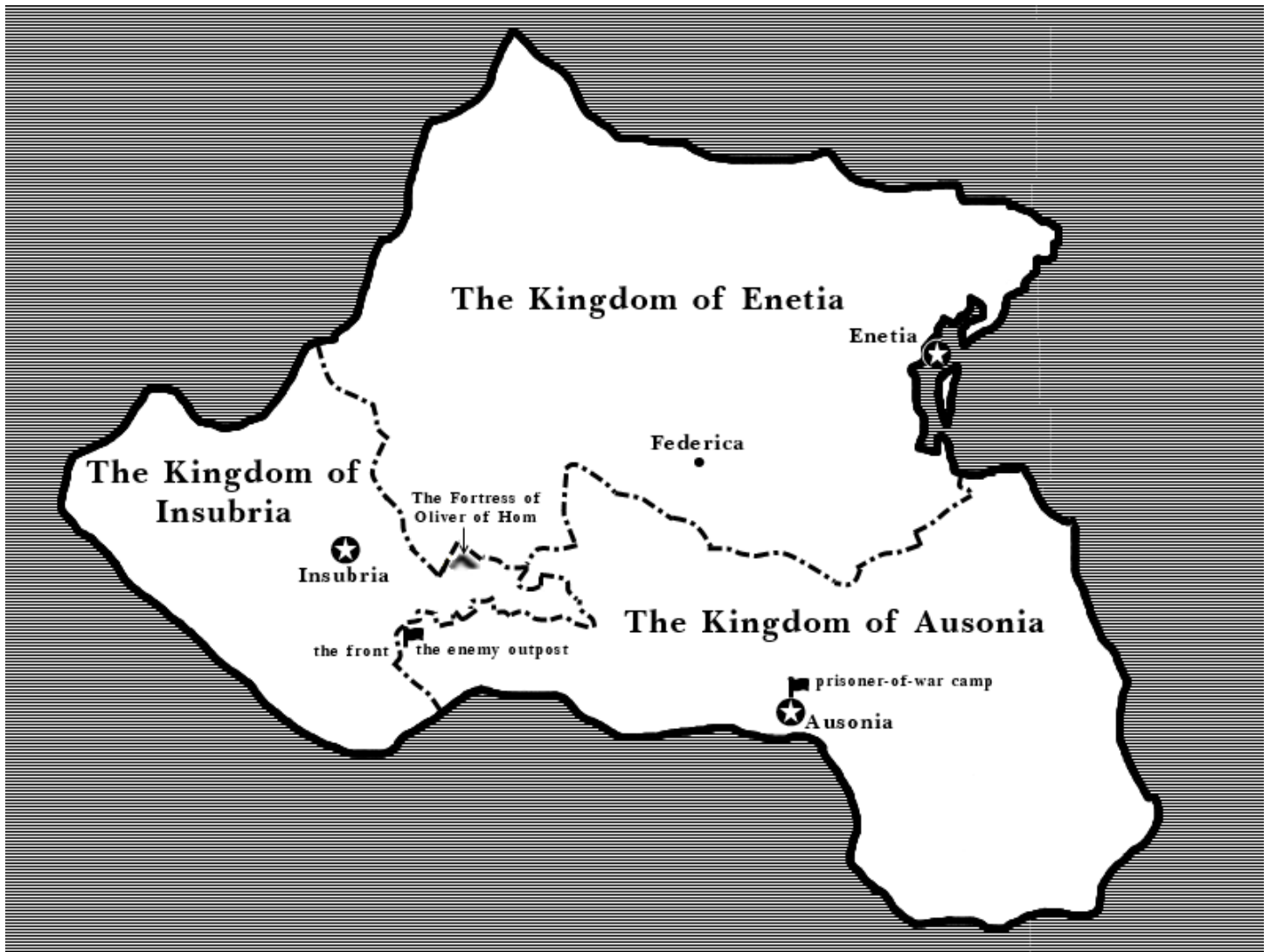


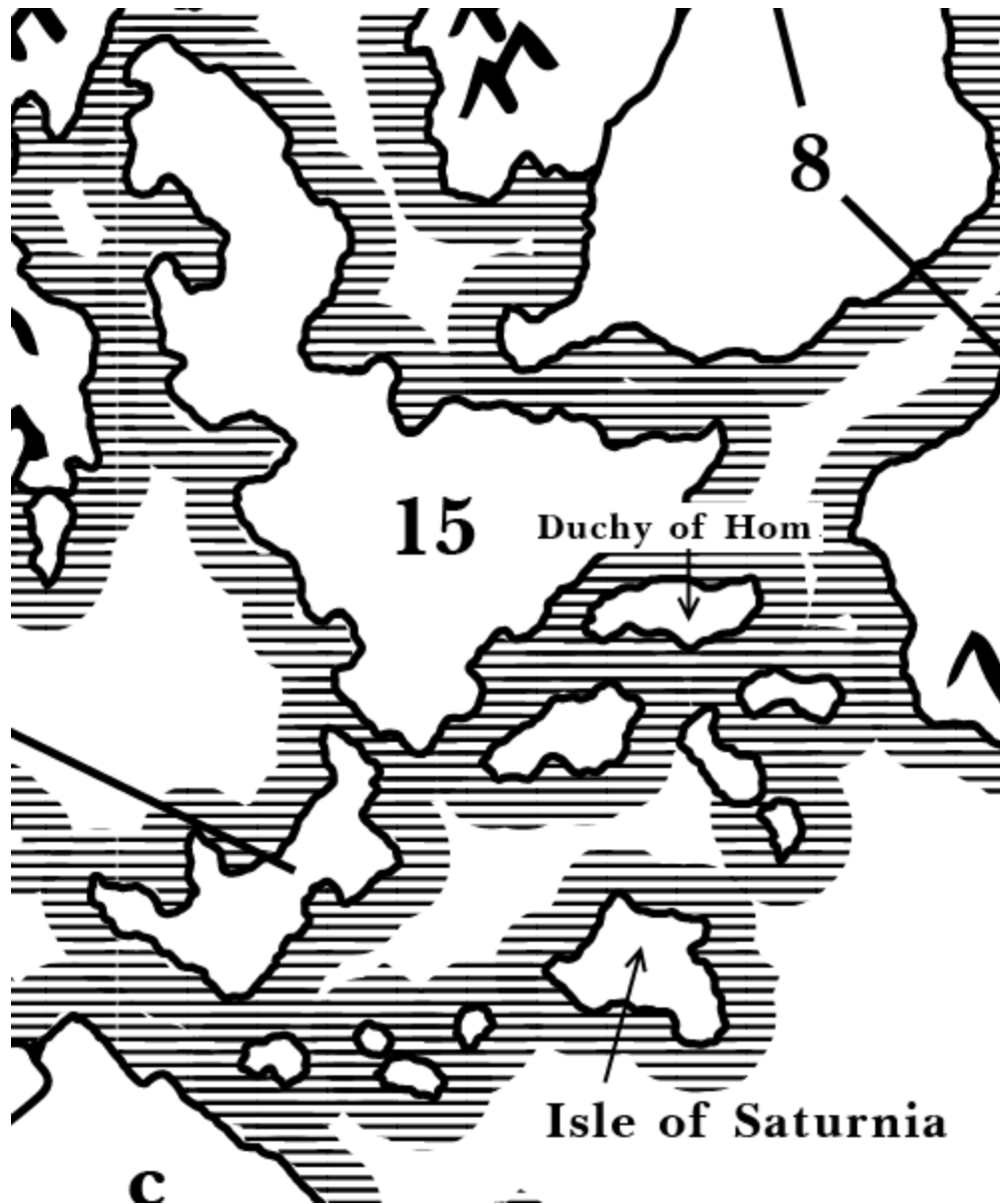
# PLACING “THE ABDUCTION OF PRINCESS SYLVIA” (1985) WITHIN THE MENTZERIAN AGE OF MAGIC AND WITHIN THE HEARDIAN WORLD OF MYSTARA

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## PART ONE: PLACING THE “PRINCESS SYLVIA” AND “THE GREAT ESCAPE” ADVENTURES ON THE MASTER SET MAP

### THE ISLE OF SATURNIA





Base map source by Thorf: <https://mystara.thorfmaps.com/master-set-outer-world/>

Saturnia is an island lying south of Alphatia, in the Age of Magic of prehistoric Earth. Saturnia's culture is similar to 16<sup>th</sup> century Italian culture, as portrayed in the works of Shakespeare, particularly the play *Two Gentlemen of Verona*.

Saturnia is the location of two adventures found in module *B9: Castle Caldwell and Beyond* (1985); namely, "The Abduction of Princess Sylvia" and "The Great Escape." The latter was later adapted for Mystara in the B1-9 compilation (1987), where it was placed just inside the border of the Black Eagle Barony. The Princess Sylvia adventure never received an official placement in Mystara.

In Saturnia, there are three kingdoms, two of which (Insubria and Enetia), at the start of the adventure, are on the cusp of a *marital* alliance; and two of which (Insubria and Ausonia) are engaged in *martial* conflict...war.

**The Kingdom of Insubria (*Il Regno dell'Insubria*)**

This is "*the country in which the player characters live*" which "*is ruled by a good king.*" It is based on the real-world Duchy of Milan; though in this setting, headed by a king instead of a duke.

Known characters:

- The player characters
- Princess Sylvia (*Principessa Silvia*). "*[V]ery beautiful and is loved by all her countrymen. This coming Saturday, she is to marry Prince Frederick, the crown prince of a neighboring kingdom.*"

- The “good king” (unnamed)
- The princess’ “guard detail” (slain before the start of the adventure)
- Gerard (*Gerardo*), “a peasant boy of about fourteen”
- Oliver of Hom (*Oliviero d’ Hom; Olivier du Hom*), “an evil magic-user” We interpret him to be from another land—the Duchy of Hom, a French analogue; based on the the placename Le Hom, in Normandy, France.
- Oliver’s Gang (*La banda di Oliviero*): The “humanoid creatures” who follow Oliver, “consisting primarily of lizard men and goblins.” “Exactly how many people are in the gang (goblin leader, 9 goblins, lizard man leader, 6 lizard men, and Oliver)”
- Thorn (*Spina*), the goblin who guards the entrance to Oliver’s hideout
- Goblin Leader (unnamed)
- Lizard Man Leader (unnamed)

#### Known locations:

- The City of Insubria (the city in which the player characters live, similar to 16<sup>th</sup> century Milan)
- A hill, “in a distant corner of the kingdom” (the location of the Fortress)
- The Fortress of Oliver of Hom, “the gang’s hideout, which has been carved out of a hill in a distant corner of the kingdom.” The hideout is placed next to the border with all three kingdoms, since it’s said that Oliver “plans to ransom the princess to the highest bidder.”

#### Past events:

- Princess Sylvia was kidnapped “last week, while taking a ride in the country” and her guard detail was slain.

#### Future events:

- “The marriage will cement relations between the two kingdoms for years to come.”
- “If Oliver should escape, he harbors deep resentment against the party, and may come back to exact revenge...”
- “The Great Escape” adventure happens soon afterward, but with enough time for Sylvia and Frederick to be married in the meantime.

### The Kingdom of Enetia (*Il Regno di Enetia*)

This is “a neighboring kingdom” and “Frederick’s country.” It is based on the real-world Most Serene Republic of Venice—the location of the Shakespearean city of Verona. Though in this setting, the country is a monarchy.

#### Known residents:

- Crown Prince Frederick (*Il principe ereditario Federico*)
- The Prime Minister. “Oliver has been hired by the prime minister of Prince Frederick’s country, who does not want the alliance to take place.”
- The King (unnamed), father of Frederick

#### Known locations:

- City of Enetia. The capital of Enetia, equivalent to real-world Venice.
- City of Federica. The seat of the Crown Prince, equivalent to real-world Verona.

### The Kingdom of Ausonia (*Il Regno di Ausonia*)

This is the “enemy kingdom” of “The Great Escape” adventure. Ausonia is based on the real-world Kingdom of Naples. “The country in which the player characters live is at war with a neighboring kingdom (not the kingdom of Prince Frederick and his new bride, Princess Sylvia).”

#### Known characters:

- various enemy troops/soldiers
- The gnoll jailer (unnamed). It may be assumed that Ausonia has a high proportion of Gnoll citizens.

#### Known locations:

- “*the front*” (there are active battle lines)
- “*large enemy outpost*” (the adventure site)
- “*A prisoner-of-war camp in the capital city of the enemy kingdom, far from the front.*” Where the PCs will be transferred soon, if they don’t escape from the enemy outpost.
- The City of Ausonia, “*the capital city of the enemy kingdom*”

“*The King of Ausonia [Naples], being an enemy / To me inveterate*”

—after Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, Act 1: Scene 2

#### The Duchy of Hom (*Le Duché du Hom*)

- Analogous to 16<sup>th</sup> century Normandy
- Homeland of Oliver of Hom, the evil magic-user
- Capital: The City of Hom

#### Design Notes:

Saturnia is located in the same place on Earth where the island of Nuar is located in the World of Mystara. It is placed here because, as seen on the paleomaps of Dr. Christopher Scotese ([link](#) and [link](#)), that island is the geological predecessor of Italy, or at least northern Italy.

This placement is based on the design principle of locating real-world cultures on the Master Set map in the geologically equivalent place (for example Agypt and Egypt, Brasol and Brazil, the Isle of Dawn and Britain, the Four Kingdoms and the Barbary States, the Empire of the Great Khan and the Mongolian Empire. This principle is seen more often on the Mentzerian Age of Magic map, than in the later Mystaran reconception.

The Italian connection is based on the similarities (whether accidental or intention) of the Princess Sylvia adventure and the Shakespeare comedy *Two Gentlemen of Verona*. In that play, the name “Sylvia” is introduced to the English-speaking world for the first time. Also, in Shakespeare, the lady Sylvia, daughter of the ruler, is likewise kidnapped by brigands and brought to a wilderness hideout.

“Saturnia” is a poetic name for Italy which is found in Virgil. “Insubria” is an ancient name for Milan, “Enetia” for Venice, and “Ausonia” for southern Italy. Naples was the enemy of the Duke of Milan in the Shakespeare play *The Tempest*.

The border between the three kingdoms is based on a map of the real-world borders of 16<sup>th</sup> century Milan and Venice: [https://www.emersonkent.com/map\\_archive/italy\\_16th.htm](https://www.emersonkent.com/map_archive/italy_16th.htm)

As for Oliver of Hom, one meaning of the name “Hom” is a placename element found in the Norman French village “Le Hom,” along with several other French locales, from the Old Norse (Norman) *hólmr* “islet”: <https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thury-Harcourt-le-Hom#Toponymie> . So Oliver’s homeland is interpreted to be the Age of Magic’s analogue of 16<sup>th</sup> century Normandy.

On the Scotese paleomap, Late Jurassic France of the Normandy area appears to be the island of Aeria in the Alatian Islands. Which is therefore designated here as the Duchy of Hom. Oliver is not necessarily connected with the Hom nobility, but his is from Hom—so he’s known in Insubria as “Oliver of Hom.”

## PART TWO: PLACING THE “PRINCESS SYLVIA” ADVENTURE IN KARAMEIKOS

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*“Each of the adventures given in this book is self-contained. If you have an original module for an adventure that does not appear here in full, you can expand the adventure in this book with material from the longer work with little difficulty.”*

—B1-9: *In Search of Adventure* (1987), p.6

The Saturnia setting is based on the understanding that Mentzerian Age of Magic of prehistoric Earth is a different planet than the Hearden World of Mystara. Because Mystara is not Earth.

However, “The Abduction of Princess Sylvia” does officially exist in Mystara as well, as indicated by the above quote from B1-9. As far as its placement, we can glean a few things:

1. We know from the 1985 text that Princess Sylvia and the Great Escape are a two-part adventure series that take place in the same milieu.
2. We know from the above quote from 1987, that we should “expand the [Great Escape] adventure” using the Princess Sylvia material.
3. We know from that same 1987 quote, that this expansion should be accomplished “with little difficulty.” Which suggests that the adaptation and placement should be straightforward. Not in some far off land, nor in some distant time in the past, unconnected to the Great Escape, which takes place in 1000 AC, on the militarized borderlands of Luln and the Black Eagle Barony.
4. We also know that B1-9 in some cases, changes a few details to make the adventure fit more neatly into Karameikos.

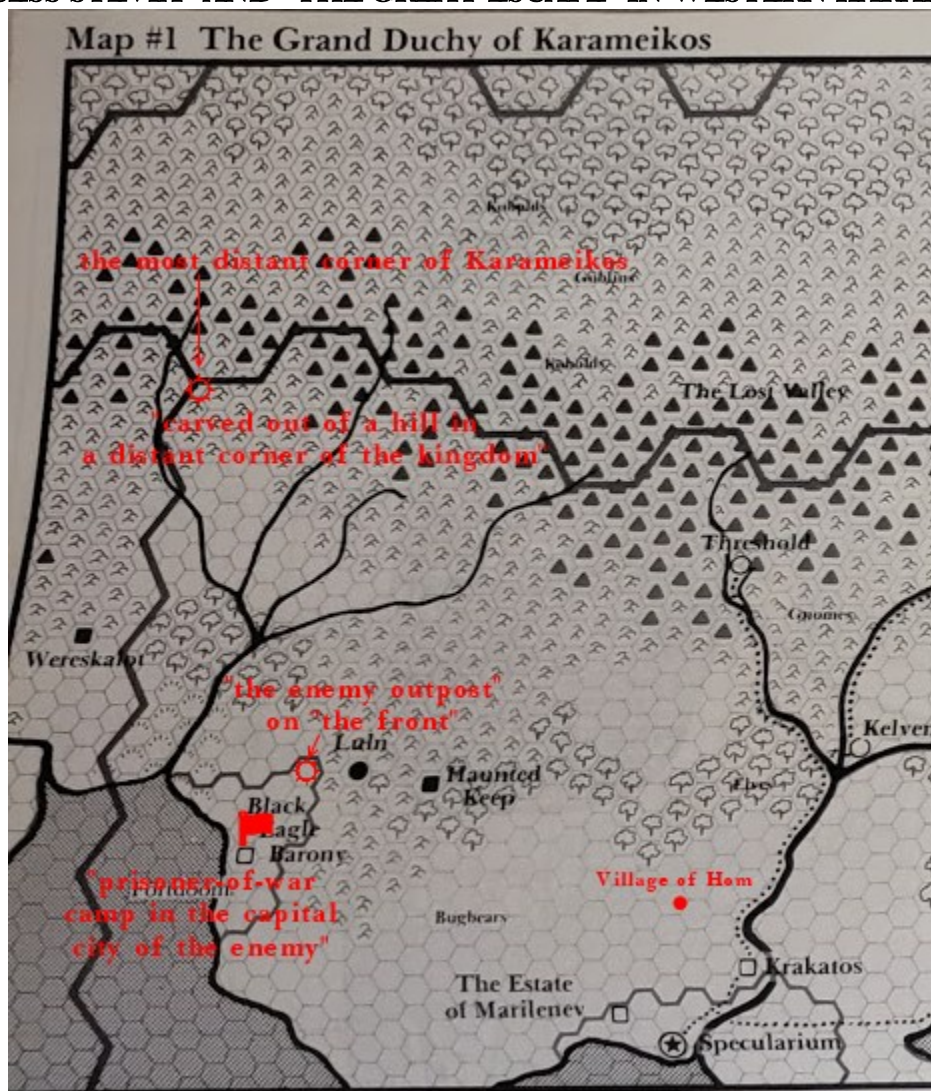
So let’s look at GAZ1. On p.43, of Lady Adriana Karameikos, it is said: *“DMing Notes: The efforts of various nobles to secure Adriana as wife can provide numerous adventures for the characters—especially if she is kidnapped by one[.]”*

There you go. In Mystara, Princess Sylvia is Lady Adriana, who is 20 years old in 1000 AC. And though Oliver of Hom was not a noble who kidnapped her for marriage, this official adventure seed from GAZ1 does share a very similar theme.

As far as kidnappers, GAZ1 and K:KoA provide a likely suspect/suitor: Baron Kelvin. However, since the Princess Sylvia adventure is not actually tied to a marital kidnapping, we won’t complicate things by bringing in Baron Kelvin, and will simply stick to Oliver of Hom as the kidnapper, whose purpose is ransom, not marriage.

As for placement, “The Great Escape” is part of the “western” arc of adventures in B1-9. So we place the Princess Sylvia adventure in the west too. The Fortress of Oliver of Hom is said to have been “carved out of a hill in a distant corner of the kingdom.” Well, the most distant corner of the western half of Karameikos is none other than a hilly hex, as seen in the 6-mile hex-map of 1983:

## “PRINCESS SYLVIA” AND “THE GREAT ESCAPE” IN WESTERN KARAMEIKOS



Lady Adriana’s “ride in the country” can be interpreted in a more vigorous way, in that she was probably heroically adventuring with her “guard detail” in western Karameikos when they were attacked by Oliver’s gang. Surely he was tipped off about her travels.

The whole thing with the marriage to Prince Frederick and his allied kingdom, and his treacherous prime minister, can all be discarded within the World of Mystara. Because in the official Mystara timeline, Adriana doesn’t get married till later. Yet in the context of 1987’s B1-9, this adventure is supposed to be associated with “The Great Escape” in c.1000 AC.

This is just a simple dungeon crawl and ransom kidnapping anyway, so that text (about Frederick, etc.) is simply dropped for our “B1-9 adaptation” of the Princess Sylvia adventure. Just as some other unnecessary details were expurgated from other Basic adventures for their 1987 B1-9 version.

The simple adaptation here was accomplished “with little difficulty”, as suggested by the B1-9 instructions.

### The placename “Hom” in Karameikos

Incidentally, *Hom* is also a real-world Slovenian placename, located in central Slovenia:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hom,\\_%C5%A0entrupert](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hom,_%C5%A0entrupert)

I’ve suggested in the past that the southern headwaters of the Syereb River (from B10) could serve as the source M-Serbian flavor of Traladaran (Syereb = Serb), and that the Krakatos area could serve as source of the M-

Croatian flavor of Traladaran (Krakatos = Croat/Hrvat/Horvat), with the Volaga River on the east of the ruins of Krakatos (as the eastern border of M-Croatian sub-culture) situated somewhat like the Danube (as the eastern border of the RW-Croatian culture).

So similarly, the M-Slovenian flavor of Traladaran would be located in the area northwest of Krakatos. I marked the village of Hom (Oliver's home village) on the map. In fact, "Homenian" (*Homenski*) could serve as the identifier of M-Slovenian Traladaran flavor, which also spread to the City-State of Nova Svoga and the Northern Goatlings. When I asked Bruce Heard about this long ago, he said that those two cultures have some Slovenian linguistic flavor. <https://pandius.com/kavaja2.html>

By the way, the name "Oliver" is spelled the same in English and Slovenian.

### **Earth's Age of Magic versus the World of Mystara**

Lastly, we offer this document is an example of how earlier BECMI sources from the Mentzer era (1983 to 1985, and somewhat into 1986) can be interpreted as being part of a distinct D&D setting: the Age of Magic, which is a fantastic prehistoric era of planet Earth, and which has its own design principles.

And at the same time, the World of Mystara can be distinctly adorned as a separate setting, with its own design principles.