew the ideals of Valentia the Justiciar in preparation of the millennial celebration of her famous Citizens' Proclamation. Promotional and cultural affairs seemed to be the focus of their activities. As such they were one of dozens of seemingly minor fraternal organizations in Thyatis and a not very noteworthy one at that.

However, their recent widespread grants and endowments have indicated that they have much greater resources than originally expected. Also it is learned that over the last several years they have, usually clandestinely, sponsored adventures and other strange activities, usually with ramifications that only become fully understood in time. Most of these have somehow benefited Thyatian interests in positive ways, but others have exposed and thwarted corrupt Thyatian officials and treacherous aristocrats and traders. They have given gifts that sometimes seem at first to be beneficial to the recipients, but later some of this generosity ends up leading to ruin. The Justiciar Institute also seems to go to great lengths to hide the details of its resources, organization and membership. (*See Am. 19, Sp. 9*)

What This Means: The Justiciar Institute is a seemingly innocuous organization with a hidden agenda: it is not quite what it seems to be. It has at its disposal a number of

powerful and skilled characters, in the full range of classes (fighters, mages, rogues, clerics, etc.), but few of these are politically or socially prominent. Its goals seem to be positive, but as an institution it is not opposed to using borderline methods to achieve them (i.e. engaging in the kind of activities PCs are good at). But, unlike many Thyatian persons and organizations, it avoids recourse to treachery and is actively opposed to all sorts of corruption (especially in its own ranks).

It has a wide and mostly underground network of agents, contacts and informants at its disposal and usually knows a lot more about things than any group should—its information and knowledge of the goings on in Mystara is uncanny.

What the PCs Can Do: Characters might learn that some of the seemingly innocuous, independent patrons that have engaged their services in the past are actually connected somehow to the Justiciar Institute. Honorable characters might be drawn into working for the foundation, either full time or as freelance operatives, once they have uncovered enough of the truth behind the foundation's activities. Characters who are more shady in their dealings might find their plans and schemes being interfered with, subtly or more actively, by foundation agents.

Eirmont 2, AC 1017: A Joyous Sight!

Location: Village of Olmshavn (formerly Olmshaven), Kingdom of Qeodhar, Nayce. AS

Description: Norlan's ongoing offensive against the Antalian rebellion mounts to a crescendo today, as elements of the two



forces—totaling 400 men in all—under his control converge on the port of Olmshavn in the hopes of linking up. The battle is fierce, as archers rain arrows down on the village and small catapults lob boulders at

the makeshift walls surrounding it. The defenders inflict their share of damage, too, as squads of skirmishers dart in and around the besieging forces in order to wreak havoc; many catapults are destroyed in this way. A heavy mist, hanging low above the ground, makes the fighting all the more vicious as assailants seem to appear out of thin air to deal death to the enemy. As the battle progresses, though, it becomes clear that Norlan's forces will soon push their way past the defenses into the village.

Just as some particularly fierce fighting erupts along the southern portion of Olmshavn's wall, loud shouting is heard nearby. Norlan's officers, thinking reinforcements have arrived to hasten the village's fall, press their advantage with renewed vigor. As tense moments pass, it soon becomes clear that the newly arrived force is not, in fact, on the Qeodharan side! Clashes of steel and screams of agony and death erupt along the eastern wall, making their way southwestwards. As the Qeodharans regroup in anticipation of this new threat—surely an Antalian counterattack—they receive a rude shock, for, instead of rebel fighters, they see a large band of eager, battle-scarred Northmen, competently wielding axes and swords!

The Qeodharan response to the assault is well coordinated, but insufficient. Accustomed to the relative ease of battling the rebels, or of countering the more disciplined armies in Norwold the previous year, they are unprepared for the sheer ferocity of their new opponents. Although they manage to inflict some losses, it soon becomes apparent that the Qeodharans must quit the field, or be killed outright! Just as the Qeodharans withdraw, however, they come face-to-face with a second force of Northmen, coming southwards around the western wall of Olmshavn! Seeing that they are now the besieged, the Qeodharans surrender.

As they are being disarmed, one Northman approaches the village and calls loudly to its defenders, saying that they need not fear the Qeodharans anymore, for

Ostland has come to aid its brethren. (*See Am. 10, Am. 22; Ei. 27.*)

What This Means: King Finn of Ostland, after considerable deliberation, decided that the Antalians of Qeodhar should receive aid, not only because they are of the same folk; having an ally in that region of the world might prove useful. The Ostlander-Antalian victory at Olmshavn has cost Norlan considerably in terms of casualties and prisoners and has delayed his plans to encircle the rebel forces in eastern Qeodhar. Other considerations affecting Finn's decision, however, will become apparent only with time.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are Ostlanders, they could be part of the force that voyages to Qeodhar. This could serve as the springboard into a campaign against Norlan's forces.

Eirmont 2, AC 1017: From Bad to Worse.

Location: North of Town of Telsadun, Kingdom of Randel, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: General Taghist is informed that scouts have spotted Randel troops but a few hours' ride from the encampment. Meeting with his remaining officers, Taghist discusses with them the situation. It does not look very good. Though they still have a numerical superiority over the immediate Randel force, the recent raid has compromised their strengths. Taghist expects that without proper leadership, a battle could be disastrous. Even if they defeat this immediate Randel force, they may not be able to continue fighting. Taghist cites specific fears that the Randel formation nearby may be reinforced. Taghist does not want to get caught in Randel in such a compromising state.

It is decided that their force will retreat back to the Randel Line. Taghist's amputated hand is healing, however he needs to get back to Bettelbyn lands so that the proper spells can be cast to restore the hand. The depleted officer staff disperses through the camp and tells the men to begin

preparing to retreat. As if to support the decision, it is quickly noticed that even a withdrawal is difficult to manage with the current number of officers.

As the Bettelny forces withdraw, the Randel forces follow them, staying just within eyesight. The sight of these troops plays heavily on the fears of the troops, who are haunted and furtive. The Bettelny officers are hard-pressed to keep the troops in some semblance of order, as many flee for their lives. The coming days will see the Randel troops following them in this manner to the Randel Line. From there, they will disperse to reinforce positions. The regular armed forces regiments will deploy to Dmireton. The Telsadun and Dmiliburg troops will return to their respective stations. (See *Sv. 21, Sv. 24; Ei. 20, Ka. 6.*)

Eirmont 3, AC 1017: Vestland Issues Protest.

Location: Town of Soderfjord, Kingdom of Soderfjord. OW

Description: Ambassadors from the Kingdom of Vestland issue formal protests against the recent raids by Soderfjord warriors and demand that King Ragnar put a stop to them. If he cannot control his *jarls*, they contend, then Vestland will view the raids as an act of war and bring its full forces to bear. They also keenly remind King Ragnar that Vestland is now a part of the Western Defense League and the alliance looks unfavorably on any such threats of invasion. Ragnar tells the ambassadors to assure King Haraldson that the raids were unsanctioned and that he will put a stop to them right away. (See *Sv. 25; Ei. 20.*)

What This Means: Ragnar is incensed by the independent thinking of the northern border *jarls* and he is furious that he is being bullied by Vestland. He is also very aware of Vestland's alliances and though it is unlikely the Western Defense League nations would declare war on Soderfjord for the independent actions of a few minor *jarls*, Ragnar cannot take that chance. He immediately sends word to the *jarls* that their

raids are not tolerated and that they must cease or he will have to take further action.

Eirmont 3, AC 1017: Settling in for the Winter.

Location: Kulikovo Fortress, Zuyevan Empire. WB

Description: Zuyevo has finally gathered together a large army at Sharya, which crosses the Yalu River to Kulikovo in the face of considerable resistance. This consists mostly of artillery fire, but also sudden appearances of undead from under the river, clawing their way onto the transport barges. The troops manage to fight off these attacks and reach the other shore. The undead dragons are, to their surprise, not seen. The Zuyevan forces surround the fortress, trapping *Don Claudio's* troops within it. They then settle in for a long siege. (See *Sv. 11, Sv. 27.*)

What This Means: Hostilities will continue next year.

Eirmont 5, AC 1017: Leaving Town in a Hurry.

Location: City of Slagovich, Gulf of Hule. SC

Description: The ships of the Thyatian exploratory trade expedition departs the city of Slagovich, sailing north towards Hule. They have managed to glean some useful information (including knowledge of the much-coveted *maintain* spell) and hired a few Torreóner mercenaries that will be of further use. But the commander received instructions to proceed on to Hule. (See *Sv. 7, Sv. 13; Ei. 17, Ka. 23.*)

What This Means: The expedition was on the verge of wearing out its welcome in Slagovich anyhow. Yesterday they received instructions to proceed to Hule, to try and make contact with them, find out more about the place and attempt to negotiate some kind of settlement. They were warned not to expect a warm welcome, because of Thyatis's recent intervention in Sind.

Eirmont 5, AC 1017: Dueling Barons.

Location: City of Glantri, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: The event of the year is taking place at the Great School of Magic. Today is the day of the great three-way duel for the title of Viscount of Castelbianco. Prince Harald Haaskinz, Grand Master of the Great School, starts the match promptly at noon and the contestants square off against one another, as well as the numerous obstacles (both magical and physical) that were specially prepared for the arena.

After brief magical exchanges to test one another's strength, Pieter Vandehaar and Vincienzo di Randazzi suddenly turn their combined magicks against Gerrid Rientha—a double team. Both men know that their best chance lays in taking out the more gifted Rientha and then dueling it out amongst themselves with whatever spells they have left.

Not completely unprepared for such an eventuality, Gerrid bravely and competently stands his ground, countering the assaults of his opponents and even managing to fire off an attack of his own here and there. The crowd watches in entertainment as the assault continues; Prince Harald clenches his withered hand in frustration at the brutal attack on his friend. Things look bad; Randazzi and Vandehaar work well together, tossing complementary spells off at Rientha, covering for the other when one of the court dangers rears up to attack or block them.

Inevitably, Rientha's defenses give out. He is hit solidly by a pair of incapacitating spells and they bring him to his knees helpless. His paralyzed lungs cannot even cry out his surrender. As Vandehaar moves in to finish off Rientha, a brace of *magic missiles* fly towards his exposed back; a double cross by Vincienzo di Randazzi.

Awaiting just such a betrayal (he'd have done the same), Vandehaar smiles as the *magic missiles* wash ineffectively off a special rear *shield* spell. Then Vandehaar's own backup plan goes into action. A pair of shadow mastiffs—two more of the court hazards, but specially *geased* by an ally of

Vandehaar's prior to the match—appear from the shadows and attack, overwhelming the exhausted Randazzi.

Vandehaar turns back to Rientha, ready to do him in. He raises his hand to cast a *disintegrate* spell... but nothing happens. The incantation is gone from memory, just as if he'd already cast it, but there was no effect. He tries another spell, with the same effect. His magic is not working. Vandehaar glares angrily around the court. Is this Randazzi's doing? No, he's too busy trying to hold back the ripping jaws of a shadow mastiff. Rientha? Yet the old man is still paralyzed, unable to move. So who?

Meanwhile the crowd is howling, calling for more. Finish it! They are shouting. Vandehaar curses and heads towards Prince Harald's seat, preparing to call this a foul match. Someone is interfering with his magic.

At that moment, Rientha's body begins to glow blue, ever so faintly. A moan escapes his lips; his hand flexes. The paralysis has worn off. Vandehaar turns towards the sound, positive now that Rientha is indeed responsible. He charges Rientha, grabbing him by the throat. The crowd roars in disbelief—physical contact between duelists is forbidden. Harald begins to rise, to declare the match over, but then...

Vandehaar's hands slowly unclench themselves, moving reluctantly to his sides. He watches in disbelief as his body moves without his conscious volition. Rientha glares daggers at his opponent even as he controls Vandehaar's body. He raises one hand—sparks fly out and send painful shocks through the Flaemish wizard. Vandehaar falls to the ground, unconscious.

Rientha stands, shakes his head. He is confused, trying to process all that has happened. A cry of pain draws his attention. Randazzi is being badly clawed by the one shadow mastiff that he has not yet dispatched. Rientha casually *disintegrates* the beast.

Gerrid walks over towards Randazzi, who still lays bleeding on the floor of the court. The two men exchange a silent glance and

Randazzi shakes his head. No more, is the silent plea. Rientha extends his hand and helps the young Caurenzan noble to his feet. The crowd bursts into manic applause. Gerrid Rientha is the new Viscount of Castelbianco. (See *Sv. 12, Sv. 20.*)

What This Means: Rientha is the man of the hour in Glantri; his performance in the arena will be the talk of the town for several weeks. The defeated Randazzi holds no malice towards the new viscount—just the opposite; he is grateful for Rientha’s timely rescue.

Vandehaar, on the other hand, is in a bind. His magic continues to fail him. Rientha claims that he had nothing to do with it and so does Randazzi, but Vandehaar doesn’t believe them. He vows vengeance on the pair of them and throw in that Grand Master of the Great School of Magic, Prince Harald as well. Vandehaar has to find a way to get his magic back, or else he’ll be out of his baronial title.

Additionally, Vandehaar faces criminal charges for violating the terms of the duel (no physical conduct) and there will be an investigation into charges of cheating. Tampering with the nature of the Dueling Court (as happened with the *geased* shadow mastiffs) is strictly forbidden. Vandehaar is confident it cannot be traced to him, but he is infuriated by the scandal.

Meanwhile, Prince Harald and Gerrid Rientha are both a bit worried. They know exactly why Pieter Vandehaar cannot use his magic, even if they cannot (or will not) say: Vandehaar has been cut off from the *Radiance*. It is a powerful spell, one only usable by someone indoctrinated into the ways of the *Radiance*, but neither of them used it during the battle. Further, Rientha’s sudden recovery was also a result of the *Radiance*’s powers, but was not initiated by Rientha himself. Someone out there used the *Radiance* against Vandehaar, but who? A member of the Brotherhood of the *Radiance*? Or someone else? Is there someone else who might have secret knowledge of the *Radiance*? And what is their interest in the affairs of the Glantrian nobility?

Eirmont 5, AC 1017: A Talk in the Lobby.

Location: City of Andaire, Kingdom of Alphas’ar, Floating Continent of Alpathia, Alpathian Empire. HW

Description: Lord Torn from Theranderol meets Soltturnun in the lobby of the Grand Council. He asks him if the Navy of the Lakes could realize a canal project for Theranderol too. Soltturnun is unsure as many funds and manpower of the navy are bound by the three ongoing projects—an important charge already. He estimates that the real work could start no earlier than in 1019. Torn asks him to send an emissary this month nevertheless and Soltturnun promises to send the request to the headquarters as soon as possible. (See *Sv. 17, Sv. 21; Ei. 15, Ei. 18.*)

What This Means: Theranderol has the same problems as every other coastal nation. Additionally, they see a military advantage in new waterways. Unfortunately the resources of the Navy of the Lakes are not unlimited, but the sailors will do what they can as the enlargement of waterways on the continent is a big wish of them.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs can become part of the negotiation teams.

Eirmont 7, AC 1017: Angel of Music.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: A new star rises in the firmament of the Thyatian theater district when a previously unknown chorus girl is suddenly and inexplicably selected to replace the lead actress and notorious prima donna, at the opening performance of a major opera. The actress’s crystalline soprano singing voice and delicately expressive acting wins her instant acclaim and fame.

What This Means: The young star’s success isn’t all due to skill. A shrouded creature that haunts the building, known as the theater ghost, threatened the opera’s backers into giving her the leading role. She hopes to make her own way now on her considerable talent, but over the following

months gets caught up in a bizarre and macabre love triangle.

What the PCs Can Do: Characters might be hired as ghost busters by the opera's backers and get drawn into the tale.

Second Week

Eirmont 8, AC 1017: Underway Once More.

Location: Southern Atlass Ocean. HW

Description: Having effected repairs and obtained more supplies, the group led by Friedrich von Dreiburg continues its journey, leaving the Island of Okta. (*See Am. 4, Am. 24.*)

What This Means: No further mishaps were encountered on the island, but everyone is glad to leave nonetheless—the place had acquired an unsettling atmosphere once word spread of the dangerous inhabitant of the mountain.

Eirmont 8, AC 1017: Thyatian Punitive Expedition Invades Dythestenia.

Location: Emirate of Dythestenia, Emirates of Ylaruam. OW

Description: The Imperial Senate of Thyatis issues a declaration of war against Ylaruam. Immediately several thousand Thyatians, consisting of the Hespirian Tagmata, its baggage column and several hundred Thyatian brigands, march out of the pass of Biazzan and into Dythestenia. The brigands spread out through the Emirate of Dythestenia, looting and burning, while the main Thyatian column marches to Ctesiphon and puts it under siege. (*See Am. 14; Ei. 18, Ei. 21.*)

What This Means: This is the beginning of the Thyatian campaign to punish Ylaruam for its previous attacks against Thyatis. The band of brigands, numbering around 300 persons, had been operating in the southern Altan Tepes for years. They were recently cornered by imperial troops and approached with a proposition—they could be killed and

enslaved if they resisted, or they could move into Ylaruam to continue their thieving ways, with the support of the Thyatian army. They chose the latter.

The Thyatian forces will build a fortified camp outside Ctesiphon, set up siege artillery and begin to batter the walls with occasional pot-shots. They do not conduct any assaults and seem content to wait until the small town is starved into submission. Their camp is situated so as to allow easy supply and communication to and from Biazzan.

In Ylaruam, when the sultan hears of the attack, he orders his troops to march to the relief of Ctesiphon.

What the PCs Can Do: Characters can participate in the war on both sides, sabotaging the other side's efforts and attempting to advance their own cause.

Eirmont 10, AC 1017: My Dear Friend...

Location: Fenswick Keep, Principality of Fenswick, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: Princess Juliana Vlaardoen can keep silent about her pregnancy no more. Having had it confirmed by a trusted physician, she now turns to the only person she feels might understand her situation—her dear friend Dolores Hillsbury. The Princess of Fenswick is indeed consoling and compassionate, supporting Juliana through several painful days. Yet as soon as Juliana leaves, Dolores makes plans to inform her ally, the Black Eagle, of this development. (*See Am. 24, Ei. 2.*)

What This Means: Dolores is no friend of Juliana's. She is the one responsible for providing the Black Eagle with the enchantment that made Juliana fall in love with him. Now that she knows of the pregnancy, she will provide von Hendriks with the necessary information and resources to ensure that Feldian is destroyed, all the while attempting to convince Juliana that she must wed the Black Eagle.

Eirmont 12, AC 1017: Armies Clash.

Location: Countryside, Kingdom of Arkan, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: The armies of Stonewall clash with the Arkan and Foresthome armies. Although the new allies haven't coordinated their attack very well, the opposition is just too great and General Selcomad is eventually forced to stop his advance and retreat to the last encampment his army had set up. (*See Sv. 11, Sv. 19; Ka. 15, Ka. 17.*)

What This Means: The combined forces of Arkan and Foresthome have been successful—the advance of the Stonewall war machine has been halted and General Selcomad is forced to consider his options now, which gives Arkan additional time to plan its defense with its new allies from Foresthome. In the next couple of weeks, there will be many casualties in the confrontations, but Stonewall is losing more soldiers than it expected and is slowly forced to withdraw.

What the PCs Can Do: There is plenty of opportunity for the PCs to participate in these battles, on either side. The DM should feel free to add as many confrontations as desired.

Eirmont 12, AC 1017: Feeding Cantrips to Dogs.

Location: Tower of Night, Milenian Empire. HW

Description: Zandor, now suffering from the same curse as the Zargosians, informs them of his latest discoveries springing from his focused work on the *Book of Zargos*. He reports having deciphered several new spells from the book and promises to spend some time teaching the Zargosians how to use those parts of the unholy book, while he continues his researches. (*See Sv. 9, Ei. 2; Ka. 4, Ka. 11.*)

What This Means: Zandor, of course, is lying about the extent of his discoveries. In reality, what he gives the Zargosians now is only the tip of the iceberg, the magics that

are mere cantrips to a wizard like him and that, thanks to his former knowledge, were easy enough to crack. For the Zargosians, though, they seem like powerful magics, hitherto unknown and thus Zandor's deception passes undetected. Zandor intends to distillate reports of his findings, thus allowing to keep a comfortable advance at all times and in the meantime he grinds his teeth and augments his spellbook, planning his revenge.

Eirmont 12, AC 1017: Caligaris.

Location: Village of Caligaris, Great Escarpment, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: The Thyatian archaeological expedition led by Ennius Necrekis reaches the phanaton village of Caligaris this afternoon. Caligaris is a small phanaton village located in the central forest of the Isle of Dawn. After some discussions and offerings of payment, the Thyatians convince the phanatons to give them hostel for the night. During the evening meal, Ennius asks the phanaton chief if he knows of a strange idol that looks like a cross between a wolf and a spider. The chief nods and after a promise of more gifts and barter items, Ennius is taken to a small shrine where several weird items are collected. Although most of them are useless rubbish, Ennius and Rudolf Neuenberg, the only two allowed in the sanctuary, recognize the idol for the one that triggered their interest in the village. They also notice some art objects that seem very old and of ancient Thyatian design. Quite puzzled by the discovery, the scholars decide to remain in the village to do further investigations and maybe some excavation too. (*See Fe. 13, Am. 7; Ka. 3, Ka. 12.*)

What This Means: Ennius is searching for arcane knowledge based on his researches in ancient mystical texts, but his reasons and goals remain hidden.

Eirmont 12, AC 1017: Duel in Torreón.

Location: Town of Ciudadela de León, *Baronía de Torreón*. SC

Description: The two Bellaynish ambassadors of Bellayne posted to Torreón are both attending a dinner hosted by *Baronesa* Isabel when they get into a fiery argument about the situation in Bellayne. After a shouted exchange from each of them, *mataras* are drawn and they both leap into combat. *Baronesa* Isabel takes a dim view of this and has her guards come in and break the fight up. Both ambassadors are then thrown out the *baronesa's* manor and told to cool off. (See *Sv. 20, Sv. 27; Ei. 25, Ei. 25.*)

What This Means: It seems that certain opinionated rakasta don't know when to hold their tongues. Perhaps on reflection having both ambassadors in the same room was a bad idea anyway.

What the PCs Can Do: Characters who happen to be nearby and who have good reputations may be asked to act as seconds in the duel.

Eirmont 13, AC 1017: Reptile Knights Face Their Fate.

Location: Village of Tsyra, Grand Duchy of Stygia. WB

Description: The group of adventurers and mercenaries sent by the Klagorst Confederacy and led by Andrzej Vatacek, the Master of the Adventurers' Guild of Grawyz, finally find the Reptile Knights, who are raiding the village of Tsyra, in Stygia. They have taken more than one month to find them, usually arriving late, after villages have been raided; sometimes, they have met monsters unleashed by the Reptile Knights and dealt with them. Two days ago, the expedition was finally able to locate their enemy's position and they have force-marched themselves in order to reach them in time.

The battle is long and fierce, but in the end most of the Reptile Knights are captured or killed. Andrzej and his 20 companions become heroes of the troglodyte population. (See *Am. 27, Sv. 1.*)

What This Means: Of the 22 remaining Reptile Knights, 14 are dead. Five have been captured and three have managed to escape. Of the members of the expedition, 12 are

dead and three are seriously injured, but the dead will be resurrected, if possible.

What the PCs Can Do: Presumably the PCs will fight, kill, cast spells, attack, defend, et cetera.

Eirmont 13, AC 1017: Welcome to the Islands.

Location: City of Seagirt, *Exarchate* of the Pearl Islands, Thyatian Empire. SD

Description: Julius Ambrosius's Davanian expeditionary flotilla docks in Seagirt, after surveying more of the Jungle Coast. Deciding that he ought to make use of the local amenities, he arranges for messengers to send his accumulated reports to the emperor, including accounts of encounters with hostile jungle orcs and the discovery of the wreckage of the Stinging Bee, as well as pages of illustrations of interesting specimens of flora and fauna discovered thus far. He also arranges for those crew members who have fallen ill to various maladies over the course of the voyage to receive medical attention and for his ships to undergo routine maintenance.

Finally, he decides that, given that the winter months can be particularly rough along the Davanian coast, he and his crew will winter in Seagirt. (See *Am. 9, Sv. 2.*)

What This Means: The first leg of the expedition's journey has been completed successfully. Julius and his crew have managed to map the coast stretching from Davania Inferior to the lands opposite the western reaches of the Pearl Islands. They found no sign in civilization during their journey, though they did document several encounters with jungle orcs, noting the variations in their tribal markings and behavior. They also charted almost 30 small islands, some little more than sandbars, others cloaked with vegetation and inhabited by seafaring jungle orcs. The fact that none of the expedition members have died so far is a testament both to luck and to Julius's leadership abilities and preparedness.

Eirmont 14, AC 1017: Deltart's Request.

Location: City of Ionace, Ionace Island, Nayce. AS

Description: Using magic, Commander Deltart requests that the council further bolster his forces at the Torenal Site. He cites that for a facility of such importance, he has yet to be given the proper support to remove the undead threat. As he puts it, his limited resources make his attempts at quelling the threat as little more than a fox-chase and the recent departure of Underocean's forces has not helped matters. Given the recent assault on Eagret Island he has few doubts that his charge will be next. He specifically cites his expectations that the undead will take advantage of the Day of Dread to repeat their assault on Torenal Site.

The response is quick and to the point—Torenal Site will not be reinforced. The available forces are dispersed thinly as is and reinforcements cannot be sent without totally undermining the defenses of other interests. The council recommends that he continue his current patrols and security measures. As for the Day of Dread, the loss of magic will make patrolling difficult. It is advised that he pull all of his available forces into the complex and take a defensive stance. The aquatic race mercenaries can make short-ranged patrols and aid in securing the outer perimeter. (*See Sv. 5, Sv. 12.*)

What This Means: Deltart has some very serious fears for the coming Day of Dread. He fears that the ghouls will repeat their attack while his magic pool is down. Deltart may be a lot of things, but he has no interests in losing his command or losing any prestige within Nayce. He wants his defenses reinforced to bolster the base. Nayce cannot offer these reinforcements, as it does not have the resources. The ghoul threat is widespread enough for all existing Naycese forces to be on alert to protect their normal posts.

Eirmont 14, AC 1017: Kronenburg Returns to Freiburg.

Location: City of Freiburg, Territory of

Heldann, Heldannic Empire. OW

Description: A small vessel, bearing the colors of Vanya's Rest, glides into Freiburg, not arousing much comment. The bound, huddled form of Heinz Kronenburg is escorted to the city goal, where he will await judgment, scheduled in three days. (*See Fj. 21, Am. 15; Ei. 17.*)

Eirmont 14, AC 1017: The Vengeful Nogai.

Location: Kingdom of Neatharm, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: The Nogai tribesmen living in Neatharm are quite enraged at the prospect of the Alphatians expanding their holdings within the confines of the kingdom. They had been quite content with the premise of the Alphatians living in Haldemar and even the mining town of Dogrel, because the bulk of the Alphatian populace stayed in these communities. The Neathar could avoid these settlements when they chose to and could go there when they wished to trade.

Rumors of the impending arrival of more of the Alphatians and the establishment of farmsteads outside of the existing communities has caused a lot of hostile feelings of distrust to be rekindled. Also rekindled are the memories of the eventual victory of their own warriors against those of the Alphatians. Many begin to think and plan for a new battle for freedom. They won before, they can win again. (*See Sv. 14, Sv. 27.*)

Third Week

Eirmont 15, AC 1017: The Burial of a Great Khan.

Location: World Mountain, Ethengar Khanates. OW

Description: Today is the day the body of the Golden *Khan*, Moglai, is laid to rest. His son (and would-be successor) Manghai *Khan* has called all the tribal and clan leaders to join him and his tribe in this ceremony, at a

vast towering edifice, upon which the bodies of great *khans* are laid to rest, though relatively few have decided to show up. Only Temur, *Khan* of the Yugatais and Batu, *Khan* of the Bortaks and Ghazan, *Khan* of the Taijits, have presented themselves.

The ceremonial procession makes its way to the top of the World Mountain, clerics and *bakomons* ready to work their magicks to ward off evil spirits and madness. Their skills are not needed, however, as no undue evil comes to the procession. It is as if the spirits that live around the World Mountain sense the import of this day and have sworn off their vengeance against the mortals who climb the mountain.

Following the burial, Manghai *Khan* gives a speech, affirming his claim to the legacy of his father and intimating that the other tribal *khans* should swear their allegiance to him. None of the other *khans* respond and the funeral procession makes its way gradually back down the mountain.

After the ceremony, unnoticed by the rest of the procession, several adventurers slip into the Spirit World. Their goal—to find the entrapped soul of Manghai *Khan*. (See *Fy. 12, Fy. 15; Ei. 16.*)

What the PCs Can Do: If they are the adventurers chosen to accompany the shaman Trungpa into the Spirit World, they will have a whole new sort of adventure ahead of them, in a place where few have ventured before.

Eirmont 15, AC 1017: First Meeting of the Planning Staff.

Location: City of Errolyn, Kingdom of Theranderol, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description:
Admiral Clarendon and some of his staff have arrived in the capital of Theranderol. They meet with their



counterparts from the kingdom. Those are led by Lady Tyrona, a well-known battle-mage. Tyrona welcomes Clarendon and the discussion begins. After a short time Tyrona learns that Clarendon is a commoner. Angrily she interrupts the meeting and storms out of the room.

Later that same day Admiral Clarendon receives the message that the talks are reported sine die (without a day being set). He leaves the city at once. (See *Sv. 21, Ei. 5; Ei. 18, Ka. 13.*)

What This Means: This was another example of a noble's arrogance. Lady Tyrona is not able to accept a commoner as her equal, as even though Theranderol is a fairly moderate nation the proper Alphatian order of things is respected—spellcasters lead and mundaners obey—and she knows only that Clarendon is a commoner. The fact that the admiral has begun his career as a thief on the docks of Aasla is still unknown to her; had she known this she might have killed him on the spot out of anger and outrage.

Eirmont 15, AC 1017: An Unexpected Arrival.

Location: City of Archport, Kingdom of Eadrin, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: Arriving by means of a river galley, a group of fifty troops and an assortment of adventurer types arrive in Archport bearing the war banner of the Randel army. King Idon goes to meet these newcomers. He is surprised when the leader of the Randel troops, Captain Gyashi, presents to him Princess Junna. Though obviously puzzled by her being sent to a war zone, Idon greets the daughter of Verothrics and niece of the Queen of the Randel.

Gyashi presents to Idon a letter from Karatnora, offering to the Eadrin defenses these troops. She apologizes about their small numbers. Karatnora places them under Idon's command, but requests that they be kept together as a unit and Gyashi retain command of them in battle. As for Junna, the letter explains that it will be beneficial for both Eadrin and Randel to have a

member of the royal family partaking in the battles to come.

Idon instructs an aide to find quarters for the Randel troops and suitable rooms for Junna. However, Gyashi interjects that Karatnora would desire that Junna be treated no differently than any of the other noble troops. Idon is puzzled at this but since Junna does not object to this treatment, he obliges the request. (*See Sv. 4, Sv. 9; Ei. 26, Ka. 11.*)

What This Means: This is the assistance that Randel has promised. Though small in number, the unit is a well-experienced group with a good number of war mages, skilled warriors and Randel-born adventurers. The unit is trained to work together, hence Karatnora's insistence that they be kept together. Likewise, she knows that the Randel mindset will make it difficult to place them under the command of any officer that they may deem inferior.

Junna's presence is at the behest of her aunt, who wanted to get her out of the kingdom for a time. Given her prior mistakes, her reputation has been severely harmed. Such expeditions are hoped to reinforce her hereditary militaristic traits and act as complimentary propaganda. Karatnora also hopes that the feel of battle will rekindle Junna's interests in warfare and drive home the need for a strong military. With these, Junna may someday be able to reassert her position as ruler of the Randel.

What the PCs Can Do: Randel-allied PCs may be called upon to join this expeditionary force. Though regular combat is emphasized, each will be encouraged to act as bodyguards to the princess.

Eirmont 16, AC 1017: Sneak Attack!

Location: Bortak Territories, Ethengar *Khanates*. OW

Description: Batu *Khan* and his wife Bakai (once more at full health) have barely just returned to their camp when *bratak* scouts arrive with dire news—Murkit tribe forces are descending upon them! Though caught by surprise, the Bortak warriors respond quickly, breaking into military formation.

Before long, there is a pitched battle ongoing between the forces of Batu *Khan* and Manghai *Khan*.

After an initial skirmish, the Murkit *dagams* retreat from combat. Batu, suspecting a trick, orders his own men not to follow. The Murkit horsemen simply pull away several hundred yards, waiting.

Then, several *dagams* bearing a different banner, that of the Taijit tribe, appear on the horizon. The warriors of Ghazan *Khan* have evidently formed a union with Manghai's tribe. Even worse for Batu *Khan* is the appearance of Manghai's *keshak* who ride up between the Murkit and Taijit armies.

The Murkit and Taijit armies open fire, pelting the Bortaks with a deadly barrage of arrows. As the Bortak warriors scramble to avoid the onslaught, the *keshak* charge and slam into the enemy with devastating effect. It is all Batu *Khan* can do to rally his warriors to retreat.

When the day is done, several hundred Bortaks lie dead and many more are to be put to the sword for their treachery in failing to acknowledge the new great *khan*, Manghai. Batu *Khan* and his wife have somehow escaped the Murkit clutches—*hakomon* assistance is suspected. (*See Ei. 15.*)

What This Means: Manghai has unexpectedly broken the temporary peace accord between the Bortaks and Murkits. He has secretly been planning this ever since the return of Moglai *Khan's* body and deemed the burial time to be the most appropriate for his attack—the World Mountain is in Bortak territory, after all. Ghazan *Khan*, who had been leaning towards an alliance with Manghai, was finally persuaded to give his full assistance, after promises that Manghai would help with the Yakka tribe that constantly wars with the Taijits. The other tribal *khans* remain neutral, waiting to see who triumphs in the war between the Bortaks and the Murkits. For now, it looks as if Manghai *Khan* is that winner and Jaku the Render is one step closer to dominating the Ethengar Steppes.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs may be able to gain advance warning of the attack

and provide this information to Batu *Khan*, allowing for the survival of more of the *khan's* men. They may also be approached by Akmad ibn Yusef, who learns of this attack only as it is declared and be sent to safeguard Bakai and her husband, Batu *Khan*.

Eirmont 17, AC 1017: More Harbors To Be Reconstructed.

Location: Towns of Sotel and Igoin, Kingdom of Foresthome, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: Like in Tenoboa a month prior, work on the harbors of Sotel and Igoin begins. (See *Sv. 14, Ei. 2; Ka. 2, Ka. 5.*)

What This Means: Queen Kikania wants to get this work finished as quickly as possible. It is a promise to the inhabitants of those cities that their lives in the future will be better. Again she trusts Lord Abolon and his staff to do the construction work.

Eirmont 17, AC 1017: Judgment.

Location: City of Freiburg, Territory of Heldann, Heldannic Empire. OW

Description: Alone in the Star Chamber with *Oberherr* Wulf von Klagendorf, Heinz Kronenburg listens as the charges made against him are read out. Accused of gross incompetence and unsuitability for command, Kronenburg is asked by his superior what he can possibly say to defend himself. The accused man stands silently, his spirit crushed by the consequences of the raid and by his confinement during his voyage to Freiburg. He looks up at the *oberherr* and tells him that he only did what he thought was right for the Heldannic Order, that he was convinced that he had the power to overcome the threats faced by Vanya's Rest. He accuses his former subordinates of being politically motivated; they do not have the passion of Vanya within them—they wish only for more power and seek to use their positions among the Heldannic Knights to further their own aims.

Herr Wulf ponders Kronenburg's

statement for several long minutes. He then asks for the names of these subordinates and notes them down. Finally, he orders the guards posted outside to come back into the chamber and escort the prisoner back to gaol; judgment has been rendered and will be meted out soon. (See *Am. 15, Ei. 14.*)

What This Means: Unbeknownst to many, Wulf and Kronenburg served together, briefly, many years ago. Even then, Wulf knew that Kronenburg was not exactly cut out to be a high-ranking commander, but he was loyal and could generally be trusted to do his best. He now sees that his later decision to grant Kronenburg (who had been a loyal supporter of his for a long time) the post of Castellan of Vanya's Rest, which had beforehand been considered a "safe" posting, might have been a mistake. Nonetheless, Kronenburg has made serious errors in judgment—ones that should normally cost him his life. The *oberherr* has decided to strip Kronenburg of his titles, honors and any Heldannic Order-related possessions and exile him for life from all Heldannic lands. In some ways, this punishment is worse than death, since service to the Heldannic Order has long been the central focus of Kronenburg's life, but Wulf saw before him a broken man, aged already beyond his years due to the internal turmoil he has faced since the raid. He knew then that the man before him had already punished himself far worse than any form of slow death could accomplish, since he himself has seen what his errors in judgment have wrought.

That night, von Klagendorf will visit Kronenburg in his cell and tell him what he has decided. The prisoner will then be given spare clothes, some money and then be escorted to a small cargo vessel, headed for Newkirk. In the official reports, the *oberherr* will state that Kronenburg was executed during the night and his body was burned to ashes.

As for the information Kronenburg provided prior to his sentencing—that will be kept by Wulf for his own purposes, in order to gauge the loyalty of the new Castellan of Vanya's Rest and his staff.

Eirmont 17, AC 1017: Jennites Reach Skyfyr.

Location: City of Skyfyr, Province of Blackrock, Republic of Esterhold, Nayce. SK

Description: After a few initial battles, the united Jennites reach the city of Skyfyr and begin a siege. It looks like it could be a long siege, though, because the initial resistance was fierce and the people of Skyfyr seem prepared for the siege. Lyriander, the Alphatian soldier who survived the initial sieges, has also reached Skyfyr and has helped Governor Kalin stage a defense against the Jennites with the insights he has gained from previous confrontations. (*See Am. 23, Sv. 2; Ka. 13.*)

What This Means: Skyfyr has had plenty of time to prepare itself for the expected Jennite siege and Governor Kalin is determined not to let his city or his province fall to the armies of his brother! Then again, if the united Jennites can take Skyfyr, they will likely break the last resistance of the Alphatians and their supporters among the Jennites, because the southern towns of Port Marlin and Rock Harbor are little more than trading posts and will probably surrender if Skyfyr falls. This seems to be the siege that will determine the outcome of the war between the Alphatians and the united Jennites, at least if the united Jennites are triumphant.

What the PCs Can Do: Fight, spy, or plan, on either side. The two brothers, Talin and Kalin, will fight hard to win here and they will be grateful to any adventurers who can aid them.

Eirmont 17, AC 1017: Port of Danger, Port of Opportunity.

Location: Town of Boyâzka, Gulf of Hule, Kingdom of Yozgulak, Hulean Empire. SC

Description: Having made a brief stopover on Berat Island, the Thyatian exploratory trade expedition reaches Hule today. The port authorities impound their ships in dock almost at once and inform the commander that the Master has instructed

them to travel to Greatrealm to explain their presence in Great Hule. Most of the ship's crew are to stay in Boyâzka; the commander, some of his officers and a small detail of selected men are to go upriver into Hule. (*See Sv. 13, Ei. 5; Ka. 23.*)

What This Means: The Master of Hule knows why the Thyatians are here and wants to string them along a bit. Forcing them to travel to Greatrealm to conduct negotiations will put off matters for some time. They likely won't arrive until next year, because of numerous delays along the way. This will allow Hosadus to complete some preparations.

What the PCs Can Do: This is a good opportunity for characters to explore Hule, though they will be closely watched at all times. They might try to break away from the group and go off on their own, in which case the Huleans will probably let them alone (but monitor them) unless they stir up trouble. If they do, they will be declared outlaws, spies, saboteurs and hunted down.

Eirmont 18, AC 1017: Sultan's Armies Reach Ctesiphon.

Location: Town of Ctesiphon, Emirate of Dythestenia, Emirates of Ylaruam. OW

Description: Sultan Hassam al-Kalim leads several thousand Ylari warriors marching to the relief of Ctesiphon. When they get within a few miles of the town, the Thyatian troops hastily withdraw back towards Biazzan, burning their own siege engines rather than taking the time to bring them along. The sultan leads his troops through town quickly, to the cheers of the townsfolk and orders the Emir of Ctesiphon to have the Thyatian campsite dismantled. The sultan then leads his troops in pursuit of the retreating Thyatian forces. (*See Am. 14, Ei. 8; Ei. 21, Ei. 22.*)

What This Means: The Ylari have cleared the Thyatian troops from Dythestenia, but the brigands that came with them scatter into the hills. They will plague the area for some time.

Eirmont 18, AC 1017: Complaints in the Lobby.

Location: City of Andaire, Kingdom of Alphas'ar, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: Lord Torn from Theranderol complains about Admiral Clarendon in a conversation with Soltturnun. It is unacceptable for Lady Tyrona to have to negotiate with a simple commoner. Soltturnun regrets the unpleasantness of Lady Tyrona but he feels he is not in a position to go along with the lady's whims. He explains Lord Torn that the navy simply has nobody available to replace Admiral Clarendon at the moment, adding that he is the best man for the job in the first place. If Theranderol cannot accept him as the navy's representative further talks are pointless. With that he rejects the demand for a replacement as interference with the internal affairs of the Navy of the Lakes. (*See Ei. 5, Ei. 15; Ka. 13, Ka. 18.*)

What This Means: Soltturnun is not responsible for staffing, but he knows that Clarendon cannot be replaced by just any other sailor. Additionally he does not want to do it as this would be a precedent and could endanger the effectiveness of the navy in the future. Inept officers, who are promoted because of their noble origin only, have spoiled more than one military operation in the past, in his opinion and that's why the navy is not organized like that. As a mercenary force the Navy of the Lakes cannot permit itself the luxury to lose battles because of incompetence.

The demand for talks originated from the other side and so Soltturnun is not very determined to press the matter further on. He can wait, it is not his loss.

Eirmont 18, AC 1017: *Submersibles Do Drown.*

Location: Sundsvall Maelstrom, Nayce. AS

Description: A ship patrolling near the Sundsvall Maelstrom is violently rammed by an undetected foe. The evacuating crew, expecting attacks on their lifeboats by the

enemy from below, stand ready for battle against a creature from the deep, but the attack never comes. The captain finally sends a team to investigate the ship and hopefully determine who or what breached her.

The away team is greatly surprised to find an Alphatian *submersible* stuck the ship. Sending in magically-equipped scouts, they find it empty, apparently adrift for an extended period. The ship and *submersible* cannot be saved, but take several hours to sink together. (*See Fy. 16, Sv. 23.*)

What This Means: Several months ago, a *submersible* crew, who had heard persistent rumors about the possibility of traveling to Alphatia by way of the Sundsvall Maelstrom, decided to try out and drove their ship right into the maelstrom. Unfortunately, they didn't know that some strange property of the maelstrom made it impossible for anything but individuals to pass through. In all likelihood, they remained trapped inside the maelstrom's wormhole for an undefined length of time, until the *submersible* was thrown back to where it came from, emptied of its crew who are either dead or lost in some unknown plane of existence.

What the PCs Can Do: If they were part of the crew of the *submersible*, this is a good opportunity for them to travel to unknown planes, lost Alphatian adventurers trying to get home.

Eirmont 19, AC 1017: The Vanishing.

Location: Various Kingdoms in the Alatians and on the Isle of Dawn, Nayce. SD

Description: All on the same day this morning, six renowned Alphatian heroes are discovered missing by their friends, family and compatriots. In Feather Fall on Aeria, the wizard Wyndel fails to show up to give his morning lecture and his quarters are found to be empty. In Crossroads on Ne'er-do-well, the famed pirate-lord Nifelrake Two-Patch has disappeared from his flagship. In Aegopoli, Esterissas, warrior-hero of the Great War, has vanished without a trace, while Sokofis, priest of Rathanos,

fails to appear to lead morning meditations at his shrine in Edairo. Qeigonia the Fiery is suddenly absent in Trikelios, leaving her apprentices bewildered and finally in Hillvale Veloril, an accomplished smuggler and former imperial spy, has suddenly evanesced as well.

While all of these people are given to sudden and mysterious comings and goings, none of their known associates were aware that they planned any trips. The six persons knew each other, but only passingly as acquaintances, so it takes awhile before a connection is made, as news travels of the disappearances and people notice they all happened simultaneously. At that point a serious investigation is begun. (*See Fy. 19.*)

What This Means: The vanished six have several things in common. First, they all fought with distinction on the Alphatian side in the Great War and the battles against the Thyatians that followed. Secondly, all are widely known and respected for their skills and accomplishments. And thirdly, all were involved in planning and conducting the shipment of arms to the Twaelar. Naturally, suspicion falls on the Thyatians, but proof is hard to come by. First, the investigators use divination magics to try and discover what happened to the vanished six and where they are, but the only answer they get is that none are on Mystara any longer. They try to recover or revive them with magic, but this proves impossible and even though Wyndel had left behind material so he could be *cloned* if necessary, that material is also missing. With little proof, the investigation seems stymied for the moment at least.

The persons responsible were, of course, agents of Thyatis, members of the Order of the *Magistranoi*. When the Twaelar turned over names of some of those who were involved in shipping arms to them, the Thyatians began an espionage project. They followed the links back up the hierarchy of the Alphatian smuggling network, till they reached the level of six of the more prominent participants. Agents in disguises, identities that were never used before and will never be used again, then gathered detailed information about each person's

life—then, on the same night, all six were expertly targeted and eliminated in their sleep, all within an hour of midnight and their corpses *disintegrated*. Powerful magics were then used to make sure that divinatory spells would be useless in gathering information pertaining to the disappearances. Given the notorious Alphatian reliance on magical methods and their comparative weakness in more mundane forensic investigation methods, this effectively cripples their inquiry. In addition, all the Thyatian agents involved vanished themselves from the region immediately after the mission was accomplished, leaving little if any evidence behind and thus making it very hard to uncover the truth—from within Alphatian territory. To have any chance of success, investigations are probably going to have to take place in Thyatis itself. In any case, the more jaded figure that these things are all just part of the “great game”—Alphatians assist the enemies of Thyatis, the Thyatians strike back and the endless cycle continues.

What the PCs Can Do: Some or all of the vanished might be known to the characters if the party consists of Alphatians or has adventured extensively in the region. The DM can even replace any or all of them with close friends and associates of the characters, giving them a real stake in finding out what happened. Their investigations will be hampered by the same difficulties facing the official investigators—with magical inquiry (divinatory spells and the like) useless and the disappearances conducted expertly, there is little evidence on the Alphatian end of things (at the scene of the crime) to be found. But it might be possible to gather information at the other end of things; since everyone knows that the Thyatians are almost certainly behind it, that would mean going to Thyatis and searching for information there. After awhile, the Naycese investigators will find more productive uses of their time and resources, so action by the friends of the vanished is the best way to go if revenge is to be achieved.

On the other side, characters with ties to Thyatis might be those engaged in the event

in any number of ways. Either they could have been involved in the initial information gathering and spying leading up to the vanishings, or they could take part in the strikes themselves, or both.

Eirmont 19, AC 1017: New Appointments.

Location: City of Jaibul, *Mumbyket* of Jaibul. OW

Description: The Black *Rajah* of Jaibul appoints a new grand vizier today. His name is Mehmed Astalani, a Hulean mage who has been living in Jaibul for many years. He also appoints a new minister of acquisitions, a man named Karllag. There isn't any known connection between Mehmed, Karllag and any outside agencies.

What This Means: Mehmed is, in fact, an agent of Hule. The black *rajah* knows it, but allows Mehmed to continue his work because his purpose is to watch the Thyatians. Mehmed reports everything he discovers to both Hosadus and the black *rajah*.

Karllag, on the other hand, is a master in the Iron Ring. Several cells of the Iron Ring have been seeking to expand their operations outside of Karameikos ever since the fall of the Black Eagle and Karllag's cell found a home in the slaver-friendly nation of Jaibul [*a cell is a semiautonomous group working within the larger Iron Ring organization. Ed.*]. Karllag hopes to use his newly attained position of influence to gain greater power for the Iron Ring, both in Karameikos and abroad.

Eirmont 20, AC 1017: Ragnar Looks for Support.

Location: Ragnar's Fort, Kingdom of Soderfjord. OW

Description: The thralls in the home of King Ragnar the Stout are keeping a low profile—Ragnar is in a foul mood. Emissaries from the various clan *jarls* have been visiting the king all week long and the news isn't good. A few of the clan *jarls* have come out in support of his condemnation of

the raids on Vestland, but most have not. Some—notably those of the northern border clans—are angry with the king's condemnation of their raids on Vestland and refuse to step down. Others have questioned the need of a king in Soderfjord and have suggested a return to the old days of rule by individual *jarls*.

Ragnar locks himself away with his most trusted advisors and ponders his next move. (*See Sv. 25, Ei. 3.*)

What This Means: Guthorm Brittle-Bone has struck the first blow against Ragnar's reign. This recent bout of public disfavor towards Ragnar seems to have done its part. Guthorm hopes that the other *jarls* will come together to oust Ragnar, hoping to return to the old ways of rule. With his opponent out of the way, Brittle-Bone will then step in with his armies and several powerful allies among the *jarls* and declare himself the new king of Soderfjord.

For his part, Ragnar finds that he has few allies in Soderfjord itself and it seems he might have to look elsewhere for help in backing up his rule.

Eirmont 20, AC 1017: And End of Hostilities.

Location: City of Citadel, Kingdom of Bettelbyn, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: With General Taghist's ignominious retreat back into Bettelbyn and the inability for the rest of the invasion force to take even one of the fortresses of the Randel Line, Queen Llynara orders her invasion to cease. She does what she can to prevent the order from being seen as a defeat. Therefore she makes no offerings of peace towards the Randel. Instead she has her forces deploy to reinforce Bettelbyn's own border defenses as she expects that the Randel will offer a retaliatory invasion once their situation stabilizes. Of course, it is realized that many of these troops will be demobilized to lessen the strain on the kingdom's economy. (*See Sv. 24, Ei. 2; Ka. 6.*)

What This Means: Bettelbyn's invasion effort has failed utterly and miserably. The

Bettelyn forces were prepared as far as men and materials were concerned. However, their tactics were based on flawed assumptions, miscalculations and bad judgment. The customary battles that the Bettelyn had counted on had never really developed. Had Randel been up to proper military strength the whole invasion would have been disastrous as well as ignominious, with Taghist's forces destroyed and Randel troops marching on Bettelyn soil. As it turned out, though, the war becomes known as The Phony War throughout Alphatia, because of the lack of any notable fighting.

The Randel High Command will not pursue any counterattacks into Bettelyn lands, though, as they lack the resources to do so. They are quite content to reestablish the old guarded border that is the Randel and Bettelyn Lines, at least for now.

Eirmont 20, AC 1017: “Steal from the Arcaners, Give to the Mundaners.”

Location: Duchy of Taterhill, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: As the newly confirmed Duke of Taterhill, Lord Alasdair McAllister hires the Mover's Guild to transfer his worldly possessions to his new dominion. En route, the caravan is attacked by a group of magically-armed bandits, led by one Robin Moorkroft, who claims descent from the legendary Moorkrofts of Fenswick and long-time enemies of the McGregors of Klantyre. Robin Moorkroft and his Mundaner Men steal much treasure from the movers, especially valuable magical items and laboratory equipment, claiming they shall distribute them to the poor mundaners of Glantri. (*See Sv. 12; Ka. 14, Ka. 19.*)

What This Means: Alasdair McAllister is furious at the theft. He appears at the parliament to protest this heinous crime against the magocracy and accuses Lord John Beaumarys-Moorkroft, Archduke of Westheath and another descendant of the Moorkroft line, of involvement in the plot, possibly as vengeance for his recent losses over Taterhill. The Mover's Guild sets forth its own investigation, anxious to remove any

suspicions that it might have been an inside job.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs may be hired the Glantrian Constabulary, by the Mover's Guild, or any of the involved parties to investigate this Robin Moorkroft and bring him to justice.

Eirmont 20, AC 1017: Milenians Arrive in Hattias.

Location: Town of Pilion, Duchy of Hattias, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: The collection of Thyatian vessels ferrying the Milenian refugees arrives in Pilion. The newcomers, upon disembarking with their few possessions, are greeted by a small number of Kastelian merchants residing in the town, who help the local port authorities take down their names and other relevant information such as age, number of children, profession and so on. Each family or individual is then informed as to where they have been allotted land or housing, depending upon their profession. Once this matter has been dealt with, the migrants are told to board designated carts with their families and possessions and from there they will be sent to their new homes. (*See Sv. 17, Ei. 20.*)

What This Means: This is the first such voyage; more will follow in the coming weeks and months, until the refugee crisis in the Hinterlands is deemed to be over. The voyage from the Hinterlands was no worse than could be expected; the vast majority of the migrants survived. Now that they have arrived in Hattias, the Milenians have been allotted farmland if they indicated that they were farmers, or a place in a village, town, or city if they told the Kastelians (who were hired as translators) that they practiced a profession.

Aside from this, however, they will not be treated any differently from native Thyatians—they will be expected to pay taxes and otherwise be productive members of society. They will also be expected to pledge allegiance to the empire and become full citizens. Time will tell whether or not the newcomers integrate very well in

Thyatian society, but for now, at least, the Milenians are happy to be away from their troubled home continent and are grateful to the Thyatian Empire for allowing them to find new homes.

What the PCs Can Do: Low-level PCs from the Milenian city-states can be introduced to Thyatis in this manner; they could begin their adventuring careers as young immigrants eager to carve out a place for themselves in the world. Otherwise, Thyatian PCs entrusted with the task of safeguarding the refugees will find their task at an end—either they will be instructed to return to Davania to pick up another group of Milenians, or they can go about their business.

Eirmont 21, AC 1017: Ylari Enter Biazzan Again... Almost.

Location: Fort Nicos, County of Biazzan, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: The Ylari forces pursuing the retreating Thyatians enter the pass of Biazzan. As the vanguard approaches Fort Nicos, rock-fall traps are activated, raining down on the main column of Ylari troops. Several dozen are crushed to death and the Ylari vanguard is trapped on the Thyatian side of the blockage, separated from the main body, which is cut off on the other side. While they are milling about, several thousand Thyatian troops—members of the Hespirian Tagmata regiment and the garrison of Nicos, begin to advance towards the Ylari vanguard. Some Ylari attempt to escape back over the rubble blocking the pass, while others try to spur their mounts up the rocky slopes on both sides of the valley, hoping to escape. Others attempt to sell their lives as dearly as possible, while still more simply recognize the futility of the situation and surrender.

At the north side of the blockage the sultan is told it will take a day or longer to clear the rubble sufficiently to allow his armies to get through to the other side. Clerics and mages with the Ylari forces use their abilities to speed up the process some. Several clerics cast *conjure earth elemental*, while

wizards cast *move earth*, but it is still nightfall before they are able to break through to the other side. By then, the battle (such as it was) is already over on the other side of the pass. The sultan's engineers also notice there are several more such rock traps lining the canyon walls and that advancing under these conditions would be dangerous. Hassam orders his forces to withdraw a mile up the pass and encamp for the night, while he and his council discuss what to do.

The next morning they receive word, via magical *sending*, that Tameronikas has been attacked. (See *Ei. 8, Ei. 18; Ei. 22, Ei. 24.*)

What This Means: The Thyatian forces at Fort Nicos are more prepared and alert than they were when the Ylari raiders attacked during the Great War. Full use is made of the rock traps, which the Ylari did not suspect existed all the more because they weren't utilized on that previous occasion.

The sultan's forces have been caught out of position by the Thyatian attack on Tameronikas and now the sultan will have to decide whether to abandon the pass and attempt to relieve Tameronikas, or to press forward. After considering the situation and consulting with his advisors, Hassam decides to return to Ylaruam and have his troops march as swiftly as possible. He hopes to be able to reach Tameronikas before it falls. He does leave a blocking force in the Ylari side of the pass of Biazzan, however. They build up a palisade across the valley and guard it to prevent the Thyatians from marching back into Dythestia.

Fourth Week

Eirmont 22, AC 1017: Thyatis Attacks Tameronikas.

Location: Town of Tameronikas, Emirate of Nicostenia, Emirates of Ylaruam. OW

Description: When he learned from his commander at Ctesiphon that the Ylari were pursuing them, Eusebius personally led the main Thyatian forces up the coast to Tameronikas. There are over 4,500 troops

with this force (consisting of the Hetaereia Augustiana, the Anatolic Tagmatic Regiment, the 2nd Marine Expeditionary Force and the 6th Imperial Battle Fleet). With them also are a few hundred unenthusiastic Ylari volunteers, under the command of a fringe member of the Preceptor faction who happens to be a prominent native of Tameronikas.

When the Thyatians arrive, the land troops construct a fortified camp outside the walls of Tameronikas while the ships bombard the town from the sea. The Ylari garrison and townsfolk attempt to hastily repair the seaward defenses of the town to prevent it from being captured immediately. (*See Ei. 18, Ei. 21; Ei. 24, Ei. 28.*)

What This Means: These are the steel jaws of Eusebius's trap snapping shut on Ylaruam. With the sultan's main army far to the west, the Thyatians can attack Tameronikas with relative impunity. It will be a few days at least until the sultan's forces can arrive. By then, Eusebius hopes to have Tameronikas under Thyatian control.

The Ylari troops accompanying the Thyatians consist of some of the men captured by Thyatis last year and this year, plus some Ylari sellswords, all of whom are more or less supporters of the cause of the Preceptors—but none of which are enthusiastic about fighting on behalf of Thyatis.

Eirmont 24, AC 1017: Preceptor Defects!

Location: Town of Tameronikas, Emirate of Nicostenia, Emirates of Ylaruam. OW

Description: The Thyatian forces wake up to discover the banner of Farouk al-Joffer, the Preceptor who had been commanding their Ylari auxiliaries, flying over the gatehouse of Tameronikas. The Ylari volunteers had set up camp north of the main Thyatian camp and it is now abandoned—all of them appear to have joined the defenders of Tameronikas. (*See Ei. 21, Ei. 22; Ei. 28, Ka. 5.*)

What This Means: The Ylari sneaked out in the dead of night, having made contact

with the troops within the walls and convinced them of their desire to abandon the Thyatians—if the town would declare its support for the Preceptor faction and reject the rule of Sultan Hassam. Somewhat out of desperation, they agreed.

Farouk al-Joffer is a distant cousin of the former Preceptor sultan and has spent many of his years as an adventurer, wandering especially through Darokin and Thyatis under the assumed name of Hark of Alasiya. He is an open-minded and charismatic leader and he has vowed to purge Ylaruam of the Kin... and this is the first step in doing so.

What the PCs can do: If they are Ylari, they can help their fellows to reach Tameronikas. If they are Thyatians, they could discover what is going on during the night and try and stop it.

Eirmont 25, AC 1017: Oldsbury Fortified.

Location: Ruins of Oldsbury, Viscounty of Furfield, Kingdom of Bellayne. SC

Description: Edgwinton has held onto Bromstow for some time, but hearing rumors of more parliamentarians being raised in the south and fearing a potential sally by the Coldstream Guards at Norchester, he decides to pull back to the Blythe River and dig in around the ruins of Oldsbury, while awaiting reinforcements sufficient to isolate either Norchester or Leominster and lay siege to one of the two parliamentary strongholds. (*See Sv. 27, Ei. 12; Ei. 25, Ei. 28.*)

What This Means: The royalist army is in a bit of a bind. It doesn't have the numbers to besiege both Norchester and Leominster and cannot easily isolate the two. Any siege attempt would be fraught with peril, as a relieving parliamentary army could trap the royalists between city and army. Unwilling to risk annihilation quite yet, Edgwinton intends to wait until the forces promised him by the king arrive.

Eirmont 25, AC 1017: Elves Split Forces.

Location: Enoreth Shrine, Forest of Geffron, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: After many weeks passed waiting hopelessly for skirmishes between Shadow Lord loyalists and Idris's troops, the elves finally decide to make their next move. On Christopher Dove's suggestion, Durifern and Beasthunter agree that in order to turn the war in favor of the elven crusaders they must deal a significant blow to Idris's forces. For this reason the elven commanders organize two separate expeditions that send one tenth of the soldiers currently mustered at Enoreth Shrine towards different destinations. The first one (100 Long Runners led by Beasthunter) has to reach Lothenar Forest, following the border of the Denagothian Plateau in order to avoid the sentinels that patrol the Avien Plains. The second one (100 Genalleth led by Christopher Dove) heads north, in search of the Nameless Tower. (*See Fe. 10, Fe. 18; Ka. 22, Ka. 24.*)

What This Means: Durifern now knows the battle he was hoping for between the Shadow Lord and Idris's soldiers will never take place, although he ignores why. He is also quite sure that Sylarion has quit the field and once General Grumman realizes this as well, he will send out troops and the deadly Elf Skull Units to hunt them down. For this reason he realized it is time to make the next move before the enemy does.

On his part, Dove managed to convince the elves they need to investigate the Nameless Tower and volunteered to guide them there, since he is the only one who knows its whereabouts. Beasthunter also insisted in dealing a serious blow at the heart of Idris's seat of power and suggested going to Lothenar to destroy the dragon knight's hatching cave and free the poor elves held prisoners. The two elven generals, knowing the magical wards placed to protect both locations, have decided to stage these missions when the chances of success are highest: during the Day of Dread. For this reason the two squadrons begin their march

across Denagoth, slowed by the newly-fallen winter snow, to reach their destinations in time.

What the PCs Can Do: If they participate in the elven crusade, they may volunteer to either brave the northern wilds to reach the Nameless Tower or to travel to the heart of the enemy to crush the feared dragon knights.

Eirmont 25, AC 1017: Stockley Manor Burned.

Location: Village of Stockley, Forest Marches of Wyndham, Kingdom of Bellayne. SC

Description: Lord Richard of Stockley has long been known for his liberal views, but when the draft arrives in Stockley under Sir William Carisbrooke, trouble flares. The local militiamen resist the efforts of Carisbrooke's soldiers to press the locals into the royalist army and soon Stockley himself comes out to reason with Carisbrooke. Unfortunately he is not in a reasonable mood and Stockley is seized by the king's men. Stockley resists and there is a running sword fight. Stockley escapes into the forest and in revenge Carisbrooke confiscates all of Stockley's possessions in his manor and then burns it to the ground before impressing several dozen locals and taking them back to Theeds to join the royalist ranks. (*See Ei. 12, Ei. 25; Ei. 28, Ka. 2.*)

What This Means: Richard Stockley, needless to say, no longer thinks very highly of the king. While he is a long way from the action out in the Marches of Wyndham, he vows this day to do something to fight the king's autocratic rule.

Eirmont 26, AC 1017: The Mincer Is Caught.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Wanting to taunt the investigators with their failure to capture him, the Mincer sneaks into the home of one of the lead investigators, Ornella

Mutinopanus, intending to kill her in the same manner in which he has killed his other victims. He attacks her in her bed with his cleaver, but he has misjudged his prey this time and is surprised when she fights back effectively. She knocks the cleaver out of his hand and they struggle violently hand-to-hand till Ornella manages to knock the Mincer unconscious. She shackles him and takes him into custody. (*See Sv. 4; Ka. 11.*)

What This Means: The infamous Mincer murders have been solved, apparently and the Mincer, one Iacobus Tanopularus, will soon be brought to trial.

What the PCs Can Do: A female PC (the Mincer only attacks women, preferably ones with a notorious sexual history) might be attacked by the Mincer and she could be the one to bring him into custody—or kill him. Like many Thyatians, the Mincer tends to underestimate the fighting abilities of women, but he is a strong, vicious and relentless combatant.

Eirmont 26, AC 1017: Like a Brick Wall.

Location: Near the City of Archport, Kingdom of Eadrin, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: Marching on Archport, Arogansan scouts report a group of entrenched Eadrin troops. The Arogansan commander orders his column to form up for an assault on these entrenched soldiers to clear the way to Archport to lay siege to the capital city. However, the fortunes of war shine on the side of the Eadrin.

The Arogansan troops charge the prepared entrenchment. Instead of a quick victory, a barrage of missile fire that wreaks havoc among their ranks meets them solidly and stalls their advance. Pressed on by their officers, they continue their charge. Wading through the raining of arrows and crossbow bolts, the Arogansans reach the entrenchment. Eadrin infantry rise from behind their makeshift battlements to meet the attackers.

The battle is going against the Arogansans, but their commanders feel that their greater numbers should win them the field of battle.

As they watch the battle from behind the lines they see their forces suddenly turn and run away from the battle. Cursing their cowardice, the officers move to rally their forces to renew the assault. However, as they stop group after group of fleeing troops they hear cries of Randel troops being among the Eadrin lines.

In disbelief at this revelation, several officers take up positions where they can get a better vantage point of the lines. Using spyglasses, they scan the Eadrin lines. Sure enough there is a Randel war banner flying above a portion of the entrenchment and several individuals in Randel uniforms can be seen walking among the lines. At first, they think that this is just a ruse. However, one officer spots one individual and positively identifies her as being Princess Junna.

With heavy casualties and the very real possibility of Randel forces entering the war, the Arogansan commander decides to pull back his forces to await the arrival of other Arogansan units. Reinforced, they can make a concerted attack on the obstacles and head onto Archport and prepare their siege. Later, he discovers that his retreat is warranted, as many of his troops do not assemble; these are presumed dead or taken prisoner. Scouts report seeing a rather large body of Arogansan troops being marched off from the battlefield. There is no way that they could have continued the fight.

Another surprise manifests itself that night, however, when Princess Junna enters the Arogansan camp, surrendering to them. She tells the Arogansan commander that she is outraged at her “illegal and unacceptable” deposition as Queen of Randel and requests asylum. He is happy to grant it. (*See Sv. 9, Ei. 15; Ka. 11, Ka. 20.*)

What This Means: This battle is solid defeat for the Arogansan forces. However, the result is not unexpected. These Arogansan troops had been part of a thrust towards the Eadrin capital to lay siege to Archport. Varying marching rates, terrain and troop fatigue had broken up the thrusting body. The Arogansan troops that

arrived on scene were but a portion of the entire group. The Arogansan commander had been lulled by tepid resistance and decided to press on.

Their Eadrin opposition had all of the benefits. These troops are fresh and rested Eadrin regulars. Though slightly numerically inferior to the opposing Arogansan force, they are fighting from prepared defenses and have had time to assess the battlefield and mark the various ranges for their archers.

Though there are Randel troops present, they only number about two score that had been sent to the battlefield to act as a reserve force attached to the Eadrin field commander. Except for moving to meet a few breaks in the lines, they contribute very little in the actual victory. However, the sighting of their battle standard does send a shock through the Arogansan ranks, on up to Detteria herself. The premise of Randel entering the conflict on the Eadrin side is something they did not want and had hoped to avoid.

The defeat is of little consequence, as it should not alter the overall scheme of the invasion. Though the losses are heavy for this unit, the troops can be easily replaced (they were mostly commoners). However, one thing that is undermining is the number of Arogansans that are taken prisoner. Most of these captured troops choose to surrender to the Eadrin instead of fleeing and rejoining their forces to continue fighting. The truth is that many are tired from the rigors of the march and from the general treatment they have received from their officers.

Junna has come to loathe and despise her sister and her supporters and the treatment she received at their hands and is only too glad to escape. This is a propaganda coup for the Arogansans, the only good thing to come out of the battle for them.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs attached to either the Eadrin, Randel or Arogansan units may find themselves embroiled in a small yet heated battle.

Eirmont 27, AC 1017: Assault on Icehop Island.

Location: Icehop Island, Kingdom of Qeodhar, Nayce. AS

Description: The seamen and soldiers stationed at the Icewatch Naval Base are surprised to see, early in the morning, five longships approaching from the west. As troops are hurriedly mustered to meet the assault, they are surprised to encounter 100 Ostlander reavers already entering the base from the north! While soldiers are diverted to hold off the secondary threat, those ships that successfully cast off to meet the longships find their sails burned by flaming arrows. Crippled, some of the Qeodharan ships are boarded, while one ship on loan from Nayce changes course and sails southwards.

In the fortified base, once news spreads of the assault, able-bodied Antalian slaves revolt, managing to kill some of their guards in the process. Faced with chaos within and without, the base's commanders realize that they cannot hold out for long. Quickly, they decide to approach the Ostlanders with an offer of surrender, which is accepted. Tension pervades the base for the rest of the day as the surviving Qeodharan soldiers and sailors hand over their weapons and are escorted to the same cells in which they kept their former Antalian prisoners.

Surrounded by his warriors and a mass of grateful Antalians, Torvald Magnusson, leader of the Ostlander raiding party, pronounces Icehop Island free of Qeodharan control. (*See Am. 22, Ei. 2.*)

What This Means: This is a nasty setback for Norlan's plans. Thinking that the rebels were safely contained on the Qeodharan mainland without any outside aid, the token military forces stationed here allowed themselves to grow somewhat lax. The Ostlander attack (a two-pronged assault consisting of the main sea-based force and a secondary land-based raiding party which landed on the island a few miles to the north) took them completely by surprise. With the fall of the base, Norlan no longer has a base of operations from which to

coordinate and resupply the eastern forces. This defeat and the liberation of almost 300 Antalian prisoners—who will no doubt have a score to settle with the Qeodharans—, could spell further trouble for Norlan in the future.

For their own part, the Ostlanders fared rather well, though they did lose two longships and 42 men. In compensation, they managed to capture one intact Qeodharan warship and sink four more. This, in addition to the 40 captives and small stores of wealth present at the base, make up for the losses somewhat. Perhaps the greatest reward of all is the gratitude of the rescued prisoners, who will likely be very supportive of future Ostlander endeavors in the region.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs stationed at the base will have a tough fight on their hands—survival, as opposed to defeating the raiders, might be a pressing matter. Unless they are exceedingly powerful, however, it is unlikely that the PCs can prevent the Ostlander victory, though they could delay it somewhat in order to allow some soldiers to escape. If the PCs are captured, a series of adventures could be staged in which they try to escape. If the PCs are with the Ostlanders, there will be plenty of opportunity for combat! Afterwards, they may be kept busy trying to hunt down those Qeodharans who escaped into the wilderness of Icehop Island.

Eirmont 28, AC 1017: Thyatis Recognizes Emirate of Tameronikas.

Location: Town of Tameronikas, Emirate of Nicostenia, Emirates of Ylaruam. OW

Description: Eusebius agrees to meet with the Ylari leader within Tameronikas under a flag of truce. After several hours of negotiating, the emperor signs an agreement, recognizing Tameronikas and the region around it as the sovereign Emirate of Tameronikas and Farouk al-Joffer, the leader of the Preceptors, as its emir. He pledges Thyatian support in protecting the Emirate of Tameronikas from attempts by other authorities to control it. In exchange the

representatives of Tameronikas agree to cede the small border region east of Fort Zendrol, running from below the hill escarpment due east to the coast, to the Empire of Thyatis. (*See Ei. 22, Ei. 24; Ka. 5*)

What This Means: Eusebius would have preferred to conquer Tameronikas outright and add it (or, in his words, recover it) to the Thyatian Empire. But he is very satisfied with the idea of creating a small client-state, dependent upon Thyatis, as a buffer between Ylaruam and the empire. The Emirate of Tameronikas covers the southern half of the former Emirate of Nicostenia, with its northern frontier roughly half way between Cubia and Tameronikas and its southern and western frontiers ending at the border with Thyatis.

Ylari living in the region ceded to Thyatis will be allowed to move into Ylari territories (either Tameronikas or even Ylaruam proper), while Eusebius will settle some Thyatians (from Kerendas or the Duchy of Thyatis) in that border area to better control it, including making some military land grants. Thyatian advisors, representatives and attachés will be very prominent within Tameronikas and its government will be largely dependent upon Thyatis for its existence, though this will be kept as hidden as possible from the Ylari people.

The Preceptor faction as a whole will be of two minds regarding the Emirate of Tameronikas. On the one hand, they do not want to be perceived as being the pawns of Thyatis, but on the other hand the Preceptor-led emirate will be too convenient a gathering point for them to pass up. So the opposition to the Kin regime will gather here. This will both help them, but will also undermine their popularity somewhat and thus further entrench Kin rule of Ylaruam. This, too, fits within Eusebius's plan, because Tameronikas is only likely to remain a Thyatian client-state so long as the Preceptors are out of power in Ylaruam as a whole and keeping the Kin faction in power is in the empire's interest, because it keeps Ylaruam isolated internationally.

Sultan Hassam will not be pleased when he learns of this.

Eirmont 28, AC 1017: Northington Raided.

Location: Village of Northington, Viscounty of Furfield, Kingdom of Bellayne. SC

Description: A sizable force of goblinoids hits the garrison at Northington, having managed to sneak through the forests from the Yazak Steppes. The attack is completely unexpected and the rakasta of the Royal Furfield Dragoons are peppered with arrows from the tree line. Fortunately they are disciplined enough to hold and quickly move out to sweep the goblinoids from the forest. However, it turns out that the attack was nothing more than a feint. As the dragoons ride into the forest, another force of goblinoids appears and quickly sacks the village. The dragoons turn about face, but by the time they return the goblinoids have melted away into the woods.

Orders are sent to reinforce the area around Northington and Wickerton with the bulk of the royal dragoons. (*See Ei. 25, Ei. 25; Ka. 2, Ka. 4.*)

What This Means: The goblinoids are still out there and Bellayne still needs to be defended from external as well as internal threats. The raid on Northington influences Lady Meghan Parringstoke, Viscountess of Furfield, to resist badgering from Edgwinton and the king to divert her dragoons to Oldsbury with the rest of the royalists.

Eirmont 28, AC 1017: Resettlements.

Location: Various areas of the Thyatian mainland, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: After the harvests have been completed, Emperor Eusebius orders the initiation of several resettlements. Some Kerendans and Hattians whose families were complicit in the Crown Rebellion, but who themselves are considered loyal to the empire, are relocated to the border area east of Fort Zendrol recently acquired from Ylaruam and given lands there. Some of the

freedmen, Thyatian slaves freed during and in the immediate aftermath of the Crown War, are granted lands to farm in Hattias, Kerendas and some of the still sparsely inhabited additions to Retebius and Biazzan. In their place, about 5,000 Milenian refugees settle in the city of Thyatis (with many more due to arrive by the end of the year), while the remainder are settled throughout Hattias, but with a large number in Hattias City, which they begin to refer to as Attiopolis. Still more settlements by freedmen are made along the east bank of the Rugalov River and the Lake of Lost Dreams, though these settlements are done carefully in consultation with the Vyalia elves so as to not disturb the elven forests. Additional settlers also move to Terentias.

Work is also begun on constructing the Kinship Bridge across the Rugalov River. The Thyatians also begin building a citadel along the new border up where the Rugalov River drains out of Haven Lake, with the help of elven and forester artisans and surveyors from Foreston and Greenheight, to insure it is properly sited and built in a way that won't disturb the forests of the Vyalia elves. (*See Th. 5.*)

What This Means: The empire needs to insure that its lands are under proper cultivation to feed everyone and it also needs to secure its frontiers. The new settlements are well supplied, with the settlers given the entire winter to establish their homes before planting season begins. Also, by shifting the populations as he has, Eusebius hopes to keep each area more directly loyal to the empire.

The Duchy of Hattias will become the main center for the settlement of Milenian refugees from Davania, with nearly 70,000 of them settling there in the coming months, they will make up over 20% of the population of that duchy. With the population shifts (some Hattians re-settled elsewhere in Thyatis, some emigrating and freedmen from other parts of Thyatis being settled in their place), the non-Hattian proportion of the population is approximately a third. Eusebius hopes that this, coupled with the defeat of the Storm

Soldier ideology in the Crown War, will both erode Hattian insularity and solidify the duchy's loyalty to the rest of Thyatis. Time will tell whether this succeeds or fails.

The new fortification, which will be called Haven Citadel, will protect the northern part of the border, just as Blackpoint Citadel defends the southern frontier. Haven Citadel is built on a small peninsula jutting into eastern Lake Haven near where the Rugalov River drains it and thus will be difficult to assault but fairly easy to re-supply by shallow draft ship and river barge.

What the PCs Can Do: Help with resettlement by clearing out monster-infested areas intended to become the homes of new settlers, or exploring the area where the fortress is to be built, which might be seated on an old ruin that must be cleared out before building can commence.

Events: Kaldmont

First Week

Kaldmont 2, AC 1017: Domes Ready for Transportation.

Location: City of Aaslin, Kingdom of Notrion, Continent of Bellissaria, Nayce. AS

Description: The final four domes are complete and loaded aboard their transport barges for ferrying to the Torenal Site. As with before, their departure is postponed to avoid the effects of the Day of Dread and to allow an adequate escort fleet to be assembled. (*See Am. 2, Am. 18; Ka. 12.*)

Kaldmont 2, AC 1017: Surveyors Ambushed!

Location: Lonely Forest, Kingdom of Foresthome, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: The survey team north of Llyn Lake is ambushed by a small but strong elite force. All soldiers and some of the surveyors are killed. All survivors are taken as captives. (*See Ei. 2, Ei. 17; Ka. 5, Ka. 19.*)

What This Means: This is a very critical moment for the project. Some anonymous foes of the project have hired some attackers to stop the surveying.

What the PCs Can Do: Should the PCs be part of the team they would have to face the threat. More unscrupulous adventurers could be part of the attackers.

Kaldmont 2, AC 1017: Dissent in the Commons.

Location: City of Leominster, Bishopric of Leominster, Kingdom of Bellayne. SC

Description: Some members of the parliament are becoming disheartened with the progress of the war; many old Royal Party members are beginning to revert to their original sensibilities. The parliament's progress has not been as good as promised by the parliamentary commanders, with the defeat at Siren Hill and the might of the

royalist army between them and the king. Also, the unrest in Kittings and the loss of Aldhythe Castle have caused despondency to spread like a disease throughout the house.

Benjamin Treeby, leader of the Royal Party, calls for a vote demanding that the parliament open peace negotiations with the king. Impassioned the house with an emotive speech, the vote passes. Duly, an ambassador is dispatched to Theeds to negotiate a peace with King James. (*See Ei. 25, Ei. 28; Ka. 4, Ka. 28.*)

What This Means: A major blow to Blythe-Jackson, perhaps the parliament doesn't have the stomach for a continued conflict. It remains to be seen how many concessions the parliament is willing to grant to the king in the name of peace—Blythe-Jackson, Croft and Southwell will all do their utmost to oppose any peace settlement.

Kaldmont 3, AC 1017: Ennius reaches Eдайro.

Location: City of Eдайro, Kingdom of Thothia, Nayce. SD

Description: Ennius Necrekis and seven men of his expedition reach Eдайro. They start bribing Thothian officials to gain access to some ancient Thothian tomes with arcane information. (*See Am. 7, Ei. 12; Ka. 12, Ka. 24.*)

Kaldmont 4, AC 1017: A King and a Queen Convene.

Location: City of Denwarf-Hurgon, Kingdom of Stoutfellow, Floating Continent of Alpathia, Alpathian Empire. HW

Description: King Koblan Dracodon of Stonewall is visiting Queen Buthra Bofadar of Stoutfellow. The monarchs discuss the possibility of crossing the Kerothar Mountains by tunnels and/or canals. The queen reassures the king of Stonewall that her engineers—mostly gnomes—are working on the matter since they have heard about the canal-building projects at the beginning of the year. Now that the technical solutions are nearly worked out, what remains to be discussed are the routes

of some of these projects. A road between Draco and Denwarf-Hurgon will be one part of the project, so that Stonewall will have at least an overland route to the rest of Alpathia. A canal like the ones in Alphas'ar and Foresthome should also include a section in Haven, though, so discussions with Queen Kryndylya will have to follow. (*See Kl. 15, Am. 1; Ka. 10, Ka. 11.*)

What This Means: The king of Stonewall is more desperate than the queen of Foresthome. His kingdom had relied even more on sea trade and is now even more isolated. As no solution would be possible without his neighbor, Stoutfellow, he has asked his sister-queen. Fortunately the dwarves of Stoutfellow are interested in increasing trade too and they are also intrigued by the engineering challenge. Likewise the gnomes in this kingdom, offended about the fact that the great pit between Aegos and the Hollow World had been constructed by gnomes from Serraine, are eager to prove their engineering abilities in such a venture. So they had worked since the canal announcements to develop their own projects, ones that would suit Stoutfellow best; such studies were even begun before the transition to the Hollow World. Now they are ready—at least as ready as a gnomish project can ever be!

What the PCs Can Do: Gnomish PCs might be some of the engineers but dwarves are involved too.

Kaldmont 4, AC 1017: The Flotilla Rush.

Location: High Seas due south of Kingdom of Bellayne. SC

Description: Three sloops under the command of Commodore Bassetlaw attempting to run before a gale towards Chansea are, by sheer bad luck, caught red-handed by a royalist frigate, the *Revenge*, under the command of Captain Geoffrey Goodenough. Goodenough fails to identify the sloops as parliamentary vessels until it is too late however and the nimble vessels slip by him to the northeast.

Via magical means, Goodenough informs

his commanding officer, Admiral Vance in Theeds. Vance is worried about where the sloops are headed, believing they may be carrying supplies to the parliamentary town of Chansea. Orders are drafted for a royalist reconnaissance of Chansea as soon as possible. (*See Ei. 28, Ka. 2; Ka. 28.*)

Kaldmont 4, AC 1017: The Book's Gate Revealed.

Location: Tower of Night, Milenian Empire. HW

Description: Furious, Zandor curses loudly at the *Book of Zargos* and goes into one of his infamous outbursts and starts casting spells about. The Zargosians who were studying near him promptly leave the room and do not return until after Zandor has locked himself in his quarters, where he stays for a full week. The Zargosians assume Zandor suffered a major setback in his work with the book; given the time they have been at it themselves, they are not surprised. (*See Ei. 2, Ei. 12; Ka. 11, Ka. 13.*)

What This Means: Actually Zandor has finally mastered the last spell that Zargos left His followers. Unfortunately it isn't what he expected—really, what good is a variation on the *gate* spell? Not only did he expect something big, but he also hoped the book would contain a cure for the disease that affects the Zargosians.

After his initial rage at the realization of the shortcomings of the *Book of Zargos*, Zandor thought hard about that *gate* variant and why it was so important to Zargos. After some intense reflection, it finally hit him: this spell is tailor-made to extinguish the Red Sun! Necromancers and undead and especially the Zargosians, hate the sun and Zandor even remembers they told him they briefly took control of the Milenian Empire a few years prior when the sun went black. Zandor now knows that he only has to find a way to use that knowledge in a way that will benefit him, so he starts working on that while pretending to resume his work as if nothing happened.

Kaldmont 5, AC 1017: The Glorious Imperial Navy Goes into Action.

Location: Lonely Forest, Kingdom of Foresthome, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: The warband that had ambushed the surveyors a few days ago is now ambushed itself by a man-of-war of the Alphatian Imperial Navy, the *Invisible Stalker*. The surprised thugs are not able to counter the attack of the imperial marines in any way, especially as the attack is backed by a warship cleared for action, which seems to appear out of nothing. The captives are freed and the kidnappers are taken into the brig. Afterwards the *Invisible Stalker* returns to Andaire. (*See Ei. 17, Ka. 2; Ka. 19, Ka. 27.*)

What This Means: The ship was ordered into the interior of the continent by the empress. As the crew had learned about the ambush they have recovered the dead, only to plan their counterattack. On this very day the captain and his officers were ready and started a neat and quick military operation. Of course it was a nice effect that the *Invisible Stalker* has cloaking abilities.

What the PCs Can Do: As a part of the away team they could attack the kidnappers. Should they have been the attackers the best they could hope is an escape now or later on.

Kaldmont 5, AC 1017: Sultan's Troops Arrive at Tameronikas.

Location: Town Tameronikas, Emirate of Nicostenia, Emirates of Ylaruam. OW

Description: The forces of Sultan Hassam arrive outside Tameronikas. After a brief skirmish between scouting parties, the sultan's forces set up camp for the night and both armies begin to prepare for tomorrow's inevitable battle. But the next morning, the Thyatian troops withdraw southward rather than fighting. The sultan parades his forces in front of the walls of Tameronikas, then he withdraws northwards. (*See Ei. 24, Ei. 28.*)

What This Means: Neither side really wanted to fight a battle that could be immensely disastrous if lost. Eusebius did

not want to risk throwing away what had already been gained, or lose both precious troops and even more precious prestige. For Sultan Hassam, a battle that could go either way would have been even more risky. Losing here would likely have insured that his name went down in Ylari history as the man who lost what his ancestor had gained, freedom from Thyatis.

So both sides sent secret representatives to talk to the other side during the night and they reached a tacit agreement. The Thyatians would withdraw, allowing Hassam to claim to have chased them from Ylari lands, but Hassam would not challenge the existence of the Emirate of Nicostenia. A week after today, the Thyatians will release the remaining Ylari prisoners, sending them to Tameronikas. This will allow Hassam to claim to have forced Thyatis to relinquish them, further saving face. Hassam also agrees to allow Thyatian traders to pass through Ylaruam and even conduct some business in the emirates so long as they are circumspect about it.

Hassam agrees to these things because he can correctly claim the Ylari retain control over Tameronikas and nominally claim authority over it. Plus, like the Preceptors, he realizes its existence as a town that seems friendly to Thyatis will tend to undermine support for the Preceptors and thus strengthen the Kin faction's control on the rest of Ylaruam.

Tameronikas will become sort of an open city—a town where non-Ylari can come to do business in ways that would be difficult in the rest of Ylaruam. But, more than that it becomes a focus of intrigues, as Thyatians, Preceptors, Kin representatives and eventually diplomats and spies from other agents all congregate here.

Kaldmont 6, AC 1017: Dogrel Relieved.

Location: Town of Dmireton, Kingdom of Randel, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: General Dogrel is given orders that he should begin preparing to withdraw from Randel. Given the turn of

events there, there is no reason for him to remain in the area. The whole show of imperial force has succeeded anyway, helping prevent the forces of Bettelyn from achieving any successes whatsoever. However, his withdrawal is not to be immediate—Eriadna wants to retain the image that his being there is part of a series of coincidental training exercises. If he and his *skyships* were to leave within the next few days it would obviously undermine their official reason for being in Randel. Therefore his orders are dated to go into affect after the Day of Dread. (*See Fj. 1, Ei. 2.*)

Second Week

Kaldmont 8, AC 1017: An Excursion for Manfred.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Since the end of the Crown War, Manfred Torion Dörfer, Eusebius's half brother and the former pretender to the imperial crown, has lived in one of the emperor's palaces, on one of the Princess Isles in Vanya's Girdle. He has been kept under discrete supervision and what amounts to house arrest. But he has become close to both Demetrian and Eusebius's younger son, Gabrionus and as the taint of Heinrich Oesterhaus's influence has left him, he has proved himself a decent sort of man. Manfred has persistently petitioned for an opportunity to redeem himself and prove his worthiness in the eyes of the emperor. With the expeditions planned to explore the vast caverns under Thyatis and map a route to the Hollow World about to depart, Manfred gets his wish. He is selected to lead one of the expeditions, guided by Rurtifus and several other wererat volunteers and including a couple of Milenians from Davania, as it is rumored that there is a Milenia in the Hollow World and they might be helpful as translators and intermediaries. (*See Ya. 11.*)

What This Means: Three expeditions, sponsored by both the University of Biazzan and the imperial government, will depart to explore the unlit realms and find a route to the Hollow World. The one led by Manfred is probably the best equipped and organized of these, with the best chance of succeeding. This is due in part to his inclusion of Milenians and of Rurtifus, who has already been to the Hollow World (and who no longer wears the *cursed* ring that bears his name and who proved himself during the Crown War). But it is also due to Manfred's natural leadership abilities, which are better than many expected from Thanatos's former pawn. Perhaps it is his Torion blood.

What the PCs Can Do: These expeditions are natural fodder for PCs, especially characters who, for whatever reason, need to leave the surface world for several months and go where they can't be found by their enemies, creditors, etc.

Kaldmont 8, AC 1017: Peace Reached in Sind.

Location: City of Sayr Ulan, *Mumlyket* of Sindrastan, Kingdom of Sind. OW

Description: After nearly two months, the peace negotiations in Sind are finished successfully. Hule pledges to withdraw all armies from Sind and not to invade it again. Chandra ul Nervi promises to respect Jaibul's independence and allow each *mumlyket* to decide whether it wants to swear fealty to the *rajadhiraja* or to become independent.

Soon after the negotiations are completed, the *mumlykets* of Gunjab, Kadesh and Peshmir declare their independence from Sind. Kadesh remains allied with Hule, while the other two kingdoms agree to maintain diplomatic ties with Sind, but they will rule themselves as autonomous kingdoms. (*See Sv. 11, Sv. 15; Ka. 12.*)

What This Means: Hosadus got what he wanted—a much reduced and weakened Sind. He also retained direct influence in the *mumlyket* of Kadesh. Secretly, the Master has made an alliance with the *Rajah* of West Jhengal, promising he would help reunite the

Mumlyket of Azadgal with Jhengal in exchange for cooperation. Hosadus also wants to influence West Jhengal because it controls the only route through the Great Waste and thus can affect travel and trade. Greenleaf Vickers of Umbarth House will be allowed to secretly take over much of the trade in West Jhengal and from there further west, thus benefiting both the *rajah* and the Master.

The withdrawing Hulean armies will move back to Hule, reinforcing its defenses and helping crush internal dissension. Darokin recalls the troops it had sent to assist the Sindhi rebellion and Atruaghin mercenaries remaining in the area will gradually return to their own homes, bringing several diplomats from Sind—Chandra ul Nervi hopes to make some allies with his neighbors to the east.

For his part, *Maharajah* Sarojun Sur of Gunjab has long desired to be free of the restrictions imposed by the *rajadhiraja*. It will be a hard road for him to rule Gunjab without the help of Chandra ul Nervi, but out of respect for the treaty and the assistance Sur provided during the revolution, the *rajadhiraja* will respect his independence.

Meanwhile, neither Hara Rudraksha of Peshmir nor his father Kabir Rudraksha of Kadesh recognize the cease-fire as pertaining to them and the civil war between the two neighboring dominions continues.

Kaldmont 10, AC 1017: Fatalists Roam the Streets.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Outside the Coliseum, a group of seemingly deranged men dressed in ragged garments disturb the people attending the games. They cry out that Thyatis is nearing its end, telling people to repent for their sins because the end of the empire is near and they will all die, or worse. They are only a dozen all in all, but very persistent. (*See Ka. 28.*)

Kaldmont 10, AC 1017: The Negotiation Team Arrives.

Location: City of Dovor, Kingdom of Haven, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: A negotiation team from Stoutfellow arrives in Haven to talk about a possible route for a canal from Stonewall and Stoutfellow to Haven. The team consists of gnomish and dwarven engineers for the digging and the constructing of machinery, but the leader of the team is the hin Michael Restonberry. Restonberry is an experienced diplomat who has to ensure the best possible result. (*See Am. 1, Ka. 4; Ka. 11, Ka. 12.*)

What This Means: A canal from Stonewall to the interior only makes sense if Haven is included, so some negotiations are absolutely necessary. Due to some statements by Queen Kryndylya it was assumed that there might be some problems—Haven is very different from Stonewall and the two kingdoms have been at odds recently due to Stonewall's aggressive attitude.

What the PCs Can Do: They could be part of the negotiations or they could work in the background of the talks.

Kaldmont 10, AC 1017: The Prism and the Stonecrafters.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Having investigated the *Dismal Prism*, Demetrion discovered that it is apparently an ancient, powerful and dangerous artifact of Entropy. With Eusebius's agreement, he has begun researching how best to destroy it, with the help of his most skilled assistants.

Late today, one of those, Adrianes Petritorium, works late on the artifact, until he is alone with it. He then vanishes with the artifact and his whereabouts cannot be found. (*See Am. 3, Am. 23.*)

What This Means: Adrianes Petritorium was one of Demetrion's most trusted and skilled assistants. But he is also, secretly, a

member of a secret society known as the Loyal Order of Stonecrafters, operating on a deep cover assignment. He has served Demetrion and the empire, with unwavering loyalty for many years, throughout the Great War and beyond. Only occasionally has he made contact, with utmost discretion, with his associates in the Order of Stonecrafters. He thus went undetected.

The Order of Stonecrafters was once an honorable society and early in the empire's history had taken on, of their own (and secret) accord, the obligation of ensuring that the *Dismal Prism* would not fall into the wrong hands. But they lost it sometime during the Hattian revolt and since then Thanatos has managed to corrupt the Stonecrafters into a group of self-interested power-seekers. Thanatos believes in having the right person in the right place at the right time and thus had Petritorium positioned to steal the artifact at the earliest opportunity. Now the *Dismal Prism* has fallen into the wrong hands—and, ironically, those hands are the Stonecrafters. The Thyatian authorities will have to try and recover the artifact and destroy it, before it is too late.

What the PCs Can Do: Thyatian characters might be assigned the task of finding Petritorium and recovering the *Dismal Prism*. They might find Petritorium before the year is out, but when they do he does not have the prism with him, nor does he know where it is.

Kaldmont 11, AC 1017: The Negotiation Begins.

Location: City of Dovor, Kingdom of Haven, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: The Stoutfellows explain their plans to their counterparts from Haven. They are planning a canal that would cut right through the Kerothar Mountains at one of the narrowest places north of Denwarf-Hurgon. After reaching Haven the canal would head southwards for Warzazath and Adiach, so ships could sail downstream the Alphas River to Dovor and ruined Aasla.

To their great astonishment the leader of the Havenish team, Lord Zuzuruth from Hady, tells them that the Kingdom of Haven will agree. The gnomes are cheering and even the dwarves are smiling, but then Zuzuruth informs them about the requirements: the canal has to fulfill Havenish standard of beauty, all costs have to be paid by Stoutfellow and Stonewall and, last but not least, Haven would have the right to collect toll from all ships using the canal on the territory of the kingdom. The gnomes are shouting angrily and two dwarves even threaten war. After half an hour of heated discussions Michael Restonberry calls for a break. (*See Ka. 4, Ka. 10; Kl. 12, Kl. 14.*)

What This Means: Such requirements are unacceptable. Both kingdoms would have to pay for a lot of extra costs without any return from this section. As the relations between Haven and Stonewall are not at their best the queen has decided to have no canal—or to have her neighbors pay for it. So the situation for Stonewall has become worse again.

Kaldmont 11, AC 1017: Sun's Sleeps Are Counted.

Location: Tower of Night, Milenian Empire. HW

Description: In the Zargosians' hidden headquarters, Zandor reveals the utmost secret that was contained in the *Book of Zargos*: a powerful spell that will bring an end to the Red Sun, thus allowing the Zargosians and their undead servants to leave their underground refuges and take control of Milenia. The Zargosians are delighted by this news.

In the following weeks, Zandor shows them in the *Book of Zargos* where this plan is explained, but explains that the Zargosians cannot understand the mentioned spell because they lack the expertise that he, as an Alphantian, possesses. (*See Ei. 12, Ka. 4; Ka. 13, Ka. 26.*)

What This Means: Zandor is now ready to cast his spell to close the *gate* to the Sphere of Energy that is the Red Sun. The Zargosians, who used the day-long eclipse

that occurred during the Week Without Magic (when the Doomsday Weapon was activated in Glantri on the surface world) to seize power in Milenia, are ready to reiterate the feat—but this time the sun won't be back.

Kaldmont 11, AC 1017: And I Get to Lick the Axe!

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: After a swift and speedy trial, Iacobus Tanopularus is convicted of the Mincer murders due to inhumanity and is sentenced to death. The usual activists protest the verdict and sentence, decrying the proceedings as unfair, but the vast majority of Thyatians feel the sentence is just. Iacobus himself declines to appeal the sentence, but this might be due to the fact that he is incoherent and no longer lucid. He made several bizarre outbursts during the trial, raving like a madman and comparing himself to holy men and martyrs.

This morning, Iacobus is beheaded for his crimes and his body fed to the crows. (*See Sv. 4, Ei. 26.*)

What This Means: The Mincer will not be missed. Unknown to most involved and kept secret during the trial, the Mincer was a subject of magical experiments during the Great War. During that conflict the Thyatians hoped to create a force of super soldiers, enhanced with magic, as a means of trying to change the course of the conflict, using carefully selected volunteers. These experiments produced unsatisfactory results, with the subjects either dying or becoming psychotic killers. Most were eliminated as a result, but Iacobus escaped. With his strong will, he managed to keep control over his impulses for many years, fighting under assumed names in the Thyatian armed forces and as an adventurer and at times in arena combats as a means of releasing his bloodlust. But when the Crown War ended, he was mustered out of military service and his psychotic rages got the best of him. The result was the Mincer murders.

What the PCs Can Do: Someone might covertly drop clues regarding what really happened to Iacobus into the PCs' hands and this could lead them to investigate the program that he was subjected to which drove him mad. The experiments have stopped and the program ended with the sinking of Alphatia, but the wizards involved might be continuing their studies privately, on unwilling subjects.

Kaldmont 11, AC 1017: Where Did They Go?

Location: Near the City of Archport, Kingdom of Eadrin, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: Having linked up with other Arogansan units, the drive on Archport continues. Upon reaching the very trenches that saw battle but a few days earlier, the invaders are stunned to find no enemy there awaiting them. Only the corpses of their own dead offer testimony that a battle had been staged there. Fearing a trap, scouts are sent to survey the area. They report that the area is clear; the defenders having abandoned their earthen fortifications and pulled back towards Archport.

The Arogansan commanders are told that many of their troops are exhausted from the marching. They request that they make camp to rest and to take care of the bodies of their dead. This decision is not popular with the troops and it takes a good bit of work to get them to form up to continue their march. (*See Ei. 15, Ei. 26; Ka. 20.*)

What This Means: The Eadrin forces have pulled back to defend the walls of Archport. Eadrin scouts had already reported the presence of other Arogansan units, even as they gained their victory. They decided that they may not fare so well in a battle where the Arogansans would assuredly attack again and in much greater numbers. They are quite content to take their victory and prepare for the subsequent and more important battles for the capital. Though they could have used the excavated defenses to bury the Arogansan dead, they decide that leaving them out on the battlefield will serve

as a visual deterrent to the approaching enemy. Instead it just enrages them.

For their part, the Arogansans were quite ready for a battle with the Eadrin. They had arrived with a very large force of troops. So it is quite an emotional let down when they find that their opponents are not there waiting for them.

The Arogansan commander's decision to press on is actually a pretty good idea. He sees the Eadrin withdrawal as a weakening of their defenses. If he acts quickly he can cover a lot of ground before Eadrin forces can be reassembled to block his approach to Archport. Likewise, stopping to rest the troops and deal with the dead would also take up precious time.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs affiliated with the Eadrin defense may be called upon to harass these Arogansan troops or to spy upon them. In the spy role, PCs may overhear the general discontent brewing among the rank and file of the Arogansan troops. Darker PC spellcasters may even use their dead as animated soldiers to harass the rear echelons of the invaders. PCs affiliated with the Arogansan invasion may find themselves acting as scouts or countering the activities of Eadrin adventurers. Arogansan PCs may even notice the rising discontent of the troops. Depending on the individuals, they may support their discontent or work to quell the most vocal troublemakers.

Kaldmont 12, AC 1017: A Grand Migration, Indeed!

Location: City of Freiburg, Territory of Heldann, Heldannic Empire. OW

Description: In the midst of rising factionalism within the Heldannic Order, some good news manages to reach *Oberherr* Wulf von Klagendorf: since the beginning of the year, another 60,000 Hattians have arrived in the territories from the Thyatian Empire. Encouraged by the news, *Herr* Wulf orders his attendants to carry out a message, that new settlers should continue to receive the generous entitlements that he devised the previous year and that they should be

strongly encouraged to settle in Heldland. (See *Va. 13, Va. 22.*)

What This Means: Although the Crown War is now over in Thyatis, the change in the balance of power in Hattias has proven to be an incentive for some Hattians to continue to leave. For some, Heldann represents an opportunity to start over, while for others—some of them Storm Soldiers—the Heldannic Territories is a region where a truly Hattian empire could arise. For *Herr Wulf's* part, each new able-bodied settler is a potential soldier in his armies, should *Straßenburger* decide to actively take control of the country—hence his urging that new settlers should seek new homes in regions avowedly loyal to him and that they be “bribed” with temporary tax freedom and cash bonuses should any sons enter the order.

Kaldmont 12, AC 1017: The Negotiations Are Slack.

Location: City of Dovor, Kingdom of Haven, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: After another day without any progress *Michael Restonberry* calls all his team members for an internal meeting. He asks for solutions but nobody has one in the moment. The engineers will ponder the matter though and try to come up with alternatives. (See *Ka. 10, Ka. 11; Kl. 14, Kl. 17.*)

What This Means: Both parties are not willing to give up their positions. Good ideas would be welcomed.

Kaldmont 12, AC 1017: Rumors of Buried Treasure.

Location: City of Baraga, Merry Pirate Seas. HW

Description: A cleric of *Korotiku* brings word of a powerful message revealed to him by his Immortal. In a Baraga tavern, the pirate cleric tells that the map to the lost treasure of *Captain Blake* will soon be found. He enlists captains to search for this map, promising whomever finds it the

blessings of *Korotiku* and fabulous riches as well. The word quickly becomes common gossip throughout *Baraga* and within seven sleeps, the rumor has spread throughout the rest of the islands. (See *Sv. 9, Ei. 1.*)

What This Means: The cleric did, indeed, receive a vision from *Korotiku*. The Immortal wants to stir things up in his “playground” of the Merry Pirate Seas. He will enjoy watching the various captains attempt to outwit each other in finding the lost map. The map is indeed within the seas, waiting for some clever ship’s captain to find it.

What the PCs Can Do: Pirates throughout the seas will begin searching for clues which will lead them to this legendary prize. Numerous adventures can be set up detailing the rivalries and intrigue as the map is sought after. The rumors for the precious map can serve as the backdrop or long range goal of a continuing campaign. It will not be easy to find.

Kaldmont 12, AC 1017: Elissa Pennydown Makes a Speech.

Location: City of *Sayr Ulan*, *Mumbyket* of *Sindrastan*, Kingdom of *Sind*. OW

Description: A few days after the peace negotiations, *Elissa Pennydown* makes an impassioned public speech in the city of *Sayr Ulan*. She says how *Darokin* has almost single-handedly defeated *Hulean* forces and freed *Sind* from occupation, while *Thyatis* was busy making conquests. Her speech is at first met with a few cheers from the crowd, then gradually the cheering picks up as more and more people join in. Before the end of the day, *Darokin* has gained in popularity in much of *Sayr Ulan*, while *Thyatis* is increasingly being viewed with distrust. (See *Sv. 15, Ka. 8.*)

What This Means: As usual, *Elissa* glorifies *Darokin* and ignores everything anyone else has done. *Hosadus* is only happy to promote that kind of attitude in *Darokin* and *Sind*. His agents in the crowd of listeners help start the cheering and spread *Elissa's* words among the people of *Sayr Ulan*.

Kaldmont 12, AC 1017: Access to the Mysteries.

Location: City of Edairo, Kingdom of Thothia, Nayce. SD

Description: Ennius Necrekis and his band finish bribing all the right people and gain access to the library of Edairo. He intends to consult two tomes: *What Ascends*, a religious text about humans who have ascended the ranks of the gods and reach different form of Immortality in various ways and *Exiles*, a volume about exiled, lost and fading faiths of the Old World and Alphatia. (See *Ei. 12, Ka. 3; Ka. 24.*)

Kaldmont 12, AC 1017: Phase Two Completed... Now Begins the Waiting Game.

Location: Torenal Site, Sunken Arogansa, Nayce. AS

Description: The construction crews at Torenal Site have finished the bulk of the construction needed to complete phase two. As they move to finish up on the last minute detail work, they also begin preparations for the arrival of the next batch of four domes. (See *Am. 18, Ka. 2.*)

Kaldmont 13, AC 1017: Winter Intermission, Outcome Postponed.

Location: City of Skyfyr, Province of Blackrock, Republic of Esterhold, Nayce. SK

Description: The siege of Skyfyr is still undetermined, but winter is now beginning in earnest and the free Jennites are forced to settle down to take care of their herds. Many rebel Jennites settle down with them, though some try to maintain the siege themselves. The battles essentially end for now, as Skyfyr itself prepares for winter. (See *Sv. 2, Ei. 17.*)

What This Means: This is a moderate victory for Governor Kalin and the people of Blackrock, since the united Jennites were not able to break through their defenses. Skyfyr had already made preparations for this and a ship arrives to resupply them with food and equipment, which further discourages the rebel Jennites who besiege

the city. However, it is scarcely a true victory, as the united Jennites are still out there in the grasslands, in control of the rest of the province and will undoubtedly try to conquer the city again—next year!

What the PCs Can Do: The battles basically end here for now, so there is little for the PCs to do. It might be a good time for PCs siding with Blackrock to spy on the united Jennites, though.

Kaldmont 13, AC 1017: A Surprising Offer.

Location: City of Errolyn, Kingdom of Theranderol, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: A message is sent to Lord Abolon. He is invited to join the canal-planning staff of Theranderol. (See *Ei. 15, Ei. 18; Ka. 18, Ka. 22.*)

What This Means: Lady Tyrona has decided that the best solution is to talk with another lord, especially as Lord Abolon is involved in the ongoing work already. Indeed he is able to do the work and he is doing something similar for the Foresthome Rim Canal.

What the PCs Can Do: They could work as messengers.

Kaldmont 13, AC 1017: In the Dark of the Sun.

Location: Tower of Night, Milenian Empire. HW

Description: Zandor casts the spell he has learned from the *Book of Zargos*, with the help from several Zargosian priests and wizards. Once the incantation is cast, the Red Sun goes black; the only natural illumination comes from the Second Sun, which happens to be red at this time of the year. The Zargosians have a moment of hesitation as they expected both suns to go down, but the light pouring out of the Second Sun is very dim and turns out to be harmless to the Zargosians.

The Zargosians, beefed up by all the new spells that they acquired with the help of Zandor these last two years and hardened by

the experience of their previous power conquest, claim all over Milenia that the disappearance of the Red Sun is a punishment by the Immortal Zargos for chasing Emperor Caracanomos from the throne and the heresy of Emperor Adronius the Imposter. Their agents organize protests and theological debates in the cities of the empire.

In the rest of the Hollow World, the event is met with almost the same fear as a similar event in AC 1009, i.e. fear and superstition; though it initially isn't that big a deal since memories still exist of a similar event only a few years ago, when the sun doesn't return after one sleep and more the net result is more chaos than then, tempered by the fact that there is no loss of magic this time around. (See *Ka. 4*, *Ka. 11*; *Ka. 26*, *Ka. 28*.)

What This Means: The spell was originally devised by Zargos at a time when only one sun existed. Though it could probably be modified to affect both suns, Zandor didn't go to that length. The result, while not perfect, is close enough to the Zargosians' objectives that it qualifies as a victory to them; it also allows them to warn about the possible end of the second sun in a near future if the Milenians further infuriate their patron Zargos, thus actually giving them further leverage over the government.

The Second Sun is totally unaffected by the event. It continues to revolve on its orbit, as do the floating continents, even though the Red Sun is absent, as the movement of those large masses was never affected by the presence of the sun in the first place as it is only a *gate* and not a body with an associated gravity well. The *Spell of Preservation*, on the other hand, is removed alongside the Red Sun, allowing for magic to work fully in the Hollow World, cultures to evolve or disappear and the burrowers to be free again.

Kaldmont 13, AC 1017: A Fatal Crash.

Location: Northern regions of the Kingdom of Blackheart, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: While on its maiden voyage the new Alphatian *skyship* *The Ruby Redoubt* disappears over Blackheart. The only sign to its demise is a frantic magically-sent SOS message from its executive officer as it plunged to the ground. The Alphatian military frantically mobilizes to find the wreckage for salvage and investigation purposes. Though it had a combined crew and marine contingent of over 200 men and women, it is doubtful that any survived the crash and even more doubtful they can survive for too long on the ground. As a precaution, the sister ships of the *Ruby Redoubt* are grounded pending an investigation.

What This Means: The Ruby Redoubt is a new *Kirin* Class *skyship*, undergoing its shakedown cruise before being integrated into the imperial forces. During its construction, part of the structural integrity was compromised by a failed enchantment; the defective section was mended and not replaced. Under the rigors of maneuver, the weakness gave way, the hull essentially breaking in two. Its being over Blackheart has nothing to do with the crash, though it does complicate its recovery. The apprehensions about crew survivability are well founded, due to the suspected altitude and the reputation of Blackheart. The primary interests for the recovery party is to examine the wreckage and to salvage enchanted fittings and weaponry.

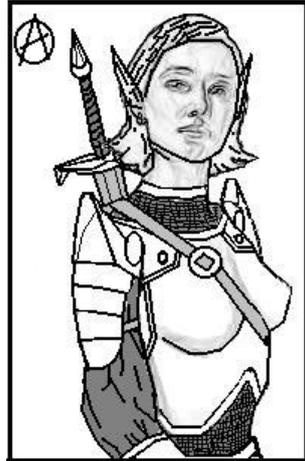
What the PCs Can Do: With Blackheart as the setting, any investigation will need a powerful escort as they search through its dark interior for the wreckage. Though the recovery team will have a contingent of troops, specialized individuals will be needed for the task and to help deal with any sinister elements that may present themselves. Obviously a wrecked *skyship* will draw the attentions of various mages and creatures wanting to secure the wreckage for their own goals. So PCs may find some competition in securing it.

Kaldmont 13, AC 1017: A Midshadow's Night Terror.

Location: Southern Azcan Empire. HW

Description:

Profiting from the disappearance of the Red Sun, leaving only the Moving Sun's faint light to protect from, the Schattentalfen launch a large-scale attack on southern Azcan territory. The dim lighting gives the



elven warriors a definitive edge against their Azcan counterparts, negating the Azcans' advantage in their native jungles. Although *Tlatoani* Oztiltipac has reinforced various strongholds in the south following the prior advances of the elves, the Azcans are unable to stop the inexorable march of the Schattentalfen. (See *Am. 24, Sv. 7; Ka. 14, Ka. 27.*)

What This Means: The removal of the Red Sun is a great opportunity for the Schattentalfen, who can now leave their caverns and tunnels with only light skin protection. Thus, they are able to turn their hatred fully on their foes, the Azcans. The Azcan Empire is not as heavily populated in the south and it has already lost to the Schattentalfen its largest city a few years back and its mining towns just this year; it is also not very well controlled by the new *tlatoani* and the new clergy, all elements converging to make its defense not very coherent, if not chaotic, despite the fierceness shown in battle by individual Azcan warriors when they face hated Schattentalfen.

Kaldmont 14, AC 1017: A Solution?

Location: City of Dovor, Kingdom of Haven, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: Some of his engineers inform Michael Restonberry about a new plan: instead of cutting the Kerothar

Mountains to reach the north of Haven a canal could be dug right through the mountains to Denwarf-Hurgon. Then the canal would be led to the Alpha River within the borders of Stoutfellow. This would require engineering to make the river navigable above Adiach and to construct a tunnel with a length of approximately 120 miles. Two points make this course of action desirable: no construction would have to take place on Havenish territory and Denwarf-Hurgon could get a canal harbor. Besides, Stonewall and Stoutfellow would not have to pay for the development of the north of Haven as in the previous plan. (See *Ka. 11, Ka. 12; Kl. 17.*)

What This Means: This solution will be more expensive than the original one, but much cheaper than the requirements of Haven. The question whether the canal will be led by locks to the surface in Denwarf-Hurgon is not yet settled. Some engineers have the opinion that the tunnel should be constructed with as few locks as possible. The harbor of Denwarf-Hurgon could be located in a great cave below the city—an idea that is absolutely acceptable for gnomes and dwarves. Restonberry sees an end of the talks for the first time now.

Kaldmont 14: Another Attack by Robin Moorkroft.

Location: City of Glantri, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: As Prince Kol journeys from Glantri City to New Kolland, his humanoid entourage is attacked by Robin Moorkroft and his Mundaner Men. Robin and his men display powerful and uncanny magical skills and capture the little kobold prince. The humanoids are mostly unharmed, but they are left naked, penniless and bereft of weapons and magical items, to fend for themselves. (See *Ei. 20; Ka. 19, Ka. 22.*)

What This Means: Robin Moorkroft is becoming more daring by the day! Glantrians wizards, particularly the nobles, will begin fearing for their safety on trips to and around the capital, for fear that this powerful bandit might capture them.

Kaldmont 14, AC 1017: Death of the Evil Twin.

Location: Azcan Empire. HW

Description: There is a strong theological debate in the Azcan Empire, between the new clergy of Quetzalcoatl and the underground priesthood of Atzanteotl, regarding the significance of the disappearance of the Red Sun.

The followers of Atzanteotl claim that the darkness is a sign that the Sons of Azca have gone in the wrong direction by following the impostor Papalotl. They scoff at the followers of Otzitiotl, who is obviously displeased with them. They claim that the new clergy plotted to destroy the Red Sun, a.k.a. Atzanteotl, who has been without sacrificial blood for too long and thus could no longer bring light to the Sons of Azca, thus preventing them from achieving the promised goal of conquering the world and dooming them to be conquered and enslaved by the hordes of elves rising from the bowels of hell.

There is dissension among the budding new clergy of Quetzalcoatl, Otzitiotl and Kalaktatla regarding the significance of the event and what the future holds. Though they all agree that Quetzalcoatl, the Moving Sun, killed his evil twin Atzanteotl, the Red Sun, the followers of Otzitiotl are deeply worried at the covering of darkness and doubt that the Moving Sun will gain in brightness despite self-assuring claims of the followers of Quetzalcoatl.

This debate and the ongoing advances of the Schattenalfen in the south, cause a lot of confusion and chaos in the Azcan Empire. (See Sv. 7, Ka. 13; Ka. 27, Ka. 28.)

What This Means: The Red Sun disappeared yestersleep, on 1 *miquiztli* (Atzanteotl, death's head) according to the Azcan calendar, a day of portent.

Third Week

Kaldmont 15, AC 1017: The Consequences of Altered Magics.

Location: Countryside, Kingdom of Arkan, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description:

For the last few weeks the Stonewall army has been steadily driven back until the Hollow World's red sun went dark, which stopped the battle for a few days. Now, however, the Stonewall



forces seem to push forward again with renewed strength... and new allies! A great number of battle mages seem to have joined their ranks and many soldiers among the Arkan and Foresthome troops are viciously killed by hostile *fireballs*, *lightning bolts*, *meteor swarms* and other violent magic. Wild monsters suddenly attack the defenders, some of whom are killed as they find themselves unable to move. All of a sudden the Arkan and Foresthome allies are cut to pieces by a ruthlessly efficient combination of magic and swordplay and they are soon forced to retreat! (See Sv. 19, Ei. 12; Ka. 17, Ka. 20.)

What This Means: Due to their similar military interests, there has long been an entente of sorts between Stonewall and Randel. When Stonewall began its war against Arkan, Randel was sympathetic to Stonewall's cause, but couldn't help the invasion much because of the vast distance between the nations involved. They were able to send only a few token battle mages. Now that the *Spell of Preservation* has been interrupted, however, things have changed! All the spells that had previously been prevented to Alphatian wizards by the *Spell of Preservation* [not counting the lucky few with access to the strange mnemonic mineral. Ed.] were

suddenly available again and Stonewall convinced Randel to send battle mages to help them drive off their enemies. With spells of instant teleportation, the Randel wizards were able to bring a large number of their battle mages to the front lines in almost no time. Their assistance is going to cost Stonewall, because Randel is not about to let them forget that they basically saved them from defeat, but it has been worth it: the combination of Stonewall's greatly experienced warriors and Randel's battle-hardened mages is merciless and effective and the Arkan and Foresthome forces are cut to pieces! This was a one-time effort by Randel, though—they do not intend to commit themselves to the war beyond this battle. General Selcomad and the other Stonewall leaders won't be too sad about that, however, because the tide of battle has turned in their favor again and they can now continue their conquest of Arkan.

What the PCs Can Do: Obviously there is plenty of opportunities for adventure and combat here. PCs on the side of Arkan or Foresthome should take care, though, or they could be among the casualties, but they might help more troops survive the onslaught.

Kaldmont 15, AC 1017: Appointments.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: On the day the Footman's Games open, Eusebius elevates Demetius Vannopolus, soon to be the former *Exarch* of Minrothad, to Count of Machetos with the full approval of the senate. Coltius Torion, Eusebius's first son and likely heir, having administered Machetos for several months since the conclusion of the Crown War, is made Prince of Carytion. Carytion's status is made equal to that of a county and several thousand new settlers are sent there (with the approval of the senators who have estates on the island). (*See Sv. 27.*)

What This Means: This is a normal reward to Demetius Vannopolus for his exemplary service as *Exarch* of Minrothad and in Dunadale. Unlike the previous time,

when Callastian Jowdynites was appointed, it actually is a reward as Machetos is in good shape now. While some might consider Count of Machetos to be a demotion compared to *Exarch* of Minrothad, the position of *Exarch* of Minrothad was temporary and he had to govern with the Council of Guilds. The position of Count of Machetos is permanent and he can govern it without having to placate a Council of Guilds. It will be a welcome respite after a year of dealing with the squabbling guilders. Coltius Torion, as Prince of Carytion, will gain additional governing experience. Also of consideration, governing Carytion will allow him to make contacts and develop strong relationships with many of the empire's most prominent leaders. These factors will stand him in good stead if and when he becomes emperor in his own right.

What the PCs Can Do: Characters deserving such a reward might gain a title in Thyatis today. Or they might be hired to help serve and advise the new rulers.

Kaldmont 15, AC 1017: Let's Get This Party Started.

Location: City of Bluenose, Kingdom of Arogansa, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: After much preparation and much more promotion, the business owners of Bluenose open their doors for the planned celebrations for Closing Day. Though the various taverns and rooming houses boast amiable bookings, the initial turnout is below their expectations. Many begin to doubt their support for the venture. As the day progresses, the influx of arrivals increases with many taverns running out of available rooms.

The reason for this unexpected turnout comes from the large contingent of graduated magic students from the empire's magical universities. Many planned to go to Bluenose and celebrate the end of the scholastic year, blow off the stresses of their studies and generally revel in their elevation to noble status.

The young mages are rather arrogant and

rather hard to handle; youth and undisciplined power can do that to people. However, the business owners can overlook this unruly behavior as the young mages spend a lot of money in their stay. Troublemakers are rounded up and summarily fined or flogged according to their offenses.

The city's entertainments manage to attract everyone's attention. Gambling and other vices are the most prolific pursuits, with wares and services being priced to accommodate any budget. However, cultured shows and theme balls are also present for those that can pay. Anything and everything is available to the tourists. The only limiting factor is the tourist's financial resources.

The business owners note the numbers of students and decide to market the week as Spring Break where the city will focus more on the younger crowd. Not wanting to give up on the more experienced and wealthier mages, they decide to market other periods especially towards them. They also pass along the idea that other Arogansan communities may want to get in on the marketing. Without the oceans, there is no need to focus just on Bluenose and the coastal resorts. (*See Am. 2, Am. 23.*)

What the PCs Can Do: The atmosphere in Bluenose is one of utter pandemonium, with every imaginable vice and entertainment being seen and indulged in. Whether the PCs are in Bluenose as security, tourists, or just find themselves by chance there is ample opportunity for them to get caught up in the festivities and its celebrants. The celebrants should be the focus of any plots or adventures. For example the PCs may find themselves hired by a novice mage to deal with a belligerent senior mage. The DM should use any and all examples of Alphatian stereotypes and excesses in filling out the setting. The DM should also remember the strongly enforced preferences of noble over mundaner. If the PCs have non-spellcaster types among their party, they will obviously have some prejudice-based adventures.

Kaldmont 17, AC 1017: A Treaty Is Signed.

Location: City of Dovir, Kingdom of Haven, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: After some more days of tense negotiations Lord Zuzuruth opens the daily talks with bad presentiments as the last days Michael Restonberry had been suspiciously merry. His feelings are correct: Restonberry tells the Havenish that there is a new plan. He is speaking about "a slightly different route," but agrees to pay for the beautification of any canal section on Havenish ground. Zuzuruth demands to see the new plans. After he has seen the new route he calls for a break to talk with his queen.

After one hour he is back and agrees to the proposal sadly. The treaty is signed thereafter. (*See Ka. 12, Ka. 14.*)

What This Means: Restonberry has gotten an approval from Denwarf-Hurgon and Draco yesterday, so he makes his final move now. Of course Zuzuruth has seen that the new plans are avoiding his original requirements. Unfortunately Queen Kryndylya has not seen the necessity of having a canal in Warzazath in the first place. When the silly dwarves insist they can construct a 120-mile long tunnel, Zuzuruth is sure they can do it, but he was not able to convince his queen. Of course the treaty as it is signed now is more or less obsolete—on the territory of Haven only little work in the bed of the Alphas River must be done, while most work will have to be done in Stonewall and Stoutfellow.

Kaldmont 17: Army Ambushed.

Location: Hills in the countryside, Kingdom of Arkan, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: The Stonewall army, now without the help of the battle mages from Randel who have returned home, are traveling through a hilly area, when they're suddenly ambushed. The enemy start by rolling rocks down the hills, which separates about 150 troops at the front from the rest

of Stonewall's army. These are then charged by Arkan cavalry, but when they try to use their pikes to meet the attack, they find that most of their pikes have been cut so that they break when they try to use them and they lose a good portion of their numbers. The Arkan and Foresthome forces who rolled rocks then begin firing arrows at the invaders, concentrating on any spellcasters they can identify. While the rest of the Stonewall army is trying to mobilize, there is suddenly a lot of confusion among their ranks, which prevents them from mounting a counter-attack against the enemy forces, who are then subsequently able to withdraw before they take any real casualties. The invaders lose about 100 troops in the battle. (*See Ei. 12, Ka. 15; Ka. 20, Ka. 24.*)

What This Means: This is once again the work of Wolf-Hunter and his Wolf-Pack. From the recent plans they stole from the Stonewall headquarters, they were able to plan this ambush and from some of the scouts they captured, they were able to learn passwords. They had to interpret Stonewall's plans due to the recent shifts in the war, but it seems their guesses have been correct. They then used these and the scouts' clothes to infiltrate the Stonewall army and sabotage their pikes and create confusion among the enemy troops. Wolf-Hunter and his Wolf-Pack even manage to escape during all the confusion. Though this is actually only a minor loss for Stonewall, it does seriously impact morale among the troops of Stonewall. Arkan and Foresthome morale, however, will greatly benefit from this, even though it doesn't really change the odds that much.

What the PCs Can Do: Once again the PCs can play the Wolf-Pack. If they decide to stay and cause confusion, though, they'll doubtlessly be discovered at one point if they remain too long and will have to fight their way out to avoid capture or death.

Kaldmont 18, AC 1017: The Lord Regrets.

Location: City of Errolyn, Kingdom of Theranderol, Floating Continent of Alpathia, Alpathian Empire. HW

Description: The answer to Lady Tyrona's invitation reaches Errolyn. Lord Abolon thanks her very much for the offer, but he regrets that he will not be able to respond to it until 2019, because he and his staff are overworked anyway. Lady Tyrona goes into a frenzy and accuses Abolon of being a commoner's friend. (*See Ei. 18, Ka. 13; Ka. 22.*)

What This Means: The reason he stated is absolutely correct. Abolon has no more respect for commoners than any other average nobleman, but with his involvement in the canal project his workforce is nearly exhausted and unable to take new demands. In addition to this canal project, he is also constructing a bridge in Haven, a new wing of the new aerial academy in Eagret and a dam in Frisland. Additionally, he participates in researches about the rebuilding of Aasla and Sundsvall and finally, he tries to develop a better, faster and cheaper method of digging canals. So he simply has no spare time for further talks.

Kaldmont 19, AC 1017: Reconstruction of the Last Harbor Begins.

Location: Town of Orfil, Kingdom of Foresthome, Floating Continent of Alpathia, Alpathian Empire. HW

Description: As the work in Tenoboa is nearly done the workers have been transported to Orfil to start with the construction of the dam in the last of the big seaports of Foresthome. (*See Ka. 2, Ka. 5; Ka. 27.*)

What This Means: Queen Kikania wants to get this work finished as quick as possible, in order to fulfil her promise to her people.

Kaldmont 19, AC 1017: Kol Up in Arms!

Location: City of Glantri, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: The recently attacked and humiliated Prince Kol of New Kolland appears at the parliament livid as a kobold can be. He calls for the nobles to expedite the hunt for the bandit Robin Moorkroft, but is greeted with amused witticisms—even giggling—from his peers. After some confusion over his kobold speech, Prince Kol engages in a barking match with Lord John Beaumarys-Moorkroft, the near-deaf Archduke of Westheath, who impulsively challenges him to a magical duel.

Kol backs down from the challenge, but walks out of the parliament in a huff. (*See Ei. 20, Ka. 14; Ka. 22.*)

What This Means: The kobold prince has come to face the harsh reality that the other Glantrian nobles do not take him seriously. He expected as much from his enemies, such as the Erewan elves; but catching his alleged ally, Princess Dolores Hillsbury of Fenswick, snickering during his speech made Prince Kol reassess his loyalties.

Prince Kol is considering allying himself with *Prinz* Jaggar von Drachenfels, banking on their recent collaboration in the war against Ethengar.

Kaldmont 20, AC 1017: The Spoils of War Are Spoiled!

Location: Village of Monden, Flatlands of Arkan, Kingdom of Arkan, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: As the invading forces from Stonewall move across Arkan, they find that the farmlands they've come here to claim have been systematically ruined: entire crops are burned and shelters destroyed, as the troops of Arkan are being driven back. [*Monden lies about halfway between Ceafem and Skyreach's former location. Ed.*] (*See Ka. 15, Ka. 17; Ka. 24, Ka. 26.*)

What This Means: The leaders of Arkan know that the Stonewall forces have come here for farmlands, which means that they have a food shortage. By burning their own fields, they hope to destroy the very supplies that Stonewall was trying to take by force.

This also leaves no shelter for the invaders. During the early stages of the invasion, the people of Arkan were unwilling to destroy their own crops, but now that the invaders are rushing through their lands, they've been forced to see the necessity of such tactics.

What the PCs Can Do: Little to do here, except perhaps to capture a few commoners and have them explain what's going on.

Kaldmont 20, AC 1017: A City Under Siege.

Location: City of Archport, Kingdom of Eadrin, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: Arogansan troops arrive within sight of the Eadrin capital of Archport. After scouts have reported that no Eadrin forces are poised to challenge their approach, the Arogansan commander orders his troops forward to take up positions around the city's defenses. His plans are to lay siege to the city. This should give his engineers time to study the defenses and plan out a means to overcome them.

Inside Archport, King Idon watches the arrival with mixed feelings. The enemy forces are too weak to realistically take the city by direct force. Likewise, with Eadrin forces deployed throughout the kingdom he has too few troops in the city to go out and physically break the siege. For the time being, the capital will have to bear out the siege until reinforcements from the north can deploy to assist them. (*See Ei. 26, Ka. 11.*)

What the PCs Can Do: PCs for both sides will find the situation quite boring. Without the cover of night, specialized raids will be hampered. The DM and PCs should try to find means to engineer daring raids or scouting parties. Likewise, PCs can act on behalf of their own forces by maintaining peace and order among the restless troops or populace.

Kaldmont 21, AC 1017: The Ice Bowl.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Today, at the close of the Footman's Games, in the worst weather yet, the Imperial Championship of Thyatian Rugby is contested in the Coliseum. For the second year in a row, the Grey Bay Packers compete against the Kerendan Cowboys in the title game. In a match that will be considered by many the greatest played, Coach Vincinine Lambeardi's Packers beat the Cowboys, scoring the winning touch in the last seconds of the match. This is their third championship in a row. Following the game, Coach Lambeardi announces his retirement.

What This Means: Last year, while the Crown War was raging, the championship was played in Kerendas. After that match, several of Lambeardi's best players retired and few thought his team would be able to compete for an unprecedented third championship in a row, much less win it.

Temperatures actually barely went below freezing, but that is unusually cold for the City of Thyatis's temperate climate.

Fourth Week

Kaldmont 22, AC 1017: New Leader of the Planning Staff Appointed.

Location: City of Errolyn, Kingdom of Theranderol, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: Lady Tyrona, who had been charged with planning a canal in Theranderol, is replaced by General-Major Quoos from the army of Theranderol. Unlike Tyrona, the general is a commoner (from the gentry) who should get on much better with Admiral Clarendon. He sends a message to the admiral and invites him to a new meeting the next month. (*See Ka. 13, Ka. 18.*)

What This Means: Finally Theranderol has made a decision: the talks must go on and so a new man has been found. The general has worked on the project for quite some time and he thinks that he will be able to handle the work by himself. Some talks

with Admiral Clarendon will be useful nonetheless and so he has decided to meet the other man.

Kaldmont 22, AC 1017: Chaos at the Glantrian Parliament!

Location: City of Glantri, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: Initial results of the investigation of the wizard-bandit Robin Moorkroft are presented at the parliament and Supreme Judge Princess Dolores Hillsbury opens the floor for discussion. A subtle innuendo, a double entendre, a veiled threat and a concealed insult later and the House of Lords bursts into chaos. Tempers flare, accusations are hurled, fingers are pointed and challenges are issued. Involved in the ruckus are: Princess Carnelia de Belcadiz, whose brothers *Don Ricardo* and *Don Diego* (once swashbuckling heroes themselves) are suspected of being this Robin Moorkroft; Princess Carlolina Erewan, who has always hated Kol and was accused of implicating Carnelia in the matter; and Archduke John Beaumarys-Moorkroft of Westheath, for the simple reason that Robin Moorkroft claims to share his name and lineage. (*See Ka. 14, Ka. 19.*)

What This Means: Although the results of the investigation of the parliament about Robin Moorkroft are far from substantial, Princess Dolores took this opportunity to work some chaos among the Glantrian princes. She is pleased at her success, although she knows this is the only silver lining in her recent troubles and failed schemes.

What the PCs Can Do: Many of the princes and nobles will involve themselves in their own investigations and reconnaissance regarding Robin Moorkroft or their enemies. PCs with a bent for spying and undercover work will probably find themselves busy this season.

Kaldmont 22, AC 1017: Final Destination Reached.

Location: Nameless Tower, Eastern Forest of Geffron, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: After dispatching a few lowly monsters and a pair of fearsome green dragons in the last week, the elves led by Professor Dove reach the long-sought Nameless Tower with only minor casualties. They proceed to explore the ground level of the building, checking that everything lies as Dove left it. Then they camp outside the ominous black basalt construction, waiting for the end of the year, while the human and a few Long Runner sages compare their lore on the inscriptions found inside the tower. (See *Fe. 18, Ei. 25; Ka. 24, Ka. 27.*)

What This Means: Dove is eager to compare his information with the elven sages' old legends, in order to get confirmation of the story told in the tower's engravings. However, he is resolute to wait for the Day of Dread before venturing into the upper levels of the tower, in order to avoid magical dangers and above all to draw Idris's (whatever She might be) unwanted attention.

What the PCs Can Do: They can assist Dove and the elven sages in their translations, maybe gathering part of the truth before all others. Also, they will be busy repelling wandering monsters during the trip to the tower, as well as during the daily watches.

Kaldmont 23, AC 1017: Thyatians Reach Azurun.

Location: City of Azurun, Kingdom of Yozgulak, Hulean Empire. WB

Description: The representatives of the Thyatian trade expedition reach the city of Azurun. They spend some time looking around and observing the lives of Hulean people. They don't seem to see any signs of oppression or tyranny that Darokin often accuses Hule of.

Instead they observe Huleans peacefully going about their business, with the Master's

guardsmen keeping order. To their amazement, Thyatians even see many humanoids living together with humans, without any apparent racial tensions. The whole atmosphere (minus the humanoids) reminds them of a cosmopolitan Thyatian city. They start thinking that maybe Hule isn't as bad as Darokin makes it out to be. (See *Ei. 5, Ei. 17.*)

What This Means: Hosadus wants to give the Thyatians the impression that Hule is no worse than any other land. His guards will remove all possible sources of disorder and the Thyatians will be presented with a civilized, cosmopolitan atmosphere.

Kaldmont 24, AC 1017: I Think I Saw a Dove...

Location: Forest of Lothenar, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: The elves are astounded to see Christopher Dove emerge from Beasthunter's tent today. Their leader quickly gathers them and explains they will follow the archaeologist to the cave of the dragon knights, for he knows well its location and will help them reach it in a few days. Once there, they will wait until the break of the Day of Dread and then penetrate the underground complex to destroy everything they can, while freeing their elven brethren at the same time. The troops immediately begin to move following the human archaeologist's instructions. (See *Ei. 25, Ka. 22; Ka. 27, Ka. 28.*)

What This Means: Beasthunter reached the western side of Lothenar Forest without many problems, but he is currently at a loss about the dragon knights' cave and is constantly keeping his men on the move to avoid the Shadow Army patrols. For this reason he magically contacted Dove's expedition and requested his aid in locating the place. Since Dove and his troops are already in place near the Nameless Tower, Dove agrees to be *teleported* to Lothenar, where he will guide Beasthunter and his troops to the secret cave, before being sent back to the Nameless Tower before the end of the year.

Kaldmont 24, AC 1017: The Futility of War.

Location: Stonewall camps in Arkan and Ceafem, Kingdom of Arkan, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: The leaders of both sides in the war in Arkan are considering their options. Though the forces from Stonewall have marched across Arkan at an impressive rate in the last few weeks, they will win little if the Arkans keep destroying their crops... and they will run out of food! Similarly, Arkan itself is gaining little and neither are their allies from Foresthome. Though they have been able to slow the invaders' advance since they began moving forward again, they haven't been able to stop it and the invaders are very close to their towns and cities along the coast of Crystal Lake now. If these fall, then Arkan will have lost. The conclusion on both sides is that diplomatic negotiations are in order and one side will contact the other on the matter shortly and naturally the other side will agree. Eventually, an agreement for a diplomatic meeting will be set about a mile from the Stonewall camp on Kaldmont 26. (See *Ka. 17, Ka. 20; Ka. 26, Ka. 28.*)

What This Means: The situation is grim for both sides. Stonewall is in danger of losing the very food supplies they came to conquer, but Arkan can't really afford to destroy any more, though Stonewall does not know that yet.

What The PCs Can Do: Prepare for more diplomacy.

Kaldmont 24, AC 1017: Ennius's Discovery.

Location: City of Edairo, Kingdom of Thothia, Nayce. SD

Description: Ennius Necrekis and his scholar-adventurers discover, on scroll 4321 of *Exiles*, a picture of the village of Caligaris. The text of the scroll says it was founded early in the 1st century AC by a group of pro-Alphatian Thyatian wizards, who had left the mainland after the successful rebellion of Lucinius and Zendrolion. Some minor references about the village point out

that there some strange cults were worshipped; among those, the Night Arachnid and the Slug Lizard. (See *Ka. 3, Ka. 12.*)

What This Means: This is just the result of Ennius's studies into background the phanton village of Caligaris. What his aims are remain mysterious.

Kaldmont 26, AC 1017: Emperor of Underside.

Location: Tower of Night, Milenian Empire. HW

Description: The Zargosians are very busy throughout Milenia trying to establish a strong following of Zargos, He Who Closed the Red Sun and to be handed the reins of power. Zandor uses the opportunity to leave the Tower of Night and *teleports* to the Floating Continent of Alphatia. Rather than going to the empire proper and making his presence known, he goes to the continent's underside and declares himself Emperor of Alphatia Underside, although there is no audience to listen to his words. Zandor, now a Zargosian because of his using the *Book of Zargos*, starts building up his strength in his new domain, putting to use his expanded knowledge in the field of necromancy he studied those past couple of years. (See *Ka. 11, Ka. 13, Ka. 28.*)

What This Means: With the Red Sun out of the picture and the Zargosians busy, Zandor was able to finally escape their attention. It took him a few days to realize that the full array of magic now worked, thus simplifying his flight greatly. The Zargosians do not have any particular feeling about Zandor's escape from their "protection," as his role was over, though Vix would not agree if she were currently present in Milenia, as she never trusted Zandor and would feel suspicious about anything unusual he might do.

Kaldmont 26, AC 1017: Diplomatic Negotiations Begin

Location: Stonewall camp in the Arkan Flatlands, Kingdom of Arkan, Floating

Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire.
HW

Description: The planned negotiations between Stonewall and the Arkan and Foresthome allies begin. At first both sides just state their claims and no agreements are reached. The major participants are General Selcomad, leader of the Stonewall army, General Lotaran, leader of the Arkan forces and Commander Trallans, leader of the Foresthome army. However, Wolf-Hunter is also here in order to intimidate the Stonewall representatives by his presence after his recent successes. It's clear to everyone present that Selcomad sends Wolf-Hunter a few angry looks a couple of times, but he doesn't address him. Other important people are Amagast, a cleric of Razud from Stonewall, Etesse, a cleric of Koryis from Arkan who is Lotaran's personal advisor and a few mages from Randel who attend on Stonewall's side after their recent involvement in the war. King Qinn of Arkan has remained in Ceafem, though. Selcomad demands Arkan's surrender, stating that they are clearly losing the war, but Lotaran merely responds that Stonewall's morale is crumbling, as are their food supplies. Selcomad threatens Lotaran by saying that unless Arkan surrenders now, his army will destroy the villages of Arkan from now on, including the capital, Ceafem. If Arkan surrenders, however, the invaders will be more lenient. Lotaran doesn't seem threatened, though and Commander Trallans adds that if need be, more troops can probably be called from Foresthome. (*See Ka. 20, Ka. 24; Ka. 28.*)

What This Means: Obviously nobody is going to admit or surrender anything at the beginning of these peace-talks. Several days will have to pass before there is any hope of true results.

What the PCs Can Do: Given the neutral site where these negotiations take place, there will be demand for expert guards (i.e., adventurers) on both sides. If the PCs are with the Wolf-Pack, they may also be here to help Wolf-Hunter intimidate the Stonewall representatives.

Kaldmont 26, AC 1017: Pilgrims' Progress.

Location: City of Glantri, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: In the months since the first clerics of Valerias visited the Belcadiz Manor in Glantri City, now considered a religious site of *Los Amantes*, there has been a steady wave of pilgrims and believers from Darokin, Karameikos, Sind, Thyatis and Ierendi arriving in Glantri. They have come to pay homage to their Immortal patron and request access to the holy site. They set up camp in the streets and byways of Glantri City. The constabulary is kept busy breaking up congregations of Valerias worshippers. An emergency session of the Council of Princes is called. (*See Fy. 3, Am. 22; Ka. 27.*)

What This Means: Supreme Judge Dolores is perturbed by this influx of pilgrims, though not necessarily for the same reasons as most of the other nobles. While they long to keep tight rein on clerical practices in Glantri, Dolores dislikes having "her" city guards wrapped up in grunt work when they could be out looking for her would-be assassins and the "late" Prince Volospin. Dolores will try to pin blame on Princess Carnelia and pass off responsibility for dealing with the pilgrims to her. Carnelia is hardly embarrassed by the incident, but she resents Dolores for this political embarrassment. In the end, it is decided that the pilgrims will be escorted from the city and told they cannot assemble within Glantri, as it is against the law. Dolores sanctions the city guards to use lethal force if necessary.

Kaldmont 27, AC 1017: Water in the Harbor.

Location: Town of Tenoboa, Kingdom of Foresthome, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: In a big ceremony the first section of the Foresthome coast canal is opened. The harbor of the city is now again useable—at least to connect with the rest of the Llyn River harbors; connection with the rim settlements will have to wait the Rim

Canal's construction. Queen Kikania promises her people that the future of Foresthome will be better than ever. Halzunthram, Solturnun, Clarendon and Abolon are invited too. While Solturnun as a politician uses the opportunity to hold a speech, Halzunthram is only seen grinning in the background. Abolon uses the opportunity to praise his work and the pride he feels about it. He is willing to dig more canals throughout the whole empire. (*See Ka. 5, Ka. 19.*)

What This Means: The visions of the sailors are really coming true. Although the canal section is only a few miles long and not yet navigable, the process has been started and it is going on.

What the PCs Can Do: On this day only two things can be done: the PCs could either enjoy the celebration, or they could ensure that no opponent to the canal could spoil the work on the last moment.

Kaldmont 27, AC 1017: Alexander's Day Massacre.

Location: City of Glantri, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: The city winds down for a respectful hour of silence at noon on this national holiday. Crowds gather around Alexander Platz to watch for omens of what the coming year is to bring. As they stare at the City Belfry, mausoleum of the nation's founder Alexander Glantri, most are suddenly struck with a chilling sensation; the belfry appears to be weeping.

At that moment, only a few blocks away, a group of pilgrims attempt to pay homage to Valerias outside of Belcadiz Manor. In direct violation of city ordinance (speaking during the hour of silence is a felony), a city guardsman comes forth to arrest the devout—and chaos ensues! Afterwards, no one will remember quite what started the event—a guardsman shoving a pilgrim too roughly, a cleric spouting invectives at godless Glantrians—but all will forever recall the consequences.

There is mass-rioting as the constables unleash magical bolts and more mundane

weaponry against crowds of clerics and pilgrims. They soon learn, to their dismay, why Valerias is also known as the Girder on of Weapons. As Her worshippers are being attacked by the Glantrian guard, Her clerics suddenly unleash deadly magicks of their own and many of Her followers suddenly (and divinely) are in possession of magical weaponry and armor. Deadly confrontations ensue and soon even non-partisan bystanders have become involved in the rioting. Buildings are set ablaze, businesses are looted (and many would-be thieves are incinerated by magical protections).

Several hours later, the violence has been mostly quelled. Reinforcements to the city guard are still being *teleported* in from other spots outside the city and troops are on their way from Fort Monteleone. Dozens of deaths are reported and many more injuries. Supreme Judge Dolores grits her teeth and prepares herself for the backlash that will likely come. (*See Am. 22, Ka. 26.*)

What This Means: This is a dark day in Glantrian history. Many will compare the massacre to the cleric burnings that occurred during the darker years of Glantri's past and this day will become a rallying point for many interest groups. Some will hope for a greater leeway on Glantri's restrictive clerical laws, while others will use the event to attack the lenience on clerical practices that crept in during the early years of the current millennium. For her own part, Dolores will have to attempt to discover the cause of the incident—either to hide her own complicity in the sanctioning of lethal force, or else to justify those same actions. The repercussions of this event will be far-reaching in any case.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are in Glantri City, it will be nearly impossible for them to avoid the mass-rioting that ensues. They can participate in events, either aiding the constabulary in trying to quell the violence, assisting the pilgrims in their efforts, or indulging in some freelance mayhem of their own.

Kaldmont 27, AC 1017: Hide and Wait.

Location: Forest of Lothenar, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: Beasthunter's elves reach the outside of the cave where the dragon knights are hatched. After the first scouting mission outside the complex, the elves discover there are a dozen humanoid guards watching the only entrance, so it won't be difficult to overcome them. However, they expect much more resistance inside, if not on the part of the Onyx Ring wizards (who will not be able to cast their deadly spells during the Day of Dread), surely by those adult dragon knights stationed inside the cave. For this reason, Dove draws a sketchy map of the cave, with the hidden tunnel he used to enter the innermost chambers and the guards he spotted clearly marked. After that, he wishes good luck to the elves and gets *teleported* back to his tent outside the Nameless Tower by Beasthunter. (See *Ka. 24, Ka. 27; Ka. 28.*)

What This Means: The elves have finally reached their goal. They know they'll have to wait till the next dawn before launching the all-out assault and for this reason everyone has cast some masquerading spell on him- or herself to merge with the environs, or has turned *invisible* thanks to spells and *elven cloaks*. They will rest hidden on the dead tree branches and in the bushes until the new day comes; then, only the Immortals know what will be of them.

Kaldmont 27, AC 1017: Here Today, Gone Tomorrow.

Location: Protectorate of Sclaras, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: As the day goes on, an ethereal mist begins to form around the Island of Sclaras, gradually obscuring it. By nightfall, it has faded hazily. Ships can still sail through the mists to the island, but the location seems oddly... different, like you're not on Mystara anymore. By midnight, the island is seemingly gone and only a fine mist remains, which fades away as magic fails on Mystara.

What This Means: The Day of Dread has been inconvenient (at best) and been dangerous (at its worst) to mages ever since it started. The wizards of Sclaras have, intermittently, researched ways to circumvent this problem. Now for once the relatively small size of Sclaras has worked in their favor. They have been able to create an enchantment that is actually shifting the island off of Mystara to another plane, temporarily. If Sclaras had been a larger island, it would have been difficult if not impossible for this to work. This will allow them and their enchantments to ride out the Day of Dread undisturbed. Then they hope to return the island to its normal position at the beginning of next year.

Kaldmont 27, AC 1017: Schattentalen Dig In.

Location: Borderline near the Snake River, Azcan Empire. HW

Description: The Schattentalen, expecting the loss of their wizardly and clerical magic, stop their advances into Azcan territory and dig in. (See *Ka. 13, Ka. 14; Ka. 28, Ka. 28.*)

What This Means: Though the Azcans will also suffer from lack of magic, the Schattentalen have more wizards and they have more clerical support too as the Azcans are still suffering from the removal of priests of Atzanteotl, who are replaced only slowly and by largely less experienced priests of Quetzalcoatl, Otzitiotl, Kalaktatla, or other Immortals.

Kaldmont 28, AC 1017: The Return of the Prodigal Sun.

Location: Throughout the Hollow World. HW

Description: While magic starts failing in the Hollow World below Glantri City, the Red Sun reappears in the sky. Everywhere the awe that the disappearance of the sun had engendered recedes, while the spellcasters start suffering their annual loss of power.

In Milenia the Zargosians are caught by surprise and many of them die from

exposure to the sun's rays. The Milenian churches condemn the actions of Zargos and proclaim victory over the forces of darkness and entropy and Emperor Adronius declares the cult of Zargos illegal. In the next few days, several more Zargosians, who were able to hide from the sun in a timely fashion, are arrested and executed, including their leader Caracanomnos.

Vix, who had just returned to Milenia to partake in the victory of her father Zargos, vows to track down Zandor and make him pay for his treachery. (See *Ka. 13, Ka. 26; Ka. 28, Ka. 28.*)

What This Means: Zandor has indeed tricked the Zargosians: the spell he cast was not the one he had found in the *Book of Zargos*, but a modified version of it, one that does not close the *gate* once and for all but instead maintains it in a closed state. Because of that subtle distinction (continuous instead of instantaneous), the Day of Dread *dispels* Zandor's spell, thus restoring the Red Sun. Zandor knew this would happen and he made sure that he would not be adversely affected by the return of the light and moved to Underside rather than on Alphatia proper. Now, with the sun back and at a great distance from the Zargosians, he has nothing to fear from them. He doesn't know, however, that Vix is after him and she will not be stopped by the airless void or the sun.

The Zargosians are greatly affected by the return of magic, as many of them die either immediately or in the following days and weeks. Also, their cult is forbidden and hunted down in Milenia. Though this is a disaster for the Zargosians and the Immortal Nyx, it is not totally negative for Nyx as Her ideas have had a great impact in Milenia as a whole rather than just among Her Zargosian followers and will thus be that much harder to eradicate. The *Spell of Preservation* resumes its usual effects.

Kaldmont 28, AC 1017: Evil Twin Bad for His Shadow Sons.

Location: Borderline near the Snake River, Azcan Empire. HW

Description: With the Red Sun's return, the Schattentalfen are again vulnerable on the surface. Fortunately, they had entrenched in their current positions waiting for the Day of Dread to pass and they were also being prudent as they feared that exact thing might occur as it did after only one sleep during the original Week Without Magic. Few elves die as a result, but some of their gains are jeopardized and indeed the Azcans regain ground. This marks the end of the Schattentalfen advance and the border stabilizes. (See *Ka. 27, Ka. 28; Ka. 28.*)

What This Means: The Schattentalfen occupy a large portion of southern Azcan territory. Most of the jungles and hills up to Snake River are under their control, plus the ruined city of Tenpocatl. During the largest part of the year the Schattentalfen advanced slowly and steadily, wiping out Azcan positions and securing their supply line; later in the year, profiting from the unexpected shadow brought on by the temporary disappearance of the Red Sun, they force marched through Azcan lands, spreading but leaving Azcan strongholds untouched. They have left the southwestern part of the empire alone, the whole region around the ruined city of Axateotl, protected by Nazelacuilli Keep. The heavily-manned Ximac Fort is a thorn in their side and could well be used as a base from which the Azcans may launch a counter-offensive next year. Murasca Keep is still in the hands of Azcan followers of Atzanteotl. Numerous smaller keeps, or simply village warriors, also make the conquest uncompleted, especially to the north of Ximac Fort.

Kaldmont 28, AC 1015: Bensarian Sleeps.

Location: City of Wendar, Kingdom of Wendar. OW

Description: With the coming of the Day of Dread Bensarian falls into a deep coma at dawn. His assistants have been prepared for this scene after witnessing it happen in the last two years and Bensarian has instructed them to protect him until his awakening. The whole King's Guard is mobilized to

watch over the old prince regent's mysterious slumber. Among the people who watch over him there are also a small group of elves with a very special task. (*See Am. 16, Am. 28.*)

What This Means: The Onyx Ring wizard possessing Bensarian's body knew that the Day of Dread would nullify his control over the sage and so came to this day prepared. By this time, it is possible the Church of Idris has noticed the elves protecting the old sage and even if they don't know the elves' true goals, they might be tempted to kill him just to spoil the elves' plans (whatever they are).

The elves must pay careful attention to everyone's moves during this day, but cannot approach Bensarian's rooms because he has ordered everyone to be kept at bay until his awakening. They know they must act swiftly once the new day comes, because the future of Wendar lies in their hands.

What the PCs Can Do: They must protect Bensarian at all costs! If they are among his personal retainers, but are unaware of the sage's condition, they may unwittingly help the Church of Idris while hindering or even fighting openly the Genalleth elves' attempts at freeing the sage's soul. If on the other hand they are allied with the Genalleth clanmasters, they will have a tough time trying to breach into Bensarian's quarters without causing distress and preventing the prince regent's assassination. Also, on the new year's day, they must *dispel* the magic laid upon his soul in order to succeed fully in their task.

Kaldmont 28, AC 1017: Day of Discovery?

Location: Village of Chansea, Bishopric of Leominster, Kingdom of Bellayne. SC

Description: Two privateer sloops, the Alacrity and the Turbulent, are keeping an eye on shipping movements at Chansea when they see an incredible sight. The village shimmers and wavers and suddenly a massive construction project is visible—a rapidly growing dockyard, complete with two parliamentary frigates and assorted

lesser ships. Several thousand troops can be seen in the town, as can multiple Torreóner bombard devices. Amazed, the captain of the flotilla speeds back to Theeds to report this development. (*See Ka. 2, Ka. 4.*)

What This Means: The illusions woven by Vezhrya have been broken by the Day of Dread and by sheer luck the royalists now know what is going on at Chansea. Admiral Vance will doubtless push for an immediate attack on the town—but the defenses are formidable. Perhaps some special tactic is required...

What the PCs Can Do: Characters could be tasked with finding a way through the defenses of Chansea.

Kaldmont 28, AC 1017: Rebirth of the Evil Twin.

Location: Azcan Empire. HW

Description: As the Red Sun returns, the theological debate that has been raging between the forbidden clergy of Atzanteotl and the new clergy integrates that new major event, as each is trying to explain the appearance or disappearance of suns in the best way possible for them and their patron, while disparaging the other faith's point of view.

The followers of Atzanteotl claim that the Red Sun has returned thanks to their efforts to sacrifice victims to Atzanteotl, so that He can bring them light again. They urge the Azcans to topple the heretic clergy and restore the worship of Atzanteotl, who alone can guide the Azcan people to their true destiny of world conquest.

The followers of Quetzalcoatl and His fellow Immortals claim that the Moving Sun has purged the Red Sun from its evil, so that it can now shine forever without further need for sacrifice. They claim that the Evil Twin has been killed by Quetzalcoatl and that now the Azcans are on their way to their promised destiny. (*See Ka. 27, Ka. 28, Ka. 28.*)

Kaldmont 28, AC 1017: Day of the Dove.

Location: Nameless Tower, Eastern Forest of Geffron, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: Just before the break of dawn, with the elves ready to storm the Nameless Tower, a group of black dragons appears flying over the site. The elves immediately engage in a fierce battle, while the sages and Professor Dove retreat inside the building escorted by a few soldiers. While the battle rages outside and the dragons (and the elves) lose part of their might at sunrise, Dove and his party venture up the ladder in the central hall of the tower, entering the upper levels. Here they have to cope with other animated guardians, which function nonetheless.

At the end of the day, the corpses of two dragons lie bleeding on the ground, surrounded by the dead bodies of many brave elves. Inside the tower, Dove and his companions have been able to reach the top of the tower and now have in their hands the inscriptions and frescoes that depict the final scenes of Idris's history. Meanwhile, a lone figure hidden in the darkness has also gained access to the upper levels and is now frantically searching the rooms trying to find a very odd and powerful item. (*See Ka. 24, Ka. 27.*)

What This Means: Since Idris knows Her tower is particularly vulnerable during this day, She has instructed a group of trusted dragons to watch over it every year on this precise day. The elves must counter the dragons' mighty attacks and swoops solely with their fighting prowess, since magic has left them as well. The good side is that the dragons cannot use magic either, but this is far from balancing and the casualties at the end are staggering. Meanwhile, inside the tower not all traps have been deactivated because of the Day of Dread: deadly mechanical traps are still present and some greater created are able to fight, albeit slowed a bit. This won't prevent Dove and his men from reaching the top levels of the tower, however.

The real problem lies in the figure hidden in the shadows: the Shadow Lord has come as well, hoping to exploit the Day of Dread to brave the tower's defenses without alerting Idris. He is now searching for his phylactery as well as spying on the elves' progress, hoping to gather some vital information about his hated enemy (and in particular looking for Idris's true name to bind Her to his will).

What the PCs Can Do: Fight against four black dragons and then join the explorers inside the tower to protect them from the mechanical traps and the (beastly and magical) wardens still present in the tower!

Kaldmont 28, AC 1017: Heart of the Enemy.

Location: Forest of Lothenar, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: Beasthunter's elves boldly launch their assault on the cave of the dragon knights as soon as their magical shielding fades away. Taking the outer guards by surprise, they are able to infiltrate the lair without losses, but once inside, the Onyx Ring unleashes the dragon knights stationed in the cave against the elves and the battle becomes a bloodbath. The elves play hide and seek inside the dungeon's labyrinthine tunnels and rooms, but they are often surprised and trapped by the enemy, who know the place far better. However, the diversion works and a group of elves manages to reach the inner chamber where the Children of Idris are produced via the secret tunnel discovered by Dove. There they kill as many wizards as possible, destroy the tanks and pools containing immature dragon knights and dragon hatchlings and free the unlucky elves who are still alive after the gruesome experiments (mercifully killing all the others who have been reduced to shriveled empty shells). With the battle still raging around them, they set the laboratory on fire and escape the cave in a hurry, their retreat covered by a group of bold elves led by Beasthunter. When the elf lord sees all of his remaining troops have escaped outside the complex with the prisoners, he and his

followers launch directly into the claws and talons of the remaining dragon knights, while another group of elves make the exit tunnel collapse, sealing the pursuers and the brave elves forever underground. (*See Ka. 24, Ka. 27.*)

What This Means: Beasthunter has succeeded in his ultimate goal: to destroy the dragon knights' breeding ground. He had known from the beginning this would have been a desperate battle, but he was confident in his men and didn't flinch at the possibility of dying in the process. The strategy was to engage the knights and all of the other guardians inside the complex in an open warfare, thus covering the actions of a small number of trained soldiers who had to infiltrate the main laboratory through a secret tunnel to destroy everything in their path and rescue the elven captives. The plan proved to be well-thought, but Beasthunter also knew that without a rearguard to cover the elves' retreat, their efforts would have been wasted in bloodshed. For this reason he chose a group of valiant and loyal elves to help him delay the pursuers and once all of his surviving soldiers managed to escape, he gave his men the order to bury all of them alive in the underground complex. This way the remaining elves will be able to make the trail back to Geffron safely and he has finally shown everyone what is the boldness of a true Long Runner clanmaster.

What the PCs Can Do: Battle their way into the heart of the dragon knights' sanctum and help the elves destroy as many draconic hatchlings as they can, fending off the enemies and rescuing the tortured elves before escaping.

Kaldmont 28, AC 1017: The Day of Renewal.

Location: Throughout the Thyatian Empire. OW, DV, SD

Description: The Imperial Senate of Thyatis declares the last day of the year an imperial holiday, the Day of Renewal. In the capital the weather is considerably



brighter and warmer than it was a week ago. Ceremonies honoring the Immortals are held in the morning, followed by games sponsored by the senate in the Coliseum and Emperor Eusebius presides over the first chariot and horse races in the now-completed Hippodrome. Jesters, acrobats, mimes and other performers put on their best shows. Similar festivities are held throughout the Thyatian Empire. Thyatians celebrate into the night, leaping over bonfires to burn away bad luck and to celebrate the ending of the old year and the beginning of the new.

In both the Coliseum and the Hippodrome, one of the performances consists of a group of bedraggled men dressed in rags stumbling onto the grounds. In one hand they carry placards with poorly-scrawled messages about impending doom, while in the other hand each holds a wine jug from which they take frequent swigs. In between stumbling into each other, they shout slogans similar to those of the Fatalists, but worded in such a way that they come out sounding like a double entendre, causing the crowd to laugh. When they reach the center of the grounds, the performers end up in a circle facing each other, with their backs to the crowd. Each then bends over at the waist and lifts up the back of their tunics, exposing their buttocks, on which are written the words "The End is Near." The audience bursts out laughing and people then have trouble taking the Fatalists seriously. People snicker and point at the band of (actual) Fatalists outside the Coliseum, saying "the end is near" and chuckling.

This ridicule seems to drive the Fatalists, always seemingly half-crazed before anyhow, into a murderous frenzy. They draw short swords hidden under their tattered robes and rush the crowds outside the Coliseum, intending to kill as many people as possible. But agents of the emperor who "happened" to be nearby, as well as a squad of guards, jump into action, intercepting the Fatalists before they cause too much mayhem. A vicious melee ensues, with the Fatalists fighting to the last man while a crowd looks

on raptly (the impromptu battle being more exciting as a novelty to jaded onlookers than the planned gladiatorial matches inside). Eventually all the Fatalists are cut down.

In the Coliseum, many of the matches are actually duels between renowned participants. These duels had been arranged naturally, but as a result of the freeing of gladiators, the Coliseum officials wanted to find a way to spice up the matches somewhat. Thus they have taken to encouraging duelists to hold their combats in the arena and these battles become particularly popular. This practice has grown throughout the year and now it is somewhat of a fad for duels to be held in the arenas of Thyatis. (*See Ka. 10.*)

What This Means: Eusebius and other Thyatian traditionalists want to put the Day of Dread thing behind them and also to renew the traditional vigor and vitality of the Thyatian people. Let others live in dread, is their message—Thyatians do not fear. This also is intended to stand in stark contrast to the cowering mages of Alphatia, holed up in their abodes waiting for the day to pass. As part of this, Eusebius had his agents hire actors to play the part of the “Fatalist Sots,” to stop people from being unnerved by them and make them the butt of jokes instead. Eusebius wants to create an image of Thyatian renewal and the Fatalists were bad for morale.

The rage the Fatalists went into was a result of the ridicule. Eusebius hadn't planned it, but ever since the Fatalists first appeared he had them under surveillance, ordering his men to get them into custody at the first excuse. They were supposed to capture at least some of them for interrogation, to learn about their origin and who, if anyone, was behind their activities. But in their fanatical frenzy the Fatalists fought to the death and the guards' efforts to capture them were thwarted. There might be more of them elsewhere, as part of some apocalyptic cult, but the imperial authorities lost their best chance to find out more. *Speak with the dead* will be used to question the corpses tomorrow, when magic works again.

The Thyatians are also celebrating the apparent revival of their empire and are happy to have something to celebrate. In the city of Thyatis especially, the ceremonies in the temples give honor and tribute to those who fought to save the empire during the battle of a year ago. Eusebius himself rises to the occasion, in a speech partially written by his wife Lucianna. In the speech he pays tribute to Thyatis's war dead, not only those who fell during the Crown War but during the Great War and its aftermath and also invoking the greatness and accomplishments of Thyatis, to rekindle the dignity and pride of the Thyatian people.

What the PCs Can Do: Characters who happen to be outside the Coliseum at the time of the melee between the Fatalists and the guardsmen can join in the fighting if they'd like, but they might get hauled in for questioning after it is over. Characters are sure to find all sorts of additional ways to get into trouble on a day like this. Make sure that they don't lack for opportunities to enjoy themselves.

Kaldmont 28, AC 1017: Diplomacy of Doom.

Location: Diplomatic camp near Stonewall camp in the Arkan Flatlands, Kingdom of Arkan, Floating Continent of Alphatia, Alphatian Empire. HW

Description: The peace-talks have been heated since they started and continued well into the night. Most of the spellcasters have left to prepare for the Day of Dread, but debaters like Selcomad and Lotaran and to a lesser degree Trallans as well, saw no reason to stop, as the Day of Dread will not affect them. On the Day of Dread, they're still discussing well into the evening and during a heated argument, a crossbow bolt is suddenly fired and hits Selcomad in the chest! During the ensuing confusion, the Stonewall guard naturally assume that Arkan or Foresthome assassins have attacked their leader and draw their weapons to attack the Arkan and Foresthome representatives, who then defend themselves. In all the confusion, it's not determined who fired the bolt and

the year ends in a confusing fight between the two sides! (See *Ka. 20, Ka. 26.*)

What This Means: It's not clear who tried to assassinate Selcomad, or even if he was the intended target.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs will have their hands full just surviving the battle that starts here, especially if they are spellcasters, who obviously won't be able to use any magic.

Topic of the Month: Renewal Oration

Following the invocation given by Thyatis's chief prelates, acknowledging the Immortals that watch over the empire, Eusebius ascended the *lectrum* at the center of the forum and spoke thusly:

“Most of my predecessors as emperor have praised her who gave us our constitution and laws, as well as those who, before even the rise of the empire, made it our custom to honor those who died in battle. I believe that the value of the contributions made by these persons should be shown by deeds emulating the spirit they embodied, not by words alone and therefore I might wish that the reputations of these valiant people would not depend upon the quality of my speech. It is difficult to speak well on a subject when one must also strive to convince listeners of the value of what one says. This is especially true when foreigners among the crowd or who may hear accounts of these words might be led by envy to suspect us of exaggeration if they hear anything that surpasses their own experience. However, since custom and tradition demand a speech recognizing the courage of the dead, I shall do my best to put into words what is beyond mere words.

“I begin with recognizing those in whose path we follow, our revered ancestors. They inhabited this country without interruption for sixteen centuries. It is they who, through their valorous struggles, liberated Thyatis from the yoke of the invader and who handed her down to us as a free commonwealth. If our ancestors deserve praise, then our fathers deserve great praise as well. For they repelled the ominous assault against our liberty in the middle of the last century and spared no effort to build up the *imperium* and leave a strong and vigorous patrimony the present generation. There is hardly a region of our empire which has not been enhanced by the contributions of those of us who are here as well, who have given to our state everything we can, enabling her to depend upon her own resources in both war and peace. The history of the conflicts we have faced in the last decade and of our resilience in the face of this adversity, is familiar to you all since we

have faced these challenges together. But our achievement in overcoming these crises was made possible by the institutions upon which our greatness depends and the national character of our people. These characteristics are often forgotten, but must be invoked, so that they will be recognized and valued for what they give us. For it is these qualities that made the sacrifices of these fallen men worthy and thus it is proper to remind us all—citizen and foreign observer alike—of the reasons why these sacrifices were not in vain, but were indeed worthy ones.

“Our constitution and laws do not copy those of neighboring states or those of the despotic empires which came before us, but instead are of our own design and are emulated in many lands. The administration of our empire is designed to benefit the many instead of just the few. If we look at our laws, they afford equal justice to all regardless of social station. Advancement in public life is based on reputation for capacity and merit, not class considerations or inborn talent unrelated to the position. Not even poverty bars the way, if a man is able to contribute by skill and diligence, he is not hindered from doing so because of social barriers to advancement. We promote liberty and are tolerant in our private lives; but in public affairs we keep to the law. This is because it commands our deep respect. In public affairs, we give our obedience to those whom we put in positions of authority and we obey the laws themselves, especially those enacted for the protection of the downtrodden. We do so whether these laws are in the statutes or belong to those unwritten laws which it is an acknowledged shame to break—the laws of virtue.

“But we also provide plenty of means for relaxation, living not just in duty and service. We celebrate games and holidays throughout the year and the elegance of our private establishments provides a daily source of relief from the burdens of work and duty. Our public structures and monuments provide a visible display of the quality of our arts and the expertise of our people, as they are built not so much by magical artifice but

by our own skill foremost. Magic is used in our crafts only to complement the skill of our people rather than to replace it. The magnitude of our city brings the produce of the world into our harbor, so that the fruits of other nations are as available to us as our own.

“Nor are these the only attributes that make our city worthy of respect. We cultivate refinement without wasteful extravagance and knowledge without effiteness. Our public officials do not set themselves apart from common affairs, while our citizens, though occupied with the pursuits of enterprise, have a voice in political deliberations, uniting us with a common bond. In our endeavors we use both daring and deliberation to achieve efficient results. We admire those among us who know the difference between hardship and pleasure but do not shrink from danger. In generosity, we are also unrivaled, insuring that all have enough to eat and that their basic needs are accounted for.

“If we turn to our other policies, here too we differ from our antagonists. We throw open our city to the world and never exclude foreign persons or ideas from any opportunity in our commonwealth. We benefit greatly from the influx of new ideas and vigorous persons. Our sense of liberty is combined with an understanding of personal responsibility and a sense of duty. This allows us to live our lives as we please while still rising to meet every occasion to preserve our empire. No enemy has ever yet extinguished our united resolve or subdued our resiliency. We give accolades to our forces when they achieve victory, but share the responsibility for setbacks rather than engaging in finger-pointing and recriminations.

“We have spread civilization throughout the known world, while simultaneously buffering it from the impositions and attacks of our rivals. Our country produces men of versatility who are able to overcome any difficulty through application of a clever mind. This is no mere boast, either, but instead a simple matter of fact as evidenced by the survival and prosperity of our empire,

founded on these habits, through the grave adversities we have faced throughout the millenium of our history. The fact that we have overcome these adversities and risen to overcome every challenge is a sign of the mettle of our people when put to the test. For it is Thyatis alone which is found to be greater than her reputation and which alone does not subjugate those she has vanquished, but rather accepts them as equal citizens to make their contributions to our empire, measured only by merit. This unites all our people in a true commonwealth. This is the Thyatis that those men, in their resolve not to lose her, nobly fought and died and for which every one of us must likewise prepared to suffer in her cause.

“Indeed, if I have spent much time describing the nature of our empire and her people, it is to show the stake in defending her. It is to demonstrate how sacrifices on behalf of Thyatis are different from those of others who have no such blessings to lose and thus who sell their lives in vain for no reason. The Thyatis that we commemorate is only what the heroism of her people made it and whose fame, unlike those of most nations with inflated reputations, is no greater than what is deserved. We believe that the greatness of the country is more advantageous to its citizens than any individual richness coupled with public humiliation. A man may be personally well off, but if the country is ruined then he will be ruined with it, but a flourishing commonwealth always provides chances to unfortunate individuals.

“There is some justice in the belief that the steadfastness of our people’s resolve in the battles we have faced should cloak whatever imperfections we have, since our good actions have surpassed the bad and the merits of our citizens more than outweigh whatever deficiencies they may have. None of these hallowed dead allowed hazards or fear to cause them to waver in their duty, instead they willingly met the risk, acting boldly and trusting in themselves and their fellows. They met danger and overwhelming odds face to face and in one brief but

shining moment left behind them not their fears or flaws, but their everlasting glory.

“You, the survivors, should reflect upon what is owed to the sacrifice of those who died and resolve to be deserving of their efforts. Let the love for the empire that these brave and noble men found worthy of fighting and dying for fill your hearts. When the recognition of the greatness of our empire dawns upon you, reflect that the courage, sense of duty and honorable deeds of these men generated the greatness of our country. For this sacrifice of the most valuable thing they had to offer, made by them all in common gives each of them individually a renown that will never age. Their tomb is not a vault, in which their bones lay, but is instead the noblest of sepulchers, the eternal remembrance of their bravery in every occasion in which the story of their deeds shall be told. For heroes have the entire world for their tomb, even in lands far from their own, because there is enshrined within every breast an unwritten record with no monument to preserve it except for the soul. Let the example set by these fallen men guide your actions and judge happiness to be the fruit of liberty and liberty to be the fruit of valor and never avoid the hardships of war. For the miserable are not these who died, but those who fail to have such resolve. People who waver in the face of adversity have nothing to live for. Instead it is those for whom life may bring reverses as yet unknown, but who would face them resolutely, who will have led a life worthy of commemoration even if it is cut short.

“Turning to the sons and brothers of the dead, you have a difficult struggle before you. For you must carry on in the wake of these sacrifices and restore that which the killers of these men have despoiled in their passage through our lands. Born, however, as you are, citizens of a great state and brought up, as you have been, with habits equal to your birth, you should be ready to face the greatest disasters and still keep intact the luster of your name. For the widows and daughters of these men, great will be your own glory in not falling short of

your natural character, to carry on as well and let no one say ill of your lost beloved. And for those who have lost both parents and been orphaned, as always the state owes you a debt that can never be repaid in full, but as always we shall look after your upbringing and insure you suffer no want. May the blessings of the Immortals be with you all.”

Predictions and Prognostications

The editors of the *Mystaran Almanac* make no claim as to these predictions’ origin, even less their accuracy.

Seers and Diviners

Genadiya

Genadiya is a Traladaran-born Darine who has traveled the world in search of adventure. Recently, she has found an ancient relic which, when she gazes deep inside of it, seizes control of her consciousness, “channeling” predictions of the darkest nature into her mind. Disturbed by these portents of the rise of Entropy, Genadiya has set off to the west, guided by a vague sense of urgency—she is in search of something, but she knows not what.

Jacob Boar

Jacob is a Thyatian poet who roams the empire looking for inspiration, which he claims he always finds in the oddest places. His wanderings result in cryptic—and as such too often under-appreciated—lays that capture a profound but hidden truth and each time you read them you get one step closer to uncovering it and each time you become a slightly wiser hin (or man, for the unfortunate).

Madame Thressias

A famous Darine fortune-teller of the Kaldresh clan, Madame Thressias shares her vision of the coming year with our readers. Also known amongst her people as Theresia Zarovan, Madame Thressias hails from southern Karameikos, where she can often be found at county fairs, reading the cards for those who cross her palm with silver.

Rumor Mill, Skalds and Minstrels

Often the predictions have no known source but are rumors or ballads one hears here and there.

Predictions

“They crawl through the caverns of earth,
They wait for the sacrifice—
They are the children of the night,
They are the children of Darkness.

The servants will be masters again
And the masters servants;
They use the power of His name,
But a new Name is spoken,
A new realm is formed.

But the Name will fall
Before the onslaught of His wrath;
And His children shall spread as a curse—
They will spread pestilence,
And the New One will be forgotten.

One will come
One will be destroyed
One will return
One will enlighten
One will corrupt.

The War shall come,
Mightier than the last;
A war betwixt those Most High—
The end can mean only Darkness.”
Genadiya, Darine seer

“Immortals fought about it. Some were killed.

Nations went to war over it. Some were destroyed.

People died for it. Some were raised.

Immortals will fight for it. Some will tap it.

Nations will be created around it. Some will be subverted.

People will be raised by it. Some will be sacrificed for it.”

Madame Thressias, Darine fortune-teller

“Lured by the Breathless Ones
His Path advancing—
What wilt thou do beloved Empress
When thine Father challengeth thee?

Shaded from the biting Sun
His Empire building—
What wilt thou do beloved Empress
When thine Son challengeth thee?

Armed for War
Their Bellies longing—
What wilt thou do beloved Empress
When thine Subjects challenge thee?”

Alphatian lay

“One eye without fear in the jungle
Two skins without paint in the sun
Four wings without respite in the city
Eight limbs without cover in the forest.”

Madame Thressias, Darine fortune-teller

“Scorn each other
Ignore past
Wonder origin
Discover faith
Dog-God
Looks alike
Cares not
Hunted
They settle
Much in common
God surely
Past mayhaps
Ancestral blood
Help each other
Brothers
Past key
Future remedy.”

Eusdrian lay

“Without war the key
Without birds the nights
Will suffer the same fate
As this prediction.”

Madame Thressias, Darine fortune-teller

“The Red Sun has missed its sacrificial
blood for the last time.”

Azcan prediction

“South they colonize
West they contract
East they explore
North they forget.”

Madame Thressias, Darine fortune-teller

“Some carnifex escaped the Caretakers.”

Alphan rumor

“He who wants food will get water
He who wants water will get lightning
He who wants lightning will get darkness
He who wants darkness will get steam
He who wants steam will get ice
He who wants ice will get food.”

Madame Thressias, Darine fortune-teller

“A beauteous Rose blooms in the heat of
midsummer

Its fervent call cannot be denied
But grasping its fiery blossom and thorns
Can only draw crimson blood.”

Babbles of a Sindhi fakir

“Snow has to fall long,
and days will grow short
Then I will rise.

Years may be few
not too much time
I’ll find anyway the will to rhyme

And then as a sudden light
a man dead lies.

And Fear and Fright
on both will rise.”

Jacob Boar, Thyatian poet

“That which once was
Shall be again.

That which lay dead,
Shall live once more.

A nation sundered,
its light darkened,
Shall soon be reborn,
and unified.”

Madame Thressias, Darine fortune-teller