

MYSTARAN ALMANAC

AC 1016

& BOOK of FACTS

Volume VII, AC 1016

Version 1.0

Published by **Joshuan Gallidox**

Halfling Adventurer and Entrepreneur
within the City of Mirros
in the Kingdom of Karameikos
in the Year After Crowning 1016

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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.

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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 mean 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. 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 Karameikos, 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!

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So, if you have any ideas or comments concerning this almanac or events for AC 1017, please, feel free to contact me. For AC 1017, 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

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INTRODUCTION

Preface

Dear Reader

The wonderful book you now hold in your hands is the seventh 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 last year's almanac. 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 include 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. 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-sight correspondents and letters to describe places and events. I firmly believe that such presentations make the descriptions all the more lively and 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 definitely 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, in an effort to introduce to the reader to a larger portion of the world. One deals with the Hollow World, which was underrepresented last year, while the Jungle Coast section has been renamed into Davania as the almanac is accompanying the new explorers to the southern continent further inland. We also now offer the most comprehensive overview of war-torn Norwold ever. And our correspondents bring news from the dangerous lands of the Master, Hule. 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 1016 edition. It would also be my pleasure to hear from you, gentle readers, on your opinions of our presentation and content.

Belzamith Fingertackles, Co-Editor

Mystaran Almanac

Mirros, Karameikos

Nuwmont, AC 1016

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.

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 made sure we didn't. I still hope such information, and other I'd like to include as well, will one day find its place in the almanac. 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, Karameikos

Nuwmont, AC 1016

Almanac Format

First of all, 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 or not his players know this information. As such, merchant PCs should have access to the *Economica* part, while superstitious PCs will probably know their horoscope, for example.

The timeline section, dealing with events for the year of AC 1016 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 similar to 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:

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

P = Priest	M(in) = Invoker
P(dr) = Druid	M(ne) = Necromancer
P(cr) = Crusader	M(tr) = Transmuter
P(de) = Defender	WD = Witch-Doctor
P(mk) = Monk	P(?) = other Specialty Priest

These letters will also be used in the Famous People section, as well as anywhere else where character classes are given.

Finally, a new 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 actually have paragraphs with the exact same text, word for word. We, the editors, saw no reason to change a description that is already accurate.

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

We here at *Joshuan Gallidox Publishing* are also proud to announce the acquisition of the artistry skills of Fedorius Artrim Teledumas and Lucertic, who will illustrate various events of the year. Fedorius is a resident artist in Mirros. Though his specialties reside in the field of sculpting, he has a certain renown for his sketches and his “unique” style of interpretation. Though realism is often sacrificed for affect, his depictions are most welcomed. Fedorius signs his work with his trademark “F.A.T.” Lucertic is a novice artist and his artwork is reflective of this. Lucertic originally hails from Thyatis, being a retired officer. With a distinguished military career behind him, he fills his time with the simple pleasures of his art form. Though he specializes in full color paintings and in woodcarved pressings, he has graciously offered a few rough sketches for our use. His works are distinguished by their lack of signing... a trait he signifies as “art knowing no master.”

Finally, the last sections give us a peek at places that are highly recommended, either to visit or avoid. For this section, we made an effort 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.

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 of time. 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&D: Rockborn dwarves are considered to be 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 actually 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 more slender 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 actually abandoned all elven ways and adopted the lifestyles of the nations they live in. [*AD&D: Sylvan elves are considered to be 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&D: 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&D: 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 Schattenalfheim in the Hollow World is also composed of shadow elves. *[There is no AD&D counterpart for the shadow elves. AD&D 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 Alphatian territories such as Norwold and Bellissaria. Also, one colony of Shiye elves seems to have settled in Eusdria on the Savage Coast. *[AD&D: 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&D: Mystaran gnomes are considered to be the rock gnomes of Mystara as described in the Complete Book of Gnomes and Halflings. Sky gnomes enjoy inventing things, and are similar to 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 Hyborian common orc. Several hundred other orc races exist outside the Broken Lands. *[AD&D: 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 considered to be 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, often 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&D: Hin are considered to be 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 come in contact with 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 definitely 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 actually 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 breath, and most expert skyship sailors recommend some sort of magical breathing apparatus or spell.

Now, with the physical description of Mystara as a whole 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 similar to 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

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:

Balinor "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.

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, pipeweek smoker, collector of knowledge and spinner of tales, the halfling 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.

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 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

AENGMOR (City of)

Location: Old World, continent of Brun, former Broken Lands.

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% Schattenalfen).

Languages: Elvish (Shadowelf and Schattenalfen 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 Schattenalfen 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 Ambrymont 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.

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: Old World, continent of Brun, Darokin area.

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/P12 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 Street 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.

Last year, 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.

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 take a 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 of 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 monster coming out 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.

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, P14 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, P10 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 actually 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 aren't able to compete, and thus little vegetation exists at the ground level. Mosses, lichens, and ferns constitute the majority 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 similar to 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 similar to 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 as yet unknown.

DAROKIN (Republic of)

Location: West and north of the Five Shires.

Area: 68,964 sq. mi. (178,617 sq. km.), not including Orcland, which is only nominally under control of the republic.

Population: 1,259,000 humans, plus a scattering of elves, dwarves, and halflings.

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: Republic plutocracy; it is a republic as leaders are voted in, 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).

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: GAZ 11 *The Republic of Darokin*, previous almanacs.

Description by Omar-ibn-Chukri.

The Heartland territory of Selenica is, in many ways, like an independent city-state. Its distance from the other major centers of Darokinian commerce has tended to isolate it, and the city and its surroundings have become very self-sufficient as a result. Yet its very location and importance to trade in Darokin have meant that, at times past, officials in Darokin City have sometimes had to take steps to insure that the Selenican spirit of free trade are reigned in. It works both ways, however, as Selenican officials have long held immense sway in the goings-on of Darokin's politics.

The Land

Selenica is situated in the grassy plains that lay at the feet of the Altan Tepes mountain range. Its location is ideal, as it sits right near the sole pass to parts east and north—Ylaruam, Rockhome, the Northern Reaches—and parts south—Karameikos and Thyatis. Virtually all commerce from those regions passes through the city of Selenica and other communities within the Heartland region. There is ample logging in the nearby woods, and the mountains and hills provide several sources of mineral wealth.

The People

The people of Selenica think of themselves as Selenican first, Darokinian second. The population is quite a mixed breed: humans and dwarves dominate, though elves are not an uncommon sight. Of the human races living there, they are mostly of Thayan or Traladaran stock, with a large minority of Ylari, such as myself. The region has always attracted Ylari peoples from the east, but ever since the incorporation of the Al-Azrad merchant house a little over 160 years ago, the percentage of Ylari has continued to grow.

Unfortunately, this mixture of ethnicities can prove volatile. The recent civil unrest in the emirates has driven a wedge between many in Selenica—both between Ylari and non-Ylari as well as between True Believers and heretics of Ylari heritage. This discord, compounded by the rising problems with the Selenican trade, may prove troublesome. It is only a matter of time before something drastic happens [*this observation is solely the author's, and the Mystaran Almanac does not endorse this view, nor does it hold itself liable for any incidents that may occur as a result of its printing. Ed.*].

Recent History

Since the expulsion of foreigners from the emirates two years ago, the economy of Selenica has been severely damaged. There are no longer any clear routes available to transport goods to and from the Northern Reaches regions, not to mention the losses of the Ylari and Rockhome markets [*Rockhome became largely isolationist following their leaving the Western Defense League in 1014. Ed.*]. It remains to be seen how severely these effects will be over the long run. Nevertheless, their immediate results are astounding—many merchants have gone from gold to silver class (and lower) as a result. Al-Azrad House is in danger of slipping from its position as seventh largest in Darokin.

Some good news may be on the horizon, however. With the civil unrest in Rockhome quelled (though war with the humanoids is still going on), and renewed feelings of affability between the dwarven nation and Darokin, there has been talk of opening up the mountain pass north of Ft. Hobart for trade (also known as the Darokin Tunnel).

ETHENGAR KHANATES

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

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 last year, 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 Glanian 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.

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

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

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

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.

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

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

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), Traladar, 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, M24), Carnelia de Belcadiz y Fedorias (Princess of Belcadiz, elf, female, F12/M18), Juliana Vlaardoen (Princess of Bergdhoven, human, female, M14), Morphail Gorevitch-Woszlany (Prince of Boldavia, human, male, M19), Urmahid Krinagar (Prince of Bramyra, human, male, M14/T5), Carlotina Erewan (Princess of Erewan, elf, female, M18), Dolores Hillsbury (Princess of Fenswick, human, female, M20), Brannart McGregor (Prince of Klandyre, human, male, M20), Lan-Syn Virayana (Princess of Krondahar, human, female, M16), Kol (Prince of New Kolland, kobold, male, WD7), Isidore d'Ambreville (Princess of Nouvelle Averoigne, human, female, M11), Malachie du Marais (Prince of Morlay-Malinbois, human, male, M11), Harald of Haaskinz (Prince of Sablestone and Grand Master of the School of Magic, human, male, M17).

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.

Located in central Glantri, northwest o' Glantri City, Nouvelle Averoigne be one o' the oddest an' most unique principalities in all the land.

The Land

The Isoile River cuts right through the middle o' Nouvelle Averoigne. To the south be mostly grassy hills. Only about a third o' the population lives there, mostly right around the Isoile an' the Tarn River to the south. Farmers herd goats an' sheep in the hills, an' the town o' Pérignon carries on most o' the trade between the county o' Fausseflammes an' the town o' Ximes further downstream. The weavin' trade be especially prevalent in this region.

Between the Isoile an' the Loir river to the north be the Vale o' Garnath. The vale be mostly rich farmland, an' the best vineyards in all Glantri be found here. North o' the Loir, in the free territories, be mainly wooded hills—an' run afoul with werewolves. Most peoples say they come from up north, in Morlay-Malinbois, an' I believe 'em. They don't call that place the "Valley o' Wolves" fer no reason. The only woods in Nouvelle Averoigne proper be the Forêt de l'Ardenne, north and west by Château Sylaire.

The People

The Averoignians be a strange bunch. Most of 'em talk in some language I ain't heared outside o' Glantri—I'd almost believe they did come from another world, like the story goes. And rude, too—they're almost as bad as 'em Belcadiz elves, what with thinkin' like they're so much better'n everyone else. They be pretty smart though—they got more schools in Nouvelle Averoigne than in any two other principalities combined! An' they do some pretty good theater, too, if you're into that sort o' thing. Me, I'll stick to the wineries.

Recent History

Etienne's disappearance during the Great War caused quite a stir among the d'Ambrevilles. The scramble for the succession had the family at one another's throats like hadn't been seen since before the mists came an' took 'em way back then. By the time the dust settled, Isidore d'Ambreville was the winner, an' the rest o' the family seemed ta fall in line. Rumor has it, though, that somethin's gotten under their bonnets again, that they don't want no outsiders knowing about. Leastways, some o' the family've been calling together their old allies and havin' a lot o' meetin's. Somethin's up for sure.

On another note, seems André-David's been lettin' up on the weres in the land. 'Stead o' killin' them werewolves outright, like he useta, he's been capturin' 'em. No one seems quite sure o' the whys an' wherefores, but I heared its been buggin' 'em lupins what been workin' with 'im for years.

Don't Miss

The grand Forêt de l'Ardenne be one o' the oldest stretches o' woods in Glantri. It be under the protection o' André-David de Forêt, the huntsman o' Nouvelle Averoigne. Him an' his forest guards've cultivated the wood for centuries, keepin' it like it were when man first came ta Glantri. There be absolutely no loggin', an' huntin' permits're rare and none between. Them what's tries anyway can be found hangin' from the trees along the border—an' not 'cause they committed suicide, neither. Still, it be one o' the safest places to be in Glantri—so long as yer friends with André-David. The only place o' note in the forest is Château Sylaire itself—home o' the nutty d'Ambreville clan.

HELDANN (Heldannic Territory of)

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

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

Population: 255,000.

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

Coinage: *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.

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

Important Figures: Wulf von Klagendorf (*Oberherr*, human, male, P19 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 more deadly, 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 definitely 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 more worthy and brave 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.

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.

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, with the exception of 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 Gallodox.

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 Hyborian 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 halflings 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.

KARAMEIKOS (Kingdom of)

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

Area: 46,750 sq. mi. (121,083 sq. km.).

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

Languages: Thyatian, Traladaran, Elvish (Callarii, Vyalia, Alfheim 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.

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

Important Figures: Stefan Karameikos III (King, human, male, F15), Olivia Karameikos (Queen, human, female, T12), Master 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.

This year's entry on Karameikos will spotlight on the community of Threshold, which has been a center of much of activity during the course of AC 1016.

The Land

The town of Threshold rests along the shores of Lake Wufwolde, the source of the Windrush River. The lake itself is fed by mountain streams and runoff from the nearby Black Peaks, and is situated in a hilly valley at their base. The surrounding woods provide the primary source of revenue of the town—primarily tall pines. A steady flow of lumber comes from the camps north and east of the lake, down to the town itself. There, it is cut and trimmed, and bound into rafts that are floated downriver to Kelvin, Krakatos, and Mirros. Adventurers looking to earn a few royals could do worse than volunteer to guide the log-rafts away from the dangers of the river!

The People

Though technically a barony, the community of Threshold and its leader, Patriarch Sherlane Halaran tend to ignore their royal title. This is well in keeping with the general attitude of the people of Threshold—unassuming and easy-going. They are more interested in doing a good day's work than in putting on airs. Patriarch Halaran fosters this attitude and works to enforce the community pride—Threshold has long been a staple of the lumber trade in Karameikos, and the people are well aware that they must continue to work hard to keep up their trade.

All the more odd, then, that this community of quiet, hard-working folk seems to attract as many adventurers as it does. Indeed, the town of Threshold probably boasts more adventurers than any other two Karameikan communities combined. Perhaps it is the self-sufficient nature of the loggers and townsfolk that inspire such activity? I think it is a mystery that will not soon be solved.

Recent History

The sheer number of adventuring types that abound in Threshold has caused it to be the centerbed of numerous memorable historical events. Residents still talk of the time, several years ago, when a local mage attempted to build a garbage dump to the south of town. The black stone building, now abandoned, still remains; the black pudding that it contained has long since been destroyed.

Then there is the time that a few disreputable loggers attempted to undercut their competitors by utilizing free labor—in the form of the town's resurrected dead! (One man was reportedly a Darokinian who had been kicked out of the Merchant's Guild for unethical practices.) Still, things had been very quiet in Threshold for almost 5

years until a man turned up in town claiming he'd discovered a hidden valley to the north... we're all still waiting to hear how this one will turn out.

Don't Miss

Tarnskeep is the lakeside castle of Patriarch Halaran. Located just north of the town, it sports one of the most impressive views of Lake Wufwolde. There is excellent fishing in the lake—just watch out for wayward logs!

A dark, untouched forest lays to the west of Threshold, about five miles or so. Reportedly magical and haunted, the locals shun this place—few who ever go there return... or so the legend goes. I took a hike over there one day—it didn't look too dangerous when I looked at it from a distance. If you're the type of adventurer who likes danger and excitement, don't miss it—otherwise, you may want to heed the local legends and give it a miss.

MINROTHAD GUILDS

Location: South of Karameikos, east of Ierendi and west of Thyatis.

Area: 8,120 sq. mi. (21,031 sq. km.).

Population: 208,000 (approximately 50% elves, 43% humans, 5% dwarves, 2% halflings).

Languages: Minrothaddan, Thyatian (known mainly for trade and business).

Coinage: *Crona* (gp), *byd* (ep), *quert* (sp), *plen* (cp).

Taxes: Officially, guilds owe a 20% annual income tax, while individuals owe 10%. Yet, there are many extenuating circumstances that can reduce or increase the amount owed, which only Minrothaddan tax collectors can keep track of all of them. There is an 8% sales tax for local items, while all imported items (or services) have an 18% sales tax. Foreigners must also immediately pay a 20% income tax for all income earned while in the nation.

Government Type: Plutocracy; every guild master has a seat on the council, with the most powerful guild master ruling over the council. Now, Oran Meditor is growing in power and trying to assume a presidential role.

Industries: Crafts, trade, and services.

Important Figures: Oran Meditor (Ruling Guild Master, elf, male, F10/M11).

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 Joshuan Gallidox.

Trader's Isle is the center of commerce (and thus influence) in the islands of the Minrothad Guilds. As such, it will be the focus of this year's in-depth commentary of the region.

The Land

Trader's Isle is a large volcanic island, like most of the land masses in the northern Sea of Dread. A large volcanic mountain chain, the Diamond Spurs, bisects the island—according to Minrothad's history, the mountains kept two segments of the island's population from discovering one another for over a year!

The land on either side of the Diamond Spurs is heavily forested—by palm trees along the coastal plains, and by more familiar deciduous trees along the mountain slopes. Much of the land is fertile and grassy, turning into black, sandy beaches along the coastlines. There are many small villages and settlements along the coasts and in the interior (much of the total population of the Minrothad isles lives here), and of course the major center of Minrothad's political and economical influence, Minrothad City, lies along the northwestern coast.

The People

The majority of Minrothad City's population consists of humans and elves. There weren't many halflings to be found at all! (I'm told they tend to keep to their own settlements on Open Isle. Note to self: visit Open Isle next year.) The city is all hustle and bustle—even Darokin City was never this busy! Merchants are constantly on the

move, pushing their goods, making their purchases, and making a *crona* for themselves. If you're looking for rest and relaxation out among the isles, I'd recommend giving Minrothad City a pass.

Recent History

The Minrothad Guilds have managed to stay fairly low key in the affairs of the outside world, which is just the way they like it. While many of their neighbors fought amongst themselves during the Great War, the guilds stayed neutral in all politics, meanwhile supplying goods and services to all sides equally. Their opportunistic nature kept them on their toes, however, and they were the first group on the scene to claim the island of Aegos once Alphatia sank, in order to gain for themselves the rumored passage to the Hollow World. Though the Thyatians showed up in force shortly afterwards, the guildsmen managed nevertheless to negotiate themselves a good position in Aegos's affairs.

Recent rumor would have it that Thyatis, now recovering the footing it had lost during the Great War, is turning its imperialistic gaze Minrothad's way. If so, the guildsmen will certainly be forced to rethink their neutral policies towards the outside world.

ORCLAND

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

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, Tequia 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 "tequia" 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. Tequia Axteca was surprisingly cordial and accommodating to our questions.

Klarmont 5: We arose shortly after dawn, ready to continue our stay with the Orclanders. Tequia 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 *tlachtili*, on a ball court outside the pyramid. The ball game (which seemed quite similar to 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's. He boasted to us of his days as a *tlachtili* 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.

It is clear that 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 in particular, 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. Tequia 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, my opinion is that it would be best to keep a close watch on the Orclanders. Governor-General Tlatepetl and his Oenkmarian lieutenants seem more or less sincere in their effort to civilize the other humanoids of Ostland, 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.

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, P10 of Odin), Asgrim the Bowed (Royal Adviser, human, male, P15 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 fairly 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.

ROCKHOME (Kingdom of)

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

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 Wyrwurf 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 reinstalled 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.

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.

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: Barge 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: Old World, continent of Brun, roughly 6,000 ft. (1,800 m.) below the Broken Lands.

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/P13 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 sparkling 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.

Now everything has to be rebuilt, but Rafiel will guide us again, as He did during the invasion, as He does every day.

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 Jennafaer, 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.

SIND (*Rajahstan of*)

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

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.]

JALAWAR (*Mumlyket* of)

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

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), *khundar* (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.

Last year, 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*.

Don’t Miss

Though I was not able to visit it, I have been told that the capital city of Sambay (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 Sambay, 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.

SHAJARKAND (*Mumlyket* of)

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

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), *khundar* (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 the midst of 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, the majority 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 fairly 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 Sindrastan, 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.

SODERFJORD (Kingdom of)

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

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

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

Languages: Heldannic.

Coinage: *Markka* (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.

THYATIS (Empire of)

Location: Southeastern peninsula on the continent of Brun, south of Ylaruam, East of Karameikos and Minrothad.

Area: 42,300 sq. mi. (109,557 sq. km.).

Population: 2,750,000 of various races.

Languages: Thyatian (Thyatian, Hattian, Kerendan, and Tel Akbirian dialects). Many other languages are spoken within the empire, especially in Thyatis City.

Coinage: *Emperor* (5 gp), *lucin* (gp), *asterius* (sp), *denarius* (cp).

Taxes: 25% income tax collected quarterly (Va. 1, Ya. 1, Fy. 3, and Ei. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. 5% sales tax on all transactions.

Government Type: Monarchy heavily influenced by senatorial body, overseeing vassal domains.

Industries: Agriculture, crafts (especially metalworking, glassworks, tanning), 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), silk, trade, wine.

Important Figures: Eusebius Torion (Emperor, human, male, F16), Coltius Torion (Prince, human, male, normal human), Demetrian Karagenteropolis (Imperial Magist, human, male, M20), Heinrich Oesterhaus (Count, human, male, C20), Tredorian (Prince of Alphatia, human, male, F12).

Flora and Fauna: Bears, boars, centaurs, lycanthropes, mountain lions, dryads, 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.

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

Description by Vivianna Romanones.

I cannot possibly do justice to the imposing and glorious Thyatian *Imperium* within the scope of an entry in the *Mystaran Almanac*. None the less, I endeavor to describe Thyatis as fully as possible so that you may learn of this remarkable country and perhaps impart to you a new perspective so that you may view it in a fresh light.

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. 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 several: the provinces of the Isle of Dawn; the Thyatian Hinterland provinces on Davania; and the island of Aegos. This entry will deal solely with the imperial heartland on the continent of Brun. The other regions will receive full attention elsewhere.

The Land

The country of Thyatis is mainly composed of rich farmlands, with hills and mountains to the north. Still, much variety exists, and only a brief description will be given. Mainland Thyatis is composed of eighteen dominions, called baronies, counties, or duchies. These dominions are:

Actius: A small island known for its fishermen and shipyards which serves as a trade way station for merchants traveling the southern route around Hattias. (Pop. 10,000.)

Biazzan: This dominion is centered in the rich mountain pass that functions as a trade route between Thyatis and Ylarumam, and sees much caravan traffic. The town of Biazzan itself (pop. 12,000) is known for its university, one of the foremost centers of learning in all of Mystara. (Pop 30,000.)

Borydos: This island protectorate has been a prison for the last several centuries. However, following the recent prison escape, debate has started in the senate about the possibility of putting it to other uses. Little is known about what such plans might entail. The island is still surrounded by dangerous sea monsters. (Pop. 5,000.)

Buhrohur: This barony is populated almost completely by dwarves, and is entirely mountainous. (Pop. 15,000.)

Carytion: 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. (Pop. 5,000.)

Halathius: 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. (Pop. 20,000.)

Hattias: 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 has rebelled several times against the empire. (Pop. 320,000.)

Kantrium: This fertile duchy is the home to farmers and fishermen. Kantrium is a historical site since it was the first dominion formed within Thyatis. (Pop. 90,000.)

Kerendas: 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. 90,000). Much grain is grown in Kerendas, the surplus is exported throughout Thyatis. (Pop. 540,000.)

Lucinius: This county is a hilly spur off the east of the Duchy of Thyatis, a land of vineyards, fisherman, and the proudest seamen in the empire. (Pop. 100,000.)

Machetos: This is 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 suffering severe exactions over 30 years ago. 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 then humbly renamed after himself). (Pop. 30,000.)

Mositius: 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. These mists can influence the behavior of the inhabitants. (Pop. 15,000.)

Retebius: 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 Great War, but is beginning to recover from the losses. Eusebius is considering renaming the fleet as the Retebius Air Cavalry to differentiate it from Thyatis' growing fleet of airships. The duchy was one of those recently enlarged, receiving additional land all the way to the Trevanian River, to help provide land grants to air knights. (Pop. 180,000.)

Sclaras: 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. (Pop. 5,000.)

Tel Akbir: This is a grassy duchy inhabited by Thyatians of Alasiyan descent untainted by the cult of the Ylari brigand al-Kalim [*this choice of word is the correspondent's, not that of the editors, and has been left to pinpoint her bias to the reader. Ed.*]. The legion keeps a close eye out for Ylari raiders in the area. (Pop. 140,000.)

Terentias: This island was hotly contested between Thyatis and Minrothad. The elven inhabitants seem to prefer the empire, and focus their lives on pirating and sailing. So far, Terentias has remained a grand duchy of Thyatis for over 200 years. (Pop. 25,000.)

Thyatis: This duchy, an incredibly wealthy and fertile region that lies just north of Vanya's Girdle, bifurcated by the Mesonian River, has been a center of trade and military recruits for over a millennium, and will likely be so for a millennium more. More towns than can be conveniently shown on any map dot this domain, each with a unique charm. Rich estates and palaces line the shores of the girdle, whose sparkling waters are often the scene of yachting races and are kept securely patrolled by the sharp-prowed imperial dromonds. Many tall lighthouses guide the way for merchant ships, as well as serving as lookout towers watchful beforehand for invading fleets. At the center of the duchy lays the queen of cities, the wealthiest, grandest and most powerful city in all of Mystara (pop. 500,000). This is a city that surpasses all in wealth and vice, and is the true heart of the empire. (Pop. 1,200,000.)

Vyalia: This county is known for its elven population (roughly a third of the inhabitants now) and its Forestry Academy. 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 leaders and to Yldysyl Greenheight, the Count of Vyalia, for guidance. (Pop. 20,000.)

The People

Thyatians are a justly proud people, the possessors of a long tradition of civilization and imperial might. Pure 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 physical characteristics can be found among the people.

Thyatians are efficient, disciplined, and practical. Others may view them as treacherous, but often the same people who decry "Thyatian treachery" ignore (or excuse) duplicity and deceit among their own people and allies. Thyatians simply do what is needed to do to achieve their goals and preserve their nation. To do otherwise would be dangerous and inefficient; however, true Thyatians understand that keeping the letter of their agreements is in their interest. 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 concepts 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. The virtues Thyatians hold most dear are dignity, duty, 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.

Thyatian History

The Thyatians have a long and glorious history, a history of both triumph and tragedy. Many non-Thyatians judge them harshly, not aware of the burdens and responsibilities Thyatis carried. These duties led Thyatis to make pragmatic decisions in the interest of not only the *imperium*, but of all Mystarans.

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. The tribes were warrior people, hardy and unafraid of death. For four centuries they lived free, eventually coming into contact with the expansionist Alphatian Empire, whose drive for conquest they resisted with raids (which Alphatian histories depict as piracy). Eventually the Alphatians came to learn that the mountains in Thyatian lands held rich deposits of gold, and ever greedy for resources and people to exploit, the Alphatians set out to conquer the Thyatians as they had so many before them. The Thyatians resisted valiantly, but were no match for the Alphatians' strong magic.

For two centuries the Thyatians lived under the domination of the Alphatian Empire, forced to work in its mines in conditions that the Jennites of today nod knowingly about when they hear of it. But the Alphatians inadvertently also taught much to the Thyatians. Hardened by their experience after two centuries of Alphatian rule, the Thyatians led a grand revolt against the Alphatian despotate. 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 millennium Thyatis stood as a bulwark against Alphatian expansionism. The Known World was shielded from Alphatian aggression by Thyatian strength, and thus allowed to develop. The modern world owes its shape and its culture to Thyatis in more ways than one. Many nations speak Thyatian and have derived elements of their civilization from it. 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 their 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.

Most recently, and for perhaps the last time, Thyatis again used its strength to shield the world from the advance of Alphatian armies. 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 of the Old world, against the threat of Alphatian dominance. The war is often called the Wrath of the Immortals [*most other peoples call it the Great War. Ed.*] because the Immortals punished Alphatia for attempting to impose its regime on the world by sundering the Alphatian Empire. During this war the Alphatian attackers caused much death and destruction in the empire, but were eventually thrown back just as during the earlier Spike Assault.

Emperor Thincol became gravely ill towards the end of the war, as the Alphatian onslaught entered Thyatis itself. Shortly afterwards the continent of Alphatia sank, and the tides of war turned. 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 in an effort to secure a lasting victory. These plans were shattered when revolts occurred and when Thothia's undead minions defeated the legions on the Isle of Dawn. 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. 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 Isle of Dawn Treaty with the empire insuring peace on the Isle of Dawn. This treaty cost the empire the conquered cities of Ekto and Trikelios and a few Alatian Islands, but the empire has now recovered almost fully.

Emperor Eusebius is now looking at Davania and plans on expanding the empire into the unclaimed jungles of the southern hemisphere. Emperor Eusebius is widely expected to be considering a number of long overdue reforms intended to restore the empire to its former glory, doing what Thincol perhaps should have done after the war. He has purged the senate of many of its most corrupt members [*defined as those who oppose his wishes. Ed.*]. Last year the emperor called on the services of many of the empire's top people, both military and civil service, to submit to him proposals for improvements, and many think he will begin to implement the best of these plans now.

Don't Miss

There are many things to see in Thyatis, notably the various gladiatorial games—especially during holidays when they are spectacular and most spirited. Thyatis also boasts fine theaters and plays and many well stocked libraries and noted universities. Many nobles throw lavish parties in their estates throughout The City. Thyatis is a center of theology, with large temples and clerical orders dedicated to many of the Immortals. 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 impression of its greatness, the glittering domes of its temples rising above the strong walls, the magnificence of its palaces and public buildings.

Of particular 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.

VESTLAND (Kingdom of)

Location: Southeast of Heldann, east of Ethengar, north of Soderfjord and west of Ostland.

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), *hellar* (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. 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 located 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.

WENDAR (Elven Kingdom of)

Location: North of Glantri and Ethengar, south of Denagoth and west of the Heldannic Territories.

Area: 78,170 sq. mi. (202,460 sq. km.).

Population: 400,000, roughly 40% human and 60% elves (including 25,000 Alfheim refugees).

Languages: Elvish (Genalleth and Alfheim dialects), 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: Gylharen (King, elf, male, F11/M11), Bensarian of Kevvar (Sage, human, male, M9), Doriath (Exiled Alfheim King, elf, male, F12/M15), Brendan Erendyl (Clanmaster of Clan Erendyl, elf, female, F7/M8), Starwatcher (Treekeeper of Clan Long Runner, elf, male, F10/M20).

Flora and Fauna: The region boasts tall ancient sequoias and pines, along with other evergreen trees that make the logging industry the most profitable one. 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 frontiersland, 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 to its inhabitants. Thick evergreen forests blanket more than a 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 Sylvair, 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 largest towns, lie at the easternmost border of this forest, and use its wood to boast 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 life. Tales of missing wanderers abound in this region.

The last important reserve lies at the northwestern border and it's 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, 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 his forest to use him into achieving 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 the 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 much common here—it snows and rains seven months a year—and the elves, who've 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 to 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 to issue 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 occurred 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 really 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 more ready 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 year 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 retaliation acts against some minor provocation 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, Ylaruum and Ethengar. I wonder if some kind of 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 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 avoided the disease to claim more souls. However, this fact 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 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 in Denagoth, where according to historical evidences another clan of elves should have 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 prisoners along with some members of the exploring party. The clanmasters of 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.

[According to some reports made by the Wendarian elves and a few scrolls signed by our correspondent Mr. Dove coming from Denagoth, the elven army was able to conquer all of the Geffron Forest, including the site known as Drax Tallen, by the end of AC 1015. They are currently holding their position up there. Ed.]

Don't Miss

All the reserves are worth 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 to receive "inspirations." 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 Dreamlands back in Alfheim, and many often 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 god of all the dragons! Could you have ever imagined: the dragons worship

Immortals 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 want it to be constantly 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 halflings, 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. 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 the legends saved not only the Genalleth Valley, but the whole 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. In particular, 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 best possibly found 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 some kind of 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 most impressed me is the faint greenish haze that envelops all the trees like a fouled 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 emotive 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 as long as 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.

Area: 54,180 sq. mi. (140,326 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 *voucherries* (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).

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. Fiends [AD&D: *tanar'ri*] 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 have undergone some harsh changes since the ascension of Sultan Hassam al-Kalim and the Kin faction that supports him. Where once this was a land open to outsiders, it has now become a realm where those who do not believe in the Eternal Truth laid out in the Nahmeh are not tolerated.

The Land

The Alasiyan basin is an almost endless stretch of sandy desert, broken only occasionally by rocky barrens and salt flats. Rarer still are the oases and irrigated stretches of arable farmland that barely support the desert's few settlements. To the southwest are rocky hills, barely settled and home to large groups of bandits that formerly plied the trade routes to and from Darokin. As these roads are rarely used any longer, the bandits have been forced to look further inland to support themselves.

The Emirate of Alasiya once covered the majority of this region, encompassing the city of Ylaruam and numerous tribal oases surrounding it. Since the rise of the new sultan, the capitol of the emirates has moved further east to Abbashan, and the Emirate of Alasiya has been slowly whittled down from its former size.

The People

Once, foreign merchants, dwarves, and halflings were an occasional, if not common, sight in the city of Ylaruam. Now, with the closure of the Ylari borders, and the moving of the capital to Abbashan, the city has become a shadow of its former self. Population levels in the city and its suburbs have dropped dramatically, and show no signs of improving. The city itself yet maintains its position as a trade center, playing host to caravans from all across the nation, but the new sultan works hard to cut in on this trade and further the importance of his chosen capitol of Abbashan. Indeed, the town of Hedjazi has already been added to the Emirate of Abbashan, and talk is that the town of Tel al Kebir will soon be next.

Nomads of the wastes are well able to provide for their small tribes as they roam through the harsh environment, but their settled cousins have only recently begun to realize how important trade with outside nations is to the continued well being of the population. Unless the sultan makes some drastic changes to his policies of interaction with foreigners, however, the settled regions will continue to suffer.

Recent History

The Emirate of Alasiya is not the only region of Ylaruam to have undergone massive changes. The Emirate of Makistan, along the western border, has suffered from a severe lack of trade as well. This trade deficiency has been brought on by not only the exclusion of foreign merchants, but also the closing of the Rockhome border by the dwarves of that realm. Only Makistan's rich agricultural legacy has allowed it to survive through the trying economic period.

The Dead Place in northern Ylaruam, which allowed massive numbers of fiends to enter the Prime Plane, has been closed, but the damage it wrought is not easily forgotten. Many fiends still roam the lands of Ylaruam, causing havoc wherever they go. Rumor has it that the sultan is installing his own emir to take over Nithia and

bring the largely heretical peoples there under his sway. There is also talk of a powerful fiend who is attempting to form his own regime in the Emirate of Nithia. The truth of these rumors is as yet unknown.

ATLAS OF 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 NACE by most of the commoners). They are well educated, mainly literate, and boast a larger percent of images 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 the NACE, and although ships from around the world sail here. The NACE 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 the NACE 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 we announce the participation of two new reporters for the Alphatian region. Early in the year it came to our attention that Allstrick, a son of Alphatia, was embarking upon visiting the lands of the NACE. Accompanying him is his longtime consort Thalia "Red Sheaf" Torres di Lopez of the Belcadiz.

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 NACE 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.

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 we were able to get a copy of a report she made for her government about the situation in Esterhold. 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 readers should keep in mind that her Esterhold report was initially for the emperor's eyes only.

Atlas

AQUAS (Kingdom of)

Location: Sea of Dawn, northwest of Bellissaria.

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.

Language: Alphatian.

Coinage: *Crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher and an import tax of 1% (NACE kingdoms and Karameikos excluded). 10% goes to the imperial treasury.

Government Type: Semiautonomous monarchy owing loyalty to the NACE.

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: Zynnia (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 NACE, 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 of 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 strove 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 these 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 in itself difficult enough to comprehend. However, the inhabitants have apparently grown quite used 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 Zynnia. 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 fairly new kingdom. In AY 1949 [*AC 949. Ed.*], Queen Zynnia's father petitioned Empress Eriadna for permission to establish Aquas. King Zyndryl and the empress had a well-known affair, resulting in two children: Eldrethila and Zandor. Zynnia was the product of another affair with the mermaid, Lynnia.

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.*], Zynnia, Prince Haldemar, Commander Broderick, and Queen Gratia ousted Zandor and captured him for a return to Alphatia in the Hollow World. Zynnia claimed the throne of Aquas and has ruled ever since. Soon after, Aquas became a member of the NACE.

Don't Miss

When in Aquas, one has to 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 lies 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 of 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.

DAWRIM (Kingdom of)

Location: Bellissaria, west of southern Skothar, southeast of Aquas.

Area: 255,900 sq. mi. (662,781 sq. km.).

Population: 28,000 (5,000 in Alinquin).

Language: Alphatian.

Coinage: Crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp).

Taxes: 15% on everyone of servant status or higher and an import tax of 1% (NACE kingdoms and Karameikos excluded). 10% goes to the imperial treasury.

Government Type: Semiautonomous monarchy owing loyalty to the NACE.

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 NACE kingdoms are rather flashy, this one tended to be... well... pretty 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. The majority 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 regards 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 fairly 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.

ESTERHOLD (Republic of)

Location: Peninsula west of the Jennite lands, north of Minaea, Continent of Skothar.

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 Verdan 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 (60,000), Verdan (150,000), Port Marlin (10,000), Rock Harbor (5,000), and Anchorage (5,000). Cities include Skyfyr (pop. 15,000) in Blackrock and Faraway (pop. 35,000) in Verdan. An unknown number of “free” Jennites also live on the peninsula.

Languages: Alphatian, Jennite.

Coinage: *Crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher and an import tax of 1% (NACE kingdoms and Karameikos excluded). 10% goes to the imperial treasury.

Government Type: Monarchy with developing democratic institutions; a member of the NACE. 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, P15 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 NACE 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 the NACE, 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 the NACE 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.

FLOATING AR (Kingdom of)

Location: New Alphatian Sea, then above the Yannivey Islands.

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.

Language: Alphatian, Elvish (Shiye-Lawr dialect).

Coinage: *Crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher and an import tax of 1% (NACE kingdoms and Karameikos excluded). 10% of it goes to the imperial treasury.

Government Type: Semiautonomous monarchy owing loyalty to the NACE.

Industries: Military, air magics, ocean harvesting.

Important Figures: Qissling (King, human, male, M19), Qirklin (Prince, human, male, P16 of Valerias).

Flora and Fauna: With their aerial nature, the islands of Floating Ar 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 in regards to 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 Floating Ar. 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 Floating Ar.

The Land

How can I begin such a description without mentioning Floating Ar'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 Ar 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.

Floating Ar 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 Ar are the Yannivey Islands. Becoming part of Floating Ar 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 Floating Arians 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 Floating Ar are predominantly Alphatian. A large number of 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 Floating Arians 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 Floating Arians 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 Qirklin. True to form, his great uncle King Qissling was absent, but such are the ways of the devoted mage. Egad how Qirklin 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 definitely 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, Floating Ar was part of Ar, 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 Floating Ar had been the residences of the ruling class [*spellcasters. Ed.*], while the lands of Ar served as the agricultural base. With Ar 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 Arians 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 Floating Ar. The coming years should be very interesting.

Don't Miss

Floating Ar is a wondrous place. Each lofty piece of real estate offers the opportunity to amaze the average visitor. Just the way that the Floating Arians 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.

HORKEN (Kingdom of)

Location: Bellissaria, west of southern Skothar, southeast of Aquas.

Area: 103,258 sq. mi. (267,438 sq. km.).

Population: 31,000 (5,000 in Horken).

Language: Alphatian.

Coinage: *Crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher and an import tax of 1% (NACE kingdoms and Karameikos excluded). 10% goes to the imperial treasury.

Government Type: Semiautonomous monarchy owing loyalty to the NACE.

Industries: Agriculture, shipbuilding.

Important Figures: Villiun (King, human, male, P19 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 went 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 actually 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 the NACE. This has done much to improve some of the hard feelings that some NACE 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 NACE'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 has to 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 the NACE)

Location: Sea of Dawn, where western Alphatia used to be.

Area: 128,199 sq. mi. (332,035 sq. km.).

Population: 3,000, and many monsters (2,200 in Ionace City).

Language: Alphatian.

Coinage: *Crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher and an import tax of 1% (NACE kingdoms and Karameikos excluded).

Government Type: Center of the New Alphatian Confederate Empire.

Industries: Bureaucratic hub of the NACE, 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 besets 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 actually 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 the NACE. 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 NACE 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 definitely 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 all across the NACE 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 NACE’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 Alphatia 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 the NACE. On Amphimir 15, AY 2014 [*Vatermont 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 NACE Council meets to administer the new empire.

The NACE 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. I am unsure where the coming year’s tourney is to be held but I do plan on trying to attend the one for AY 2016 [*AC 1016. Ed.*].

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 of 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 pretty 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.

Area: 244,677 sq. mi. (633,713 sq. km.).

Population: 150,000 (15,000 in Blueside).

Language: Alphatian.

Coinage: *Crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher and an import tax of 1% (NACE kingdoms and Karameikos excluded). 10% goes to the imperial treasury.

Government Type: Semiautonomous monarchy owing loyalty to the NACE.

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 Alphatian flash to meet my expectations, but with enough practicality to be believable. Lagrius is actually 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 the NACE. 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 similar to 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 in number, 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.

Area: 92,034 sq. mi. (238,368 sq. km.).

Population: 100,000 (15,000 in Alchemos).

Language: Alphatian.

Coinage: *Crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher and an import tax of 1% (NACE kingdoms and Karameikos excluded). 10% goes to the imperial treasury.

Government Type: Semiautonomous monarchy owing loyalty to the NACE.

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. The majority of the city's alchemy trade is born 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 the NACE. 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 fairly reasonable despite the aftermath of the Great War. The integrity of potions is fairly 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.

Area: 338,956 sq. mi. (877,896 sq. km.).

Population: 50,000 (10,000 in Aaslin).

Language: Alphatian.

Coinage: *Crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher and an import tax of 1% (Karameikos and NACE kingdoms excluded). 7% goes to the imperial treasuries (economic aid).

Government Type: Semiautonomous monarchy owing loyalty to the NACE.

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 has to 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 the NACE. 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.

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.

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 (5,000).

Languages: Alphatian, Heldannic.

Coinage: *Crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher and an import tax of 1% (NACE 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, formally a member of the NACE.

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 NACE council no end of trouble.

SURSHIELD (Kingdom of)

Location: Bellissaria, west of southern Skothar, southeast of Aquas.

Area: 260,390 sq. mi. (674,410 sq. km.).

Population: 100,000 (30,000 in Spearpoint).

Language: Alphatian.

Coinage: Crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp).

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone and an import tax of 1% (Karameikos and NACE kingdoms excluded). 8% goes to the imperial treasury (for economic aid).

Government type: Semiautonomous monarchy owing loyalty to the NACE.

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 particular 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 furthest 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 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 pretty 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 the NACE, 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 the NACE. The relationship with the NACE has been fair. Surshield has been given relaxation on its taxes due to its prominent role in keeping the Minaean pirates in check.

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 is 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 particular nuisance. More organized creatures also abound. Tasloi are fairly 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

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 bear 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 actually 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 we announce the participation of two new reporters for the Alphatian region, and three others for the Thyatian region, plus some you already know from last year. Early in the year it came to our attention that Allstrick, a son of Alphatia, was embarking upon visiting the lands of the NACE. Accompanying him is his longtime consort Thalia "Red Sheaf" Torres di Lopez of the Belcadiz.

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 NACE 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.

Titia Solenius

It is with deepest regrets and apologies that we must inform our readers that we had to let Titia go. She will no longer be reporting for this almanac. As editor, I give my corespondents a lot of freedom in their reports. They are allowed to describe things as they see them, with their own opinions. I generally let this pass, even at times against my better judgment. However, the *Mystaran Almanac* draws the line at permitting our reporters to accept money from others in exchange for including information into the descriptions. We recently discovered that Titia Solenius had accepted gratuities from several interests within the NACE and from the Grand Duke of Westrourke in exchange for altering her reports to serve their interests. What troubles me most is that some of these insertions were not even accurate. The *Mystaran Almanac* strives for accuracy, if not always objectivity.

Furthermore, the only opinions we find acceptable are those of the reporters themselves clearly named so you can see what their biases may be. We do not permit unnamed persons to insert their propaganda into the almanac secretly by bribing our correspondents. We apologize to our readers for this episode, and promise that we will heighten our awareness of this type of corruption so that it does not happen again.

Because we only recently learned of this, we have had to scramble to find suitable replacements.

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 (Province of)

Location: Sea of Dawn, southeast of the Isle of Dawn, west of Ochalea.

Area: 65,846 sq. mi. (170,541 sq. km.).

Population: 25,000, including Aegopoli (5,000) and Pittston (2,000).

Languages: Thyatian, Alphatian.

Coinage: *Emperor* (5 gp), *lucin* (gp), *asterius* (sp), *denarius* (cp). Alphatian coins are also very common: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: 25% income tax collected quarterly (Va. 1, Ya. 1, Fy. 3, and Ei. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. 5% sales tax on all transactions with the exception of food and clothing.

Government Type: Dominion under the jurisdiction of the Empire of Thyatis.

Industries: Agriculture, fishing, trade.

Important Figures: Francesca Egidio (Governor, human, female, F18), Delsel Oaktree (Assistant Governor, 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 the NACE 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.

AERIA (Kingdom of)

Location: Alatian Islands, the Sea of Dawn, southeast of the Isle of Dawn.

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).

Language: Alphatian.

Coinage: *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 (NACE kingdoms and Karameikos excluded). 10% of tax revenue goes to the imperial treasury.

Government Type: Semiautonomous monarchy owing loyalty to the NACE.

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 Gait, 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 Thayan 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 still remains intact even after the occupation. I do have to wonder how much of this priceless knowledge is now in Thayan 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 in regards to 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 the NACE, one would expect to see a heavy military presence. Already one can see a certain influx of NACE military personnel. Since some of the troops I saw wore the insignia of the forces of [censored. Ed.] one can expect NACE'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 the NACE. 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 the NACE. Under the NACE 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 the NACE 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.

DUNADELE (Duchy of)

Location: Northeastern head of the Isle of Dawn.

Area: 168,605 sq. mi. (436,687 sq. km.).

Population: 70,000, including city of Dunadale (20,000), and the town of Deirdren (5,000).

Languages: Alphatian (Hillvale dialect), Thyatian (Redstone dialect).

Coinage: *Emperor* (5 gp), *lucin* (gp), *asterius* (sp), *denarius* (cp). Alphatian coins are also very common: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: 25% income tax collected quarterly (Va. 1, Ya. 1, Fy. 3, and Ei. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. 5% imperial sales tax on all goods except food and clothing.

Government Type: Dominion under the jurisdiction of the Empire of Thyatis.

Industries: Agriculture, fishing, cutting of peat moss, sheep herding, trade, some freebooting (into sunken Alphatia).

Important Figures: Edmondo Tiberia (Duke, human, male, F11).

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.

The Duchy of Dunadale is a nation at a crossroads. A crossroads between the past shrouded in antagonism and war, and a future of prosperity and enlightenment. Recently joined to the Thyatian Empire, Dunadale is a land where hard working natives are blending with enterprising Thyatian settlers. But there are tensions between cultures, Thyatian, Alphatian, which threaten to renew old conflicts.

The Land

Dunadale is a large nation, with all types of terrain and climate. It reaches the northern tip of the Isle of Dawn near the border of Helskir, where 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 People

Dunadale's settlements are thriving communities, but trade is less than it could due to the distrust between the Alphatian communities and the newly arrived Thyatian settlers. There is a danger of splitting into separate societies, bound by one government but mutually suspicious. But also positive signs that a beneficial blending could take place. But the duke's forces heavily patrol the city of Dunadale, and dissatisfaction with his authority is on the rise. Deirdren remains largely Alphatian, but even their customs differ from the Alphatian norm. 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. The new duke seems to prefer a more authoritarian style of rule, however, at odds with the republican ways of both the native Dunadalers and the Thyatian settlers. How this will be resolved remains problematic.

While the coasts, with their brash tradesmen and knowing ways, are what people most think of when they consider Dunadale; 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.

Recent History

Dunadale faces a new future with more ahead of it than behind it, but the legacy of past conflicts lingers. It has been fought over between empires for over a thousand years. For the past several years it has been ruled by Thyatis, but it is known that the NACE has pretensions to restore the borders of the old Alphatian Empire, and may bring the fires of war and destruction to this still-healing land yet again.

Don't Miss

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 these folk will restore your faith in humanity.

EAST PORTAGE (City-state of)

Location: Isle of Dawn.

Area: 79,690 sq. mi. (206,397 sq. km.).

Population: 10,000 (3,000 in town of East Portage).

Language: Alphatian (Hillvale dialect), Thyatian (Redstone dialect).

Coinage: *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 (NACE kingdoms and Karameikos excluded). 10% of tax revenue goes to the imperial treasury.

Government type: Semiautonomous monarchy owing loyalty to the NACE.

Industries: Trade, portage of goods between East and West Portage.

Important Figures: Quicklimn (King and General).

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 the NACE, 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.

EKTO (City-State of)

Location: Isle of Dawn, east of Brun, southwest of the New Alphatian Sea..

Area: 38,160 sq. mi. (98,834 sq. km.).

Population: 28,000 (1,000 in the city of Ekto).

Language: Alphatian (Hillvale and Thothian dialects), Thyatian (Redstone dialect).

Coinage: *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% (NACE 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 owing loyalty to the NACE.

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. In light of all of 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. The NACE 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 the NACE. Under the banner of the NACE, 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 pretty 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 (Province of)

Location: Isle of Dawn.

Area: 9,875 sq. mi. (25,576 sq. km.).

Population: 5,000 (including 1,000 in the community of Furmenglaive).

Languages: Thyatian (Redstone dialect), Alphatian (Hillvale dialect, not so widespread).

Coinage: *Emperor* (5 gp), *lucin* (1 gp), *asterius* (1 sp), *denarius* (1 cp). Alphatian coins are also accepted: *crown* (1 gp), *mirror* (1 sp), *judge* (1 cp).

Taxes: 25% income tax collected quarterly (Va. 1, Ya. 1, Fy. 3, and Ei. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. 5% imperial sales tax on all goods except food and clothing.

Government Type: Dominion under the jurisdiction of the Empire of Thyatis.

Industries: Agriculture, fishing, and sheep.

Important Figures: Phileus Furmenglaive (Count, human/werewolf, male, F20), Lyra Furmenglaive (Countess, human/werewolf, female, P20 of Protius).

Flora and Fauna: Furmenglaive consists mostly of moors and rolling hills with scrubs 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 (and in general throughout the Shadow Coast) 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 all 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 Province of Furenglaine. 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 rise goats and sheep that produce a fine quality of wool (similar to 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 Furenglaine, 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. Furenglaine 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 Furenglaine, where the count and countess have built the only existing port of the entire domain. A four yards wide street of milestones lead from the port 200 yards up to the fortified town of Furenglaine, built around the imposing building known as Castle Furenglaine, 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 Furenglaine 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 nighttime... as I've witnessed myself firsthand.

The People

The people of Furenglaine 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 similar to last century Traladarans than to the common Thyatian: I can only assume they changed their vision of the world when they came to live in Furenglaine. 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 Furenglainians 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 (*àuguri*—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!).

There is also a strange role assigned to some people I encountered in these hamlets: the “dhampirs.” Apparently this is a tradition that could also be encountered in Traladara in the last centuries (though I admit I don't know if it's still in use today). According to legends, the dhampirs are half-humans and half-monsters, children of a human woman and a creature of darkness (commonly a vampire, a Longfang Devil) who can recognize and hunt down other monsters like their father because of their incredible (albeit fiendish) powers. Famous dhampirs are always viewed with suspicion by people not only in Furenglaine but also in all the dominions of the Isle of Dawn (where the knowledge of the existence of these beings is widespread). However, in Furenglaine nobody can deny a dhampir shelter and a warm meal if he asks for it, because this could bring bad luck on him, or worse the dhampir's wrath. Dhampirs normally are loners who travel the land seeking evils to destroy, but I haven't understood the reason they do it even after speaking with a few of them: some do it for revenge, others for glory, others simply for sheer pleasure of killing... a strange lot indeed.

Also, there is a common and renowned profession widespread in Furenglaine and in all the provinces of the Shadow Coast: the hunter. There are four types of hunters in the Province of Furenglaine (though others could exist in nearby domains): vampire hunters, lycanthrope hunters, demon hunters and ghost hunters. Each hunter is experienced with the tactics, powers and weaknesses of his kind of prey and has special weapons and tricks he uses to identify and subsequently kill his foes, taught from generation to generation. I have encountered a few of them in my wanderings in the Isle of Dawn, and I must say they are really incredible people, extremely experienced and devout to their duty of freeing the world from the most hated creatures of darkness. The ones I spoke with

were all utterly loyal to the cause of Good, but I know some have also a love for money and glory like every other hardened adventurer.

The people of Furenglaine also have their own particular celebrations during the year besides those commonly acknowledged in other Thyatian dominions. The strangest two are the Awakening (also called "D" Day) and the Night of Whispered Curses. The first one (Eirmont 23rd) commemorates the first major victory of the forces of Goodness against the Prince of Darkness, which led to the end of the Shadow Years of Furenglaine (AC 500-540) and to the formation of the first companies of hunters. It is also called "D" Day because according to the ancient version of the legend, it was the famed dhampir "D" (the first of its kind) who was responsible for the defeat of the evil forces of Darkness. The Night of Whispered Curses (Kaldmont 13th) is said to be the moment of the year when the powers of the witches and of all the servants of the Prince of Darkness (or the Dark Mother according to others) are at their peak. For this reason people throughout Furenglaine meet in large sanctified halls (temples or even blessed stables) and there they pray for the whole night to the good Immortals, trying to fend off the evil curses of the witches and protect themselves from the Darkness' powers.

Recent History

Furenglaine is ruled by Count Phileus Furenglaine 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 Furenglaine, a powerful Thyatian wizard. The dominion has always been ruled by the Furenglaine family, even though the inhabitants of the region tell strange tales about the fate of the former rulers. In fact, many people here believe that the Furenglaine family is cursed and that this legacy dates back to Magnus's time. Persistent rumors want the current rulers to be cursed too, even though nobody knows exactly what kind of affliction they're suffering. However, both Count Phileus and Countess Lyra fought valiantly against the Alphatian invaders and organized a secret resistance during the period of the occupation that was able to dispose of more than one hundred Alphatian soldiers who ventured too far in the moors of the domain. Of all the occupied provinces during the war, Furenglaine was surely the one that gave less benefits to the Alphatians and the first one they left (some say in a hurry) after the end of the war.

Don't Miss

There aren't many things to visit in Furenglaine, but if you are really brave and ambitious, you could try to get an audience with the Sybil. This woman lives in a hidden cave near the northern border of the dominion and is considered blessed by the Immortals: she is renowned for her prophetic abilities. She lives alone in her cave and apparently has no contact with the outside world. Many say that she's been living there for more than one hundred years, for they remember their grandparents talking about the Sybil, but nobody knows for sure who she really is or how she looks like. The Furenglavians are not even sure the Sybil is a female: they simply use the female pronoun because they heard others using it in the past. The truth is that nobody has ever seen the Sybil (according to my sources), so she's surrounded by an aura of great mystery. However, she still lives in her cave and offers omens and predictions to every person that can find her lair. The visitor must whisper his questions at the entrance of the cave and the Sybil simply whispers the answer after some time. The problem is that the cave distorts the voice, and considered that the Sybil also gives very obscure responses, most of the times the pilgrim cannot really understand the answer. However, as far as the rumors go, the Sybil's prophecies have always been right: she's the true mouth of the Immortals.

Do Miss

I'd say do miss the whole Shadow Coast altogether if you value your soul, but if you want me to be more explicit, these are a few of the sites you should not venture too far into when you are in Furenglaine: the Blood Hill and the Tower of Magnus.

The Blood Hill is a singular haunted place: theater of one of the most bloody battles between Alphatians and Thyatians during the last century, it is now inhabited by the ghosts of all the soldiers who perished there. The hill itself is an eerie sight even during daylight, for it is still littered with bones and rusted armors and weapons belonging to the fallen fighters, and is normally avoided by men and animals alike. By night, the whole hill becomes alive with screams, sounds of clashing weapons and ghostly figures roaming around. Some people claim to have witnessed the events from a safe distance and report the sight of whole troops of shadows rising from the earth and marching against one another, repeating the same moves and suffering the same fate over and over again. Rumors also tell of unlucky travelers who were so moved by the scene that they tore themselves apart crying in agony, while others joined the soldiers in their fray and became part of their macabre army.

The Tower of Magnus is a strange and isolated tower built near the eastern border of the domain and shunned by the locals. The legend wants it to be Magnus's laboratory, where the first ruler of Fur menglaive researched arcane lore and made foul pacts with the Forces of Darkness dwelling on the Isle of Dawn. When Magnus disappeared some 450 years ago, his tower became inaccessible even to his relatives, and all the adventurers who have tried to unveil its secrets have never returned. Some say that Count Magnus still visits it during certain periods of the year, though nobody knows it for sure.

GAITY (Baronies of)

Location: Alatian Islands, the Sea of Dawn, southeast of the Isle of Dawn.

Area: 16,960 sq. mi. (43,926 sq. km.).

Population: 13,000.

Language: Thyatian.

Coinage: *Emperor* (5 gp), *lucin* (gp), *asterius* (sp), *denarius* (cp).

Taxes: Each baron imposes different taxes within his dominion.

Government Type: 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 of our visits, our journey to Gaitly must have been the best planned. With its anarchist state and presence of warring Thyatian barons, we had hired a number of 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 Gaitly 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

Gaitly 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 Gaitly. 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 Gait 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 NACE lands, some Alphatians have returned to Gait 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 NACE neighbors. I cannot really blame them, as the NACE 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 the NACE to assert its authority upon the barons. Perhaps the NACE would rather save themselves the trouble and let these amateurs kill each other off before moving in.

Recent History

Gait had once been part of the artistry movement to develop the Alatians. For Gait this effort manifested itself in the resort town of Rainbow Park. The resort was utterly 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 Gait is within the NACE's sphere of influence and well within its capabilities to retake, the confederacy has ignored the island completely.

Don't Miss

Strangely enough, Rainbow Park is still the bright spot upon Gait. 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 Gait.

HELSKIR (Kingdom of)

Location: Northern tip of the Isle of Dawn, north of Westrourke and northwest of the province of Dunadale.

Area: 8,980 sq. mi. (23,258 sq. km.).

Population: 40,000.

Languages: Thyatian (Redstone dialect), Alphatian (Hillvale dialect).

Coinage: *Emperor* (5 gp), *lucin* (gp), *asterius* (sp), *denarius* (cp). Alphatian coins are also very common: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: 20% income tax, collected 4 times a year (Va. 1, Ya. 1, Fy. 3, and Ei. 1). 5% sales tax on all items except food and clothing.

Government Type: Independent monarchy with formality ties to the Empire of Thyatis.

Industries: Trade and fishing.

Important Figures: Eruul Zaar (King, human, male, F18), Asteriela Torion (Queen, human, female, M12).

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. Giant lizards and other unknown monsters inhabit the Demeran's Moor.

Further Reading: M5 *Talons of Night, Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Vivianna Romanones.

Helskir was the first autonomous kingdom to be accepted into the Empire of Thyatis. As such, the king and queen of the land have greater control over the laws than in normal Thyatian dominions, even to the point where they can overrule Thyatian imperial law, though they have yet to adopt Alphatian custom and reduce Citizens to the status of subjects and chattel. Helskir does not send taxes to the imperial treasury, and its troops are under royal control, kept distinct from the imperial forces, though they liaison with imperial officials who protect the kingdom from external attack (by, for example, the NACE or the Heldannic Knights). In all respects, it is an independent nation with only formal ties to the empire. Only if the emperor himself declares war on another nation must Helskir participate in imperial politics and send its troops out to fight alongside the imperial legions. There has been some friction in the past when Helskiran officers attempted to give commands to imperial troops, but Emperor Eusebius has made it clear that he will not delegate imperial military authority to a subordinate nation.

Helskir sends representatives to the Thyatian Imperial Senate, but there is some indication that the kingdom's rulers would like to forge closer ties to the NACE as well. Helskir has always been a border nation, and seems to be trying to play both sides again. It is difficult to discern where the kingdom's loyalties truly lie, but if the history of Zaar and Asteriola are any judge, it is with themselves only.

Is this in fact the start of a new age for the Empire of Thyatis? Is the chain of command among the nobility being destroyed and replaced with this new form of government? I can't help but noticing that independent kingdoms loosely allied together with an emperor in charge of only the military and foreign affairs sounds way too much like the Empire of Alphatia. Is it a better system? I personally don't think so, as each nation has its own armies, and it makes coordinating military activities extremely difficult. Still, I'm a warrior and not a politician, so I'll let our leaders decide what will become of our empire.

The Land

Helskir is a very small kingdom that has been oriented more towards the sea and fishing than the land throughout its history. This is starting to change somewhat as new immigrants begin to put the fertile coastal lowlands to agricultural use, and food exports to the Thyatian mainland are increasing. These trade ties will serve to forge strong bonds to the empire, regardless of the whims of Helskir's fickle rulers.

The southwestern borders of the kingdom end at fog-shrouded Demeran's Moor. Various bandits, goblinoids, and lizard-monsters make their lairs in the moor, and sally forth to strike passersby, using the fog to hide their movements. Both royal and imperial patrols have increased in this area of late, in order to contain this menace.

The southeastern borders of the land are rocky and unsuitable for farming, and thus are only sparsely inhabited. Insular clans of Helskirans do herd goats in this area, but preferring their privacy they do not welcome wandering strangers quickly. Further past the border into Dunadale, the land rises higher and higher until it finally drops several hundred meters and becomes the Herdane Escarpment. Though this natural feature is within the borders of Dunadale, patrols of Helskir often go as far as the escarpment, pursuing bandits and humanoids in cooperation with imperial forces.

The city of Helskir itself is growing rapidly. New city walls have been built to better defend this vital port, and Helskir is becoming one of the major trade centers of this region of the world. Strategically sited buildings, warehouses, and markets also have palisades protecting them. Helskir has a deep harbor, able to accommodate many ships in its docks, a fact that has helped them achieve their seafaring success.

The People

Helskirans are a freedom loving, self-sufficient people, who prefer to handle things themselves rather than relying upon their government for help. Helskir has changed from Thyatian to Alphatian rulership and vice-versa so many times that Helskirans have lost count. Regardless of which empire Helskir has belonged to, Eruul Zaar has remained the ruler of this town, shifting his loyalties with the wind.

Most Helskirans are of Alphatian descent, but severed all ties to the despotic Empire of Alphatia. Until recently, many feared that Helskir would be the first place to be destroyed should the two empires go to war. The

natural and easy infidelity of Zaar ironically spared Helskir from the destruction of the Great War and its aftermath, shifting affiliations whichever way the wind blows. This has given the people prosperity, but at the expense of respect for their rulers—they know the political folly of Zaar and Asteriela led ultimately to Helskir standing alone against raiders from Ostland and Heldann. Many Helskirans suffered great losses during these raids, and the resulting popular pressure forced the royal couple to restore ties to Thyatis in order to salvage the prosperity they had gained by sacrificing honor to profits. Helskirans now look forward to a bright future, hoping for some political stability. It is not clear their rulers will grant them that, though, as there have been rumors of secret talks with representatives of the NACE, which could spark yet another border war over control of this nation.

Recent History

Helskir is a young nation for this region of long-established civilization. For many centuries Helskir was nothing more than a sleepy, peaceful community of fisherman. Then Eruul Zaar, the son of a famous Isle of Dawn bandit lord, seized control with a group of followers just over 40 years ago. He attracted new settlement by promising to curtail the danger of piracy and brigandage in the region. This he did, in part by incorporating the bandits loyal to him into Helskir's army, and in part by using his personal knowledge of bandit hideouts to root out those bands which wouldn't pledge loyalty to him. Via this sort of method he succeeded in attracting settlers, and brought Helskir, for good and ill, to the state it is in today. When the fishing trade started to become lucrative, both the Empires of Thyatis and Alphatia began to take greater interest in the area, and both have claimed it numerous times. Eruul Zaar shifted his loyalties to whomever he thought would grant him greater advantage at any one time, claiming to derive his legitimacy as ruler from whoever was in charge at any given moment, but in essence being little more than a jumped-up bandit chieftain. He let the armies fight for rulership outside of town and obsequiously pledged loyalty to whoever won the battle. Hence, whenever Helskir changed empires, Zaar still remained the ruler of the town, useful to both empires. With all this shuffling around and battles for the small town, it is no wonder that most Helskirans feared the future—often the town would near a state of prosperity, then be suddenly depopulated and devastated again. Zaar, charming and charismatic, persuaded the people that their struggles were the fault of outsiders (whichever empire was out of his favor at any given time) and that they needed his authority in order to rebuild. Meanwhile other nations on the isle, with less fickle rulership, were usually spared the strife Zaar's folly visited on Helskir. The Great War, which left Helskir intact while devastating the rest of the island seemed to change that pattern, until the raiders arrived to strip the people of their hopes.

In AC 994, Helskir served as the neutral meeting grounds to discuss future expansions for both empires. Hotly contested were the lands of Norwold, recently granted [*that is, in AC 990. Ed.*] to Ericall, son of Empress Eriadna of Alphatia. In fact, Emperor Thincol and Empress Eriadna themselves both appeared at this meeting, only to be kidnapped by forces of Alphaks. Brave adventurers ventured to the Great Escarpment to rescue the two rulers. There they faced the intelligent spiders that are now plaguing the southern Isle of Dawn once more [*this heroic quest is often told by bards; just ask them to tell you about the M5 Talons of Night adventure. Ed.*]. In the end, King Ericall retained his title over Norwold.

In AC 1008, during the heat of the battle for the Isle of Dawn, Eruul Zaar married Asteriela Torion, daughter of the Emperor of Thyatis, and was declared King of Helskir by the Empress of Alphatia. Thyatis was forced to recognize the kingship in AC 1009 when it signed a peace treaty with Alphatia, shortly before the hubris and aggression of the Alphatians resulted in their destruction.

Helskir remained independent until AC 1012, when it voluntarily rejoined the Empire of Thyatis following years of destructive raids and fear of invasion from Thothia, Heldann, or any other power seeking to take advantage of the kingdom's isolation. Emperor Eusebius agreed that the ties between Helskir and Thyatis would be limited and that Helskir would remain an autonomous nation, a protectorate of the empire.

Don't Miss

There is not much to see in Helskir proper, except for the lighthouse that guides ships to the safe deep-water harbor. This building is a good 15 stories in height, and its base must be at least 15 meters. A huge magical fire lights the top of this tower, and this reportedly allows ships to spot it from at least 150 kilometers (100 miles) away. This is one of the largest lighthouses known in the world, shorter only than those at the entrances of Vanya's Girdle. Mirrors aim the light out toward the sea, guiding ships to Helskir's harbor. Lately, the lighthouse has also served as a watchtower, warning of approaching raiders.

The market of Helskir is also a popular place for merchants and off-duty soldiers. Here one can find goods from all around the world. Almost all ships that sail the Alphatian Sea or Sea of Dawn has probably stopped in Helskir

at one point. Lately a brisk gray-market trade in goods “recovered” from the sunken continent of Alphatia has sprung up. Although Thyatian coins are the standard for this kingdom, merchants in the markets of Helskir accept coins from almost any nation.

KENDACH (County of)

Location: Center of the neck of the Isle of Dawn, between East and West Portage.

Area: 6,285 sq. mi. (26,278 sq. km.).

Population: 40,000, including 5,000 in the capital of Kendach.

Languages: Thyatian (Redstone dialect), Alphatian (Hillvale dialect).

Coinage: *Emperor* (5 gp), *lucin* (gp), *asterius* (sp), *denarius* (cp). Alphatian coins are also very common: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: 25% income tax collected quarterly (Va. 1, Ya. 1, Fy. 3, and Ei. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. 5% imperial sales tax on all goods except food and clothing.

Government Type: Dominion under the jurisdiction of the Empire of Thyatis.

Industries: Agriculture, trade (especially portage of goods from West Portage to East Portage).

Important Figures: Marie Kendach (Countess, human, female, F9).

Flora and Fauna: This Thyatian provinces has the normal animals and plants found for lands of their climate and weather (which are too numerous to all list here).

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 in fact dominated by marshy wetlands where goblinoids and bandits are known to make their camps. 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 People

As a frontier county, Kendach suffered heavily during the Great War. The arrival of thousands of colonists from the mainland has replaced these losses and more. The town bustles with new life and enterprise. Contrary to previous inaccurate reports, the Kendach plateau still falls under the jurisdiction of the countess, but is unsettled. Some in town think there might be minerals worth developing in the plateau, but no one has done a full geological survey yet.

MERIDIONA (*Provincia*)

Location: Southwestern coast of Isle of Dawn.

Area: 92,035 sq. mi. (238,371 sq. km.).

Population: 10,000 including Furmenglaive (2,000) and Caerdwicca (1,000).

Languages: Thyatian (Redstone dialect), Alphatian (Hillvale dialect).

Coinage: *Emperor* (5 gp), *lucin* (gp), *asterius* (sp), *denarius* (cp). Alphatian coins are also very common: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: 25% income tax collected quarterly (Va. 1, Ya. 1, Fy. 3, and Ei. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. 5% imperial sales tax on all transactions.

Government Type: Dominion under the jurisdiction of the Empire of Thyatis.

Industries: Agriculture, fishing, sheep.

Important Figures: Phileus Furenglave (Count of Furenglave, human werewolf, male, F20), Lyra Furenglave (Countess of Furenglave, human werewolf, female, P20 of Protius), Uthgaard McRhomaag (Baron of Caerdwicca, human, male, F16).

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 the province is wilderness, and almost any type of monster can be found in its depths.

Further Reading: M5 *Talons of Night, Dawn of the Emperors* boxed Set, previous almanacs.

Description by Stefania Torion.

The Province of Meridiona is almost entirely untamed wilderness. Only the sparsely settled Barony of Caerdwicca and County of Furenglave have seen any real development. Caerdwicca subsists by herding sheep and privateering. Agriculture and fisheries support the people of Furenglave. 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. The Great War almost completely bypassed this area, though the privateers of Caerdwicca and the pirates of Ne'er-do-well clashed fiercely at sea.

The People

The people of Meridiona have been close-knit and insular. Rumors of evil wizards and lycanthropes in the wilds of Furenglave have limited immigration there, and the people of Caerdwicca only welcome those with their, shall we say, unique enterprising spirit. The northern area is untamed and largely unexplored, with only a few wandering hermit types calling it home. This may change in the future as the recent colonization wave continues and more of the empire is developed and settled. Some stalwart immigrants have already increased the settlement of Caerdwicca and Furenglave.

NE'ER-DO-WELL (Kingdom of)

Location: Sea of Dawn, southwest of the Isle of Dawn, north of the Pearl Islands.

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 (5,000).

Languages: Alphatian, many other languages.

Coinage: 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, formerly belonging to the Alphatian Empire.

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 NACE influence have their appetites been curbed. Still, they prey on shipping in the region, especially near the Pearl Islands and even Ochalea.

OCHALEA (Kingdom 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.

Area: 190,054 sq. mi. (492,240 sq. km.).

Population: 125,000, including 50,000 in the capital Beitung.

Languages: Alphatian (Ochalean dialect), Thyatian (Ochalean dialect).

Coinage: *King* (a.k.a. *teng*, 5 gp), *one* (gp), *tenth* (sp), *hundredth* (cp); Ochalean coins are octagonal with square holes in the middle.

Taxes: 15% income tax, inheritance tax of 10%.

Government Type: Monarchy.

Industries: Agriculture (wheat and rice), textiles (silk).

Important Figures: Teng Lin-Dieu (King, human, male, P20 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 who 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 Kalitoru Nuar.

Ochalea be a strange land indeed, with customs unlike dose found anywhere else in de world. Even der architecture is unique, with der tiered an' slanted roofs and strange, sliding doors made out of what appears to be paper [*I doubt they are made of paper, but I left this here because that is what the writer believes. Ed.*]. A small bamboo fence be surroundin' deir houses. Stepping stones lead around de houses to a little garden with a few trees an' perhaps a shrubbery or two. Even der gardens are designed to give a feelin' of quiet and peace.

The Land

Ochalea be an island kingdom, just like the Pearl Islands, mohn. But dis island is not rich in farmlands and palm trees like Nuar. It be a rocky place, with large uneven hills everywhere. Dese hills once be volcanoes, but are now completely inactive and have been so for de past hundreds of years.

In de valleys between de hills, however, dere be another story. Water rolls down de hills, mohn, creatin' rivers dat make fertile lands. De Shino-Gawa River be de largest of dem crossing almost de entire nation, mohn. It start from de hills around de town of Wongzhao Tsushao, den moves down to de lake around de town of Chungkiang Li. From dis lake, de largest one in Ochalea, de Shino-Gawa den pours into de Sea of Dawn several days' walking away. All along dis river are forests and very productive farmlands. Dey be so productive dat dey be makin' enough food to feed everyone in de kingdom an' even export some out to oder nations.

Dere also be two huge grasslands steppes on de island. One, on de western shore, is also de location of Beitung, de capital city. De oder, called de Grasslands of Chi, covers de soudern shore of Ochalea. De most soudern portion of de flat terrain is actually a tropical jungle, mohn, mostly due to de souderly ocean currents dat warm its shores.

The People

Ochaleans are Alphatian an' be having de same coppery skin as all de oder Alphatians. Dey usually have dark brown hair, an' eyes vary from brown to amber or golden. Fine facial features are very common.

Ochaleans are a peaceful bunch, satisfied with de status quo instead of seekin' to improve themselves. Dey be very scholarly, doing a lot of research an' educatin' der people. Many claim dey be de dird most educated nation in de world, only behind Glantri an' Darokin, wherever dose places be.

De philosophies of Koryis, de Immortal of peace an' prosperity, have made de Ochaleans very quiet and reserved. Dey be extremely polite, mohn, an' often dings that everyone else do are considered rude here in Ochalea. True to de ways of Koryis, all arguments are settled peacefully drough negotiation.

Ochaleans believe in de equality of all men, an' der king be treated no differently den any of de peasants that work on de farms. Women, on de oder hand, be treated as inferiors. Der husbands decide der every fate, mohn, an' girls are often items to be negotiated away for pre-arranged marriages instead of children to be loved and dought to live der own lives.

One strange custom of de Ochaleans involves der greeting. Dey be seemin' to like kissin' each other, regardless of gender. It be not uncommon to see a man kissin' a man, or a woman kissin' another woman. An' dis be a full kiss on de moud, mohn, not on de cheek. This appears to be der medod of handshaking dat be common in de rest of de world. Der be no romantic connotations involved in der greeting kisses.

Recent History

Not much be happening in dis land over de years. In AC 1007, Ochalea declared der independence from Thyatis wid de Pearl Islands, succeeding danks to de war Thyatis was in against Alphatia.

Recently, uncovered scrolls have stirred up a big debate between der scholars, mohn. De scrolls seem to indicate dat de Ochalean architecture be not from Alphatians but from a race previously living on de Alphatian continent before dey arrived from der own world. Dis oder race was displaced to de island of Ochalea along with oder Alphatian undesirables [*mainly non-spellcasters, that is. Ed.*] where dey created der own culture. De Alphatians seem to have dominated in terms of appearance, since no oder racial traits are visible among dem, but it is de philosophies an' architecture of dis mysterious race dat have dominated Ochalea ever since. Scholars believe de other race be from de land of Skothar and might actually be de same as de ancestors of de Nuari of de Pearl Islands. Would dis not be an interesting development, mohn.

Don't Miss

De architecture is unique droughout de world, mohn, so Ochalea deserves a visit by any tourist. It be a land of beauty, one definitely word seeing. An' they be havin' an interesting culture as well, wordy of study as any oder.

PEARL ISLANDS (Kingdom of the)

Location: South and east of Ochalea, south of the Alatian Islands, north of the Jungle Coast of Davania.

Area: 119,719 sq. mi. (310,072 sq. km.).

Population: 100,000.

Languages: Nuari (believed to be a dialect of Tanagoro), Thyatian (Nuari dialect).

Coinage: None (they use barter), although Thyatian coins are mostly used for and by foreigners: *emperor* (5 gp), *lucin* (gp), *asterius* (sp), *denarius* (cp).

Taxes: None, people work freely to improve their nation when the king needs the help.

Government Type: Monarchy.

Industries: Pearl diving, jewelry making, and export of tropical fruits.

Important Figures: Nurokidu Nuar (King, 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 Kalitoru Nuar.

Ah, my homeland be de subject of dis entry, and I be proud to give it to ye, mohn.

The Land

De Pearl Islands, as dey be called by Thyatians, be a series of islands found where de Sea of Dawn meets de Bellissarian Sea. Dere be five large islands and several hundred smaller ones usually not found on any map. De islands be volcanic in origin, an' a few be still active. De volcanic mountains can be seen on every island.

From de shores to de slopes of de mountains, tropical forests are everywhere. From dese forests come all de wonderful fruits that will delight everyone's stomach. Not many animals be livin' in de woods, eider. One only needs to watch out for de famous draco lizards. Streams collect de runoff waters from de mountains and bring dem back down to de ocean.

Of de five major island, only Nuari be large enough to actually have rivers an' even a lake. Der be also many clearings dat are dominated by grasslands. Dwair, Puir, Tuar, and Kuir have neider rivers nor grasslands, and neider do all de oder smaller islands.

The People

We, de Nuari as we call ourselves, be an energetic people who always strive to do de best we can, mohn. We be fierce fighters yet also great philosophers. We believe in individual excellence in everyding we do, wheder it be warfare, the arts, deology, or magic. Nowhere can ye find better sailors or scouts dan here on the Pearl Islands.

It be believed dat de Nuari be descendants of Tanagoro colonists from long ago. Ancient scrolls claim dat we once be a matriarchal society, but now men an' women are treated equally. We have black skin, brown or black hair and eyes. Nuari be taller dan de average Thyatian, but we also be leaner.

De Nuari believe dat everyone is equal an' everyone has de potential to be great. We derefore be nice to everyone, an' expect de same in return. Upon meeting a stranger, Nuari present dem with a small gift, usually a pretty colored shell or stone. De stranger be expected to return a similar gift before de day is over, an' to do oderwise be a sign of dislikin' de person.

One thin' dat be shockin' most visitor be our lack of concern for wearin' clodin'. We be born widout clodes, so why should we be forced to wear dem at all times, mohn. It be strange how oder cultures believe dat not wearin' clodes is unnatural. What could be more natural dan de way we be born?

Recent History

As wid Ochalea, de Pearl Islands do not have much of a history to tell for de past few years. In AC 1007, we be declarin' our independence from Thyatis, an' have held on to it since. Now, we be livin' peacefully on our own since den.

Wid de departure of de Thyatian Navy, de town of Seagirt be mostly abandoned now. De king be ruling from dere mainly because it be de sight of de palace, an' it be de only town with stone buildings an' a wall around it. Most of Seagirt's people have returned to livin' in simple villages like de rest of de Pearl Islanders.

REDSTONE (County of)

Location: Western spur in the center of the Isle of Dawn, adjacent to Westrourke and West Portage.

Area: 57,864 sq. mi. (149,868 sq. km.).

Population: 60,000 including 25,000 in the capital of Redstone Castle.

Languages: Thyatian (Redstone dialect), Alphatian (Hillvale dialect).

Coinage: *Emperor* (5 gp), *lucin* (gp), *asterius* (sp), *denarius* (cp). Alphatian coins are also fairly common: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: 25% income tax collected quarterly (Va. 1, Ya. 1, Fy. 3, and Ei. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. 5% imperial sales tax on all goods except food and clothing.

Government Type: Dominion under the jurisdiction of the Empire of Thyatis.

Industries: Agriculture, fishing, trade.

Important Figures: Anaxibius Torion (Count, human, male, F20), Stefania Torion (Countess, human, female, F5 dual classed to T14).

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 Alphatian-Thyatian war in AC 1009. Emperor Thincol granted the city and the surrounding land to my husband Anaxibius and myself, changing Redstone's status from a region of Westrourke to a county on its own account.

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. Herdsman 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, despite our best efforts to patrol it.

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 mostly uninhabited. To the east are the dense forests of Ashton Woods and Lurben Forest, which are inhabited by giant wolves that sometimes attack travelers. Rumors claim that dire wolves are controlled by evil fairies. The only safe passage in the area is on the patrolled Westrourke Road, which goes from Dungannon all the way to the grand duchy.

The west-central region is almost completely wetland, 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. 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 southern region of the county is dominated by the Neagh Flats and various hills and ridges [*Hills of Dooagh, 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.

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 origins, though all are Thyatian Citizens, and defended their country valiantly against Alphatian aggression during the recent Great War.

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 Sidhes: anyone cares 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 site in Redstone is Redstone Castle itself. 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 1,000 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 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, when it fell to the Alphatian aggressors. 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. And it took the combined

Alphatian armies of General Bentharzim, General Joshtintan and General Martigan to obtain that result. Redstone Castle has therefore never been taken by force since its creation.

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 folks and the magic of the fairies. Redstone bagpipers are talented musicians, and there is a growing trend to add pipes alongside the drums and trumpets of the legions. The soldiers seem to favor it.

SEPTENTRIONA (Province of)

Location: Northern half of the Shadow Coast, west of the great escarpment on the Isle of Dawn.

Area: 95,775 sq. mi. (248,057 sq. km.).

Population: 10,000 including the town of Laticea (2,000).

Languages: Thyatian (Redstone dialect), Alphatian (Hillvale dialect).

Coinage: *Emperor* (5 gp), *lucin* (gp), *asterius* (sp), *denarius* (cp). Alphatian coins are also very common: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: 25% income tax collected quarterly (Va. 1, Ya. 1, Fy. 3, and Ei. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. 5% imperial sales tax on all goods except food and clothing.

Government Type: Dominion under the jurisdiction of the Empire of Thyatis.

Industries: Agriculture, logging. Resources largely unknown and undeveloped.

Important Figures: Deitica Baralius (Governor-General of Septentriona, human, female, F13).

Flora and Fauna: The Thyatian province have the normal animals and plants found for lands of their climate and weather (which are too numerous to all list here). Many exotic monsters can be found within its wilderness areas. The Province of Septentriona has also been experiencing raids from the araneas of the Great Escarpment.

Further Reading: M5 *Talons of Night, Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Vivianna Romanones.

Like Meridiona south of it, the northern section of the Shadow Coast is largely wilderness. Some few small towns have developed here, but mainly as posts for military patrols rather than civil life. This administrative district has yet to become a part of the emperor's colonization plans, and remains an imperial preserve. Untouched by the recent war, but rumored to be infested with monsters, it remains available for future land grants by the emperor to reward faithful service.

The People

A few hardy souls live here, most of them attached to or serving the military. Some few rove the interior, engaging in logging or searching for rarities. This is a dangerous area, however, and most of the "people" here—uncounted in the above numbers—are monsters.

Don't Miss

The forests are darkly beautiful, dense and wild as the Canolbarth was before its twisting. But it is as dangerous as that wood after the coming of the Shadow Elves. Not a place for vacationers from Darokin, but brave and stalwart citizens will find much to invigorate their spirits here.

THOTHIA (Kingdom of)

Location: Southeastern end of the Isle of Dawn, north of Caerdwicca and east of *Provincia Septentriona*.

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: *Crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: 15% income tax, collected yearly.

Government Type: Semiautonomous monarchy owing loyalty to the NACE.

Industries: Agriculture, fishing and trade.

Important Figures: Ramenhotep XXIV (*Pharaoh*, human, male, P10 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 soudieastern 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 many 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 another 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 (City-State of)

Location: Isle of Dawn, east of Brun, southwest of the New Alphatian Sea.

Area: 17,960 sq. mi. (46,516 sq. km.).

Population: 70,000 (25,000 in the city of Trikelios).

Language: Alphatian (Hillvale and Thothian dialects), Thyatian (Redstone dialect), Nithian (Thothian dialect).

Coinage: *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% (NACE kingdoms and Karameikos excluded). 10% obligation to the imperial treasuries deferred due to rebuilding. Trikelios also benefits from imperial funding to aid in its rebuilding.

Government Type: Semiautonomous monarchy owing loyalty to the NACE.

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 the NACE.

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 in itself worthy of a look over. Alphatian building practices are interesting. With a depleted mage pool, magic and manual labor have to 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.

Area: 9,977 sq. mi. (25,840 sq. km.).

Population: 10,000, including 5,000 at the capital of West Portage.

Languages: Thyatian (Redstone dialect), Alphatian (Hillvale dialect).

Coinage: *Emperor* (5 gp), *lucin* (gp), *asterius* (sp), *denarius* (cp). Alphatian coins are also very common: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: 25% income tax collected quarterly (Va. 1, Ya. 1, Fy. 3, and Ei. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. 5% imperial sales tax on all goods except food and clothing.

Government Type: Dominion under the jurisdiction of the Empire of Thyatis.

Industries: Agriculture, fishing, trade.

Important Figures: Jules Docerius (Captain of the Guard, human, male, F12), Periandra Docerius (Baroness, human, female, F12).

Flora and Fauna: This Thyatian provinces has the normal animals and plants found for lands of their climate and weather (which are too numerous to all list here).

Further Reading: M5 *Talons of Night*, *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Vivianna Romanones.

The community of West Portage, the 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. West Portage 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.

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 exists because it lies on the shortest overland pass from this side 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. Merchants 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.*].

The People

The inhabitants of West Portage are open, cosmopolitan people, busily employed in the resurgent trade. Right now there is almost no unemployment, and more hands are needed simply to keep up with the growing traffic.

Because of the presence of rich traders, thievery is high in the town, mainly confidence games. In fact, up until AC 1009, when Docerius was crowned baroness by Emperor Thincol I, the province of West Portage was unofficially known as the City of Thieves. Still, despite the rumors, West Portage had previously had a very low crime rate. Docerius replaced the former ruler, Lareth Kubek, because he failed to deal with the invading Alphatians, having let the city's defenses decay. At that point, the thieves came out of the woodwork. It took the baroness almost 2 years to get things back under control.

Kubek disappeared shortly after being replaced as ruler, and his current whereabouts are still unknown. Some say he's the hidden hand controlling the city's thieves.

Most people work either at the docks, or as guards and guides for the Crossdawn Road. Almost all are proud Thyatians, strongly loyal because of the rights of citizenship that the Alphatian occupiers deny them every time they invade. Most residents can speak both Thyatian and Alphatian, but are firmly devoted to the former empire. Captain Jules Docerius, the baroness's nephew, leads the town guard. Previous reports of his drinking and corruption seem to have been greatly exaggerated, for he has been in the forefront of recent efforts to clamp down on thievery.

Don't Miss

The main sight worth seeing in West Portage is the marvelous docks. There is a mechanism at the docks that 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 floors in height. 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 a 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 berth-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 (Grand Duchy 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.

Area: 119,344 sq. mi. (309,101 sq. km.).

Population: 75,000, including 25,000 in the capital of Newkirk.

Languages: Thyatian (Redstone dialect), Alphatian (Hillvale dialect).

Coinage: *Emperor* (5 gp), *lucin* (gp), *asterius* (sp), *denarius* (cp). Alphatian coins are also very common: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: 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. 5% imperial sales tax on all goods except food and clothing.

Government Type: Formally a dominion of the Thyatian Empire, which is asserting independence.

Industries: Agriculture, armor, dyes and pigments, and lumber.

Important Figures: Thrainkell Firestorm (Grand Duke, human, male, P(cr)12 of Vanya), Holva Firestorm (Grand Duchess, 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, Westrourke suffered some territorial loses since the Great War. However it is still one of the largest territories, and also one of the most stable and prosperous.

Westrourke 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

Westrourke is blessed with a wide variety of terrain types and towns. The grand duchy 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 grand duchy. 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 obviously 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 the 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 Westrourke.

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. In fact, many military excursions are 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 uninhabited.

North of the Dust Reaches you enter the County of Viksdalen. Contained within its borders are Glotta Forest 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 the constant raids of orcs from the Dust Reaches or lizard men from the Fyresvatn Bogs.

Spreading out toward the north and west, around the Bay of Westrourke, are the baronies of Blido, Guddal, Tromsheim, and Ytre Ystrebo. In fact, each barony is nothing more than a small village of which the baron controls about 30 kilometers of the land around it (20 miles). The area is well forested and home to many lumberers and woodsmen. The plains are also fertile and produce enough food to keep Westrourke self-sufficient.

The County of Nordvik is the largest dominion of Westrourke. 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 which are exported to Thyatis. Nordvik was formerly the northernmost dominions of the grand duchy, near the border to Helskir.

The People

Thyatians and Ostlanders make up the vast majority of the population. It is not uncommon to notice Westrourkites of Alphatian descent, as Thyatians have never evidenced the racial prejudices found in other lands. Thyatians don't typically blame their fellow citizens for the crimes of other nations.

Most Westrourkites 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 Great War. In fact, Westrourke's economy is dependent upon Thyatis, and could be hurt badly if events in the empire sever Westrourke's trade with the mainland.

Recent History

The Grand Duchy of Westrourke was completely conquered in AC 1007 during the Great War, a fact that took Thyatis by surprise. Helskir treacherously switched sides, allowing Alphatians to invade the then duchy from the north while General Martigan of the Alphatians spearheaded an assault onto Newkirk itself after conquering Redstone Castle. The battle was long and bloody, but the Alphatians won through mass assaults against the outnumbered Thyatian defenders. Duke Donegal Firestorm gave his life defending his people, allowing them to escape the doomed city.

His son, Thrainkell was one of those who escaped, and he was named Duke of Westrourke when Thyatis finally reconquered the land in AC 1009. But the emperor did not return full control to Thrainkell Firestorm. First, the entire southern half of Westrourke was turned into the province of Redstone and given to the emperor's daughter Stefania. Second, a large part of the northern territory was disputed between Westrourke and the Kingdom of Helskir. Still, Thrainkell held Emperor Thincol in high regard and accepted the decision.

In AC 1012, after the death of Emperor Thincol, Duke Firestorm announced his bid for independence, and through the use of bribery and extortion he falsified records to make it appear that Eusebius had agreed to this in an appendix of the Isle of Dawn Treaty with Thothia. Firestorm went so far as to pay off Titia Solenius (one of several bribes that reporter was discovered to have taken) in order to spread his intrigue in last year's almanac *[an error we heartily apologize to our readers for. Ed.]*.

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 (160 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

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 of 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

Marina Takanitas is another new correspondent. At 23, she 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 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.

Atlas

EMEROND (Kingdom of)

Location: Jungle Coast, continent of Davania, west of the Thyatian Hinterlands.

Area: 67,500 sq. mi. (174,825 sq. km.).

Population: 125,000.

Languages: Emerondian (a language not related to any other spoken in 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, P(dr)16), Pikkolu (Forest Protector, Emerondian, male, P(dr)20), Dendeh (Sun Protector, Emerondian, male, C20), Kamesama (Earth protector, Emerondian, female, P(dr)18).

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 sparse clearings and no serious attempt of large scale clearing has ever been attempted. 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 are able to modify their external structure and possess a rough form of intelligence and instincts. The common fauna encountered in the region includes jungle creatures such as panthers, jaguars and other great felines, all varieties of tropical snakes, displacer beasts, and some lizards and amphibious creatures, and 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 Emerondians. Other plant-like beings can be found here too, both dangerous and healing 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 entralling 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 differences it from the 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 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 folks, 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 people of Mystara. Their cities are living: all is made of wood that produces 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 through the use of 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 Emerondian 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 tribute these elements (which are considered intelligent entities) their 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 normally guarded at every time 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 particular problems. The sun is vital to them, so they must be sure to bathe in the sunrays daily if they want to regenerate their strengths.

Emerondians use giant insects as vehicles: giant bugs as horses (but they can even climb vertical walls), hornets and butterflies for faster movement, 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 empathic 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 the political centralized 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 in coordinating the various cities for purposes of trading 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 beside 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 judgment 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 or her real identity is (symbolically) erased from the memory of the community during a ritual and he or she becomes known only by the title, becoming one with the other precedent protectors. The Forest

Protector is called Pikkolu (pron.: pEEk-ko-lou), the Sun Protector is called Dendeh (pron.: den-deh) and the Earth Protector is called Kamesama (kah-me-sAH-mah).

The People

Emerond is a kingdom ruled by creatures that look like elves, but are slightly taller, green-skinned and silver-haired. But 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 actually 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 more 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 are able to 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. The others guard those people to protect them, helped by beasts bred from special plants. Emerondians eat only vegetables, roots and fruits but cannot tolerate meat of any kind: their organism cannot digest it.

The Emerondians reproduce similarly to humans: the male impregnates the female who then hosts 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 (other 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 loosing 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 homeworld.

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 the rules of 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 belonging to it) and abandoned alone in the jungle to face the Forest's Judgment, for it is the forest the highest power in Emerond. Foreigners who commit sin 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 (Pyrithians) 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 some decades, until disaster struck. It is told by the legend that the last ruler of Pyris sinned against Nature and Land, for she wanted to use 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 particular problems from the nearby tribes of Hinterlanders, nor from other humanoids that live in the region. This is mainly due to the fact that 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 fairly safe inside their territory. Thyatis hasn't discovered its existence so far mainly because it never ventured so westwards (they still have problems in keeping their Hinterlanders in line), but one never knows what reserves the future... One thing is sure: if the Thyatians discover Emerond and start a war to conquer it, 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 manages 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 Pyritian 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 really lucky to have the honor of visiting it and reading some of its books, though I frankly admit I wouldn't be able to retrace 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 conditions. The city covers a two miles radius and is surrounded by high walls that have collapsed with time in 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 similar to 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 ascetic 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 into 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 traveling 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 the 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 like 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.

Area: Approx. 550 sq. mi. (1,425 sq. km.)

Population: 20,500 (around 2,200 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, and sheep.

Important Figures: Mehmet II *Bey* (Baron), human, male, F7), Kemal (Dockwarden, human, male, normal human).

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, passers-by 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 grasslands 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 *Bey* 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.

Generally speaking, 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 passers-by. 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 is the *bey*'s palace. In form it greatly resembles the palaces described by travelers who have ventured to Hule, with its graceful towers, domes, and curves. *Bey* 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 *Bey* 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.

IILIOLOOSTI (City-State of)

Location: Continent of Davania, western Meghala Kimata Plains.

Area: Approx. 1,100 sq. mi. (2,850 sq. km.).

Population: 32,000 (18,700 in Ilioloosti, 13,300 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 crab 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: Previous almanacs.

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 similar to 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 more 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 still 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 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 seen as 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 on the basis of 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 the 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.

Area: Approx. 600 sq. mi. (1,555 sq. km.).

Population: 26,000 (another 5,500 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, male, halfling, F2), Marina Takanitas (Experienced Trader, human, female, T1), Xenthos Sarantakos (Council Spokesman, human, male, normal human).

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, hippocrits, 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 Halav, 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, for example, 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 are able to 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 similar to 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 the vast majority 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 actually came out reasonably intact, and flourished.

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 counselors 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 take 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 a large number of 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.

Area: Approx. 1,400 sq. mi. (3,625 sq. km.).

Population: 40,000 (21,000 in Mivosia, 19,000 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 ruled by a triumvirate.

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, human, male, M4), 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: Previous almanacs.

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 Iliolosti, but no further.

The Land

Mivosia is situated on fertile hilly terrain bordering the great Meghalo 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 Meghalo 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, the vast majority 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 are allowed to 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 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. It is clear that 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 clues 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 Lychaeian 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 came to an abrupt end 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.

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 definitely 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 (Heldannic Dominion of)

Location: Continent of Davania, eastern Meghala Kimata Plains.

Area: Approx. 336 sq. mi. (870 sq. km.).

Population: 8,300 (includes roughly 200 Heldannic Knights), approx. 1,500 in the countryside.

Languages: Heldannic, Milenian (Polakatsikan dialect).

Coinage: *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, town council has some autonomy.

Industries: Agriculture (mainly wheat, potatoes, and other vegetables), cattle, crafts, sheep, smithing.

Important Figures: Wolfgang Stummel (*Landmeister*, human, male, P8 of Vanya), Trimos Sortiropolis (Former *Bürgermeister*, human, male, normal human).

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 deathblow 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 more hilly and 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 Stummel, 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.

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 indoors 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 sufficient 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.

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: *Emperor* (5 gp), *lucin* (gp), *asterius* (sp), *denarius* (cp).

Taxation: 20%/25% income tax, collected 4 times a year (Va. 1, Ya. 1, Fy. 3, and Ei. 1). 10% imperial *commercia* sales tax on all goods except food, clothing, and fixed assets.

Government Type: Dominion under the jurisdiction of the Empire of Thyatis.

Industries: Agriculture (primarily fruits and grains), cattle, mining, sheep, war.

Important Figures: Leilah ben Nadir (General Governor, human, female, P18 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 at the moment, 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 in their own right, 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 the majority 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.

Generally speaking, the two groups seem to get along reasonably well in the towns and cities of the Hinterlands. A large number 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 augurs for the future, I have no idea.

Recent History

Although Thyatian interest in the Hinterlands dates back 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 passer-by 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 *[her own opinion. Ed.]*.

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 (Heldannic Outpost of)

Location: Continent of Davania, eastern coast by Gulf of Mar.

Area: 48 sq. mi. (125 sq. km.).

Population: 4,000 (does not include around 500 farmers supplementing local rations).

Languages: Heldannic.

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

Taxes: None.

Government Type: Military dictatorship.

Industries: War, some agriculture (mainly grains and vegetables).

Important Figures: Heinz Kronenburg (Castellan, human, male, P12 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 of 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 drilled mercilessly and give top performance at all times. 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 tribespeople 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 tribespeople, 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

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 toll at their leader's 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 semi-literate, while the native Antalian people 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 Averoigne 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

[Refers to included map.]

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: Norwold, continent of Brun, island north of the continent, in the arctic circle.

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 whims.

Government Type: Monarchy (the strongest giant is proclaimed great king at the death of the former ruler).

Industries: None. The frost giants live off by fishing, hunting and raiding 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 fishes 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: Norwold, continent of Brun, north of the Great Bay, between the Kaarjavi and Vaaranavi rivers (known as the Landsplit River to most people).

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, MU16); Vaalkoi Taapionen (Great Druid of the Kaarjalan Circle, human, male, P(dr)31); Pekka Seppanen (High Priest of the Church of Kaarjala and Grand Smith of Ilmarinen, human, male, P12 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.

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, Taatio 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 *hakomons* 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, halflings, 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 at all 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 of 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.

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, P3 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.

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 as a whole is comparable to southern Norwold in terms of climate, while the interior is truly a harsh land.

Generally speaking, 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 these 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 has to 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, it is clear that the Littonians have lived in these lands for a very long time—likely before the time of the Alphatian 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.

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 amount 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 rose up 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.

BARONY OF THE ELMS

Location: Norwold, continent of Brun, north of Leeha, west of Panteria.

Area: Approx. 997 sq. mi. (2,582 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 (independent elven dominion, the baron is advised by the clanmasters). Loosely allied to the Kingdom of Alpha, the baron recognizes the spiritual authority of Zoltan the White.

Industries: Hunting and gathering.

Important Figures: Quillan Elm-Grower (Baron and Clanmaster, elf, male, F14/M10), Lidial Almashiye (Almashiye Clanmaster, elf, female, P10 of Eiryndul).

Flora and Fauna: Well tended elms and evergreen trees abound in this area. Deer, bears, elks, 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: Norwold, continent of Brun, north of the Great Bay, south of the Landsplit River.

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, P10 of Eiryndul), Desel Leafbower (Leafbower Clanmaster, elf, male, R15.)

Flora and Fauna: Deer, bears, elks, 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 myself, 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 spend 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 being a nation since a civil war almost broken 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 to 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 lives 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 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 colonist. Each clan claimed its own territory and was completely independent from the other.

And so it remained for several centuries until AC 990, 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 AC 995, King Acroshiyeh 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 AC 997, 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 Acroshiyeh'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 AC 1004, 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 definitely 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 AC 1007. If this is true, there were probably a lot more of 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 of 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 uniter also exists in Norwold, Lord Elarianhas 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 free-spirited Shiye of Norwold view an organized country. Synthala.*].

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 definitely 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: Norwold, continent of Brun, north of the Great Bay, northeast of Panteria.

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: Independent elven foresthomes each led by a clanmaster, recognizing more or less explicitly the spiritual leadership of Zoltan.

Industries: Hunting and gathering.

Important Figures: Zoltan Hytaxius (High Priest, human, male, P20 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 vegetation to grow at ground level: scrubs, 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, elks, caribou, moose, bears, wolves, blink dogs, 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, decapus, 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 as a whole by one—or from three to a dozen—green pines over white.

Further Reading: CM1 *Test of the Warlords, Zoltan the Treekeeper* by Hervé Musseau.

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 home, 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 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 months growing season the 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 a few dozens 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. Actually, 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 to play practical jokes, a tradition that has not dwindled despite the influence of Zoltan [*most Shiye still revere Eiryndul before 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.

A few dozens of Alfheim elves call the forest north of the Marquisat 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 sub-group 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 Wyrmsteeth 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 Alphatians 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 Alphatian dominions. In AY 2007 [AC 1007. Ed.] 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 Alphatians; 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 hurts many Shiye's susceptibility, but he was able to expand his influence over a great part of Lothbarth nonetheless, especially after the sinking of Alphatia 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.*].

Don't Miss

It is very difficult to get a glimpse at 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 that all Shiye, who had never seen a *Tree of Life* but in legends, could 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.*J], 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 uneventful. 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 of 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 the economic, military and political point of view.

DRAKEN (County of)

Location: Norwold, continent of Brun, north-west of Alpha.

Area: 2,992 sq. mi. (7,749 sq. km.).

Population: 5,000.

Languages: Alphatian.

Coinage: *Crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: 25% of income.

Government Type: County; bears allegiance to the Kingdom of Alpha.

Industries: Fishing, agriculture, military, trading.

Important Figures: Beriak (Count, human, male, M16).

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 fishes can be found near the coast, many wild animals in the woods inland (elks, moose, bears, wolves, foxes, etc.). Many birds of prey and wild felines roam the eastern areas of the county, 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*.

No description this year. [*Synthala provided us with basic dominion information, but no insight—watch for more next year. Ed.*]

LATELA (Barony of)

Location: Norwold, continent of Brun, north-east of Alpha.

Area: 1,995 sq. mi. (5,167 sq. km.).

Population: 5,750.

Languages: Thyatian, Alphatian.

Coinage: Crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp).

Taxes: 20% of income.

Government Type: Barony; bears allegiance to the Kingdom of Alpha.

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, elks and moose, and more feral beasts like wolves, black and brown bears, pumas and yowlers. Fishes are not so common in Latela's waters.

Further Reading: CM1 *Test of the Warlords*.

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 similar to 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 have been turned to farmlands and orchards, while the rest remains wild woods that are exploited by a boosting 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, anyway. First of all, all other streets except the two main roads are dark and narrow alleys, often not paved 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 on 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 elaborated 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-stories building in the whole country [*not even Lord Longtooth's villa is that high. 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 concentrate 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 loose any opportunity to display it in the face of Alphatians. However, Latela never created problems to 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 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 impressing 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 life 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 Alphatians, but so far nobody has found evidences supporting this hypothesis. Also, other rumors want 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, like happens in nearby Panteria, so if you are a merchant or if you are interested in making 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 trim 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 really 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 by night.

NORDENHAFEN (Barony of)

Location: Norwold, continent of Brun, isle in the Great Bay, west of Alpha.

Area: 498 sq. mi. (1,290 sq. km.).

Population: 900.

Languages: Heldannic.

Coinage: Barter common; otherwise Alphatian coins: *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: 30% of income.

Government Type: Barony; bears allegiance to the Kingdom of Alpha.

Industries: Fishing, hunting.

Important Figures: Bardeen Longwalker (Baron, human, male, F15).

Flora and Fauna: Nothing really grows on this rocky chunk of Norwold, except small scrubs and tundra. Few are the animals that live here, most notably seagulls, puffins and other avians, seals and small fishes. 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*.

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 Leeha. It is flat and windswept most time of the year, and nothing can grow on its soil except scrubs, the common tundra 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 fishes are not sufficient to live, 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 600 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 300 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 of the proofs of Baron Bardeen's shortsightedness. Adik.*].

This small island was home to a few communities of Heldanners when Bardeen first arrived, and the majority 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 resource 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 no pirates in Nordenhafen. This is caused by the fact that nobody (except the baron) owns a drakkar or a sailing vessel large and swift enough to raid the coasts of the Great Bay. The other lords of the northern and southern marches are more than happy with this state of things, even though for the proud Ostlanders this must be an unbearable condition of living.

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 particular mineral or animal resource 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 ruling goals. Arcadius.*]. He convinced many Ostlanders to follow him in 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 particular efforts [*aside from the great frost giants' invasion of AC 1004, which caused severe losses in Nordenhafen. Arcadius.*], swearing fealty to Ericall and Alphatia.

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. Rumors of small bands of annoyed Ostlanders uniting to plot an overthrow of the baron has spread through the isle, but so far no proof of these machinations has been discovered.

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 (Marquisat of)

Location: Norwold, continent of Brun, northeast of Leeha, on the northern coast of the Great Bay.

Area: 2,494 sq. mi. (6,459 sq. km.).

Population: 7,000, including 1,500 hin.

Languages: Alphatian, Thyatian, Heldannic, Halfling (Lalor).

Coinage: *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: Marquisat; bears allegiance to the Kingdom of Alpha. 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 marquisat are sparsely covered by short grass and scrubs 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 to 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 that 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; Marquisat 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*.

Description by Adik de Chevas and Arcadius.

Among the feudal dominions that dot the large expanses of Norwold, the Marquisat 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 other did. Of course, this isn't the lone peculiarity of this place.

The Land

The marquisat extends along the northwestern bays of the Great Bay, following the coastline and the milder plains a few miles in the interior to the edge of the great northern forests. A good part of these plains have 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 marquisat actually 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 marquisat 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 the NACE, 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 Leeha. 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 marquisat 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 an increased traffic, and can also accept foreign coins for that reason; the Minrothaddans gain a good entrypoint 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 the NACE. 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 origin, 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 marquisat, 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, with or 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 marquisat, 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 marquisat 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 the everyday affairs. There are guilds for every activity going on in the marquisat: 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 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 to 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 formation of new craftsmen or immigration of master craftsmen from other regions, seeks out craftsmen that live out 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 marquisat, 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 AY 2007 [AC 1007. Ed.]

In early spring of AY 2006 [AC 1006. Ed.] a most unusual storm destroyed a natural protection hereby flooding hin 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 AY 2010 [AC 1010. Ed.] the two dominion 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 debt owner 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 to visit 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 within trouble—which I won't detail here—until I managed to bring proof that I was a lord of Norwold and a friend of Celia's. And yet I know that whenever I enter the marquisat the

guilds still have me under watch all the time. I imagine with a shrill 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 properly. 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 (Duchy of)

Location: Norwold, continent of Brun, northwest of Leeha.

Area: 4,988 sq. mi. (12,919 sq. km.).

Population: 8,000.

Languages: Alphatian, Heldannic.

Coinage: *Crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: 25% of yearly income.

Government Type: Duchy; bears allegiance to the Kingdom of Alpha.

Industries: Military, agriculture, mining.

Important Figures: Ney (Duke, furmy, 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 furmy’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 furmy can double its movement rate by running on its six limbs.

Furmies have a tremendous sense of loyalty toward their queen and their colony. They will typically sacrifice their lives for the greater good of the colony. This does not mean that furmies have no personality and are mechanical, instinct-driven creatures like ants, quite the contrary, just that their scale of value would appear alien to most sentient creatures. Most furmies are of Loyal alignment, and in fact eggs are normally scryed 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; queen generally live about 500 years.

All furmies have an instinctive fear of water, and will avoid crossing seas and oceans, or even smaller water bodies—there is no known furmy sailor. They also fear fire. Because of their strange look 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 expenses, 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 beings. 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 scrubs, 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 dragon 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*.

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 scarring 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 to make sure his judgments are respected and his sentences carried out. The monk of Tarastia Blind Wooster still acts as high magistrate for most countries of Norwold like it 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 furmy, 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 he 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 after, King Ericall increased the size of his dominion and honored him 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 Down, 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 NACE, Ney was officially recognized as General of Alpha.

Don't Miss

Furmy Castle is the heart of the duchy, surrounded by sturdy walls. Around it lies the city of Furmy, 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*.

DRAGONARD (County of)

Location: Norwold, continent of Brun, south of Leeha.

Area: 2,494 sq. mi. (6,459 sq. km.).

Population: 6,000 (80% humans, 20% halflings).

Languages: Alphatian, Heldannic, Halfling (Lalor).

Coinage: *Crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: 25% of yearly income.

Government Type: County; bears allegiance to the Kingdom of Alpha.

Industries: Agriculture, fishing, mining.

Important Figures: Quentin Jax (Count, human (actually a huge elder gold dragon), male, M10).

Flora and Fauna: The eastern plains and hills are lightly covered by evergreen trees, mostly pine, while the western areas near the White Bear River are farmlands. The hills and mountains of the south 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 adventure. Otherwise the dominion is completely free of dangerous beasts. Dragons are often sighted near the southern border, although they are not a problem for this county.

Further Reading: CM1 *Test of the Warlords*.

Description by Adik de Chevas and Arcadius.

Another dominion that is heavily populated and nestled near the western shores of the Great Bay, precisely south of Leeha and on the eastern banks of the White Bear river, is the County of Dragonard. Its people seem to enjoy a rather peaceful living and its exports make it one of the most envied dominions of the whole Norwold.

The Land

Dragonard is a rather large country bounded on the eastern border by Siegeria, separated from that country by the White Bear River. It also touches Leehashire's southern border, and many hin in fact live in Dragonard's territory. The land is hilly along the eastern border, where woods and light forest cover the rolling hills before turning into an intricate forest. Evergreen woods also exist in Dragonard, and the human city of Arboria has been founded by Alphatians to commerce with the Shiye that dwell outside the dominion's borders.

In the north, farmlands and peaceful hamlets dot the countryside, a vast plain that extends into halfling territory to the north. Here, streets of cobblestones connect the capital city of Jaxia (built on the shores of the White Bear) with the northern hin settlement of Surekeep (on the border with Leehashire) and with the other significant settlement of the dominion, Silmaril (north of Jaxia). 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 the year. In the lowest parts however, many miners have found rich deposits of precious stones and gold, and Dragonard prospers selling these raw materials to the other dominions or crafting them to produce refined manufactures to sell to Panteria, which then exports them to the Old World. Even though dragons are often spotted in this region, they never venture beyond the peaks of the White Glacier, leaving Dragonard's populace and their mines in peace.

The People

Dragonard's people are a happy folk, especially because they enjoy such a peace and a relative welfare that the other Norwold countries do not have. The majority of the population is Alphatian, with many Heldanners working as farmers in the north and hunters in the eastern woods, but enjoying a better life than their peers in the rest of Norwold. Count Jax, the ruler, long ago solved the problem of wandering monsters [*although nobody*

knows for sure how he managed it, and he refuses to tell anyone. Adik.] and this attracted many settlers. The precious mineral ores also are the first source of richness for Dragonard, since its whole economy is based on that. For this reason, gemcutters, goldsmiths, and even miners are respected professions in this region. Strangely enough, no dwarves are present in the country to prosper thanks to their skills as metalworkers, but this has never preoccupied the Dragonardites. Indeed, the human and hin population seem to have more talented goldsmiths and gemcutters than the usual northern country, and nobody knows if Lord Jax actually called them from all over the world or just had a great luck in finding the right people in the right place.

Anyway, nobody in Dragonard bothers for the living standards, since there are absolutely no poor wandering the streets or woods of Dragonard. However, bandits do exist, even though they are not humanoids, but humans coming from other lands attracted by the richness of this dominion. Penalties for stealing in Dragonard are severe [*they range from a minimum of forty lashes for small sums to the removal of one hand and one eye for higher amounts. Arcadius.*], and if somebody is found guilty of theft for the second time, a death sentence is automatic. Count Jax is inflexible in enforcing the law, but his motto is: "Laws make a rich country a heaven." Lord Jax's special elite guards, the Golden Wings, always serve in the capital of Jaxia and regularly patrol the dominion looking for criminals to hang. They are unforgiving, and the populace seem to like their manners.

Recent History

Dragonard was founded by Quentin Jax in AC 1002, when numerous settlers had become moving to the area also called by other lords, who were founding their domains nearby. He soon got rid of the problem of monsters roaming the land and transformed the wild areas into safe farmlands and orchards, leaving even the eastern woods devoid of possibly dangerous creatures, but still a heaven to inhabit. He soon made pacts of non-belligerency with his neighbor, the Baron of Tescan, and these were ratified when Lord Sieger von Durn claimed Tescan the year after.

In AC 1004 the rich ores were discovered in the mountains south of Dragonard, and Baron Jax claimed them immediately, beginning the exploitation of the White Glacier. Dragons never gave a problem even in these years, although they attacked ferociously both Siegeria to the west and Kameloth to the northeast. [*Many people suspect Baron Jax made a secret alliance with the dragons to win their trust and protection well before coming. Also, none knows exactly where he comes from. Arcadius.*]

Despite Sieger's thirst for power and new lands, Siegeria never waged war against Dragonard, even after declaring its independence in AC 1005, and this still remains a mystery to everyone [*King Sieger and Count Jax refuse to talk about the topic, simply saying that "good neighbors don't kill each other." Adik.*]. After remaining neutral in the first stages of the war, when the Thyatian troops stationed in Siegeria invaded its borders, Dragonard sided with Ericall and Alphatia, and repelled the Thyatians after a staunch but taxing resistance that killed many of its inhabitants [*who are craftsman, not warriors, after all. Adik.*]. For its service to the Alphan Crown, Ericall awarded Lord Jax with the title of count and the former barony became a county. This only added to the haughtiness of its inhabitants.

Recently, Dragonard has had diplomatic relationships even with the Heldannic Knights, even though they remain formal economic agreements. However, many believe Count Jax is simply taking the appropriate steps to avoid being crushed by the Heldannic warmachine should the knights advance further in their conquest of Norwold.

Don't Miss

Be sure to come to Dragonard's capital of Jaxia on the first week of Swiftmont. On that day, the Dragonardites celebrate the Day of the Gold: they all dress up in golden clothes, paint their faces with gold hues or don golden masks and parade on the streets cheering and exchanging money freely. But beware: be prepared to give some coins in exchange and absolutely do not try to steal, or you will be hunted down by an angry mob and hanged among laughs and cheers in a matter of minutes.

Another interesting site to behold is the Mine #1, some 1000' 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 Golden Wings, and as you may know, the punishment for gold theft in Dragonard is not pleasant at all.

Do Miss

Never go past the northern side of the White Glacier if you value your life. Just because dragons do not invade and prey over Dragonard, 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.

LEEEHA (Shire of)

Location: Norwold, continent of Brun, on the western coast of the Great Bay.

Area: 998 sq. mi. (2,585 sq. km.).

Population: 7,000.

Languages: Hin (Lalor), Alphatian.

Coinage: Crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp).

Taxes: Mostly barter; otherwise *crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Government Type: Democracy; elected clan representatives (clanmasters) advise an elected sheriff (count).

Industries: Agriculture, fishing.

Important Figures: Shaedrik Divotfoot (Sheriff, halfling, male, F9).

Flora and Fauna: Leeha's rolling hills are forested with a mixture of evergreens, oak, maple, hickory, elm and ash in the south-east. 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 halfling 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 halflings always take decisions in common and live as a single nation. In this report I will deal extensively with the central shire, Leeha properly, because it's the most famous one and the heart of the county.

The Land

Leehashire is one of the most beautiful regions in all of 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 five halfling clan strongholds, each with its own leadership (and *Crucible of Blackflame*). The close 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. The hin have excavated huge warrens along the riverbank, so that the members of all the clans may stay in Leeha and have a safe roof over their heads and a warm fire before their feet.

Leeha is the capital of the shire. It is the central meeting place for the five clans of Norwold, and also the seat of government in the shire. There is a central marketplace where goods can be traded between the clans as well as with outsiders. Most types of goods can be found here, although some foreign items may be quite expensive. Larger two-handed weapons and clothing and armor larger than hin-size will be difficult to find here. Horses are very rare in Leeha, but ponies can be purchased easily. The market is not far from the river, which has docks and warehouses (both above and below ground) to accommodate river traffic and sea-going vessels. However, dock space for larger ocean vessels is limited.

Leeha is not heavily fortified, but there is a central fort where the Leeha Defense Force and *krondar* (hin police force) are based. The Sheriff's Mansion is adjacent to the Defense Fort. A stone bridge crosses White Bear River in the center of town. It has two guard towers and a wooden drawbridge to allow ships to pass. The more common smaller vessels can pass under when the bridge is down. It is here that the toll is collected for watercraft traveling on the river. Note that the toll is paid in both directions, and that all ships entering Leeha are subject to it, as the bridge must be passed in order to reach the docks. The shire maintains a small fleet of riverboats and sailboats to patrol the waterway.

Most streets in Leeha are either dirt or grass to accommodate hin feet. The only paved area is found surrounding the Defense Fort. The entire town is walled and there are several towers, as well. The two main gates are the North Gate and the River Gate, but there are many other unofficial doors and tunnels leading into and out of town. A huge network of warrens and burrows has been dug into the riverbanks and extends beneath the city. The entire population of the shire could take refuge in the town and warrens if the need arose. Many of the underground chambers are storerooms containing stockpiles of food and other goods to withstand an extended siege. Because of this (and the small size of the hin), the town seems rather open and spacious. It is less crowded than human cities and there are several parks or "greens" to allow for leisure activities (a very important part of any hin's life).

The People

Overall, Leeha has the atmosphere of one big happy family. The five 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. They will not hesitate to quickly band together and repel disrespectful or dangerous visitors. The hin maintain a standing force of 1,500 warriors. Although the small folk try not to become involved in human quarrels, they do not hesitate to band together and defend their homeland against incursions by monsters and other undesirables.

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. He 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 completely over. 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 halflings enjoy the peace and prosperity of their position.

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. In addition to the inns, various craft stores and all kinds of shops can be located in Leeha. Most residences are one or two stories tall, but all have some type of cellar. Many of these “holes” are more spacious than the above ground dwelling and some are entirely underground! During deep snows that could paralyze a halfling city, the residents simply retreat to their burrows and life goes on.

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

Despite the quaint and pleasant character of Leeha, it is not without its shadier side. The southwest side of town, near the banks of the river, is known as “Nighthin Nest.” It is here that thieves, smugglers, and other undesirables ply their trade. Most decent hin avoid this part of town. Very few are foolish enough to venture into the burrows beneath this area of town where rival gangs fight over territory. Being what they are, *yallaren* (young hin) are sometimes involved in these activities, even if just for a time. Nevertheless, this is still a dangerous and unsavory part of town. Most *krondar* will avoid patrolling this area, or will turn a blind eye toward dubious activity.

SIEGERIA (Kingdom of)

Location: Norwold, continent of Brun, west of Leeha.

Area: 7,981 sq. mi. (20,671 sq. km.).

Population: 35,345 (87% humans, 12% halflings and 1% gnomes).

Languages: Alphatian, Thyatian, Heldannic, Hin (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 Down (King, human, male, M20), Uthar Metzger (Baron, human, male, F18/M9), Lavim Hollister (General, halfling, male, F10), Red Ork (High Priest, human, male, P14 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 a dragon is said to have its lair, along with a small tribe of giants and scattered humanoids.

Further Reading: CM1 *Test of the Warlords*.

Description by Adik de Chevas and Arcadius.

Siegeria is a small but rather hospitable kingdom that borders Leehashire on the west and the Duchy of Chitine to the south. King Sieger von Down, 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. 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). 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. Arcadius.*], and so only two of the twelve 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.*].

The political system is another feature that makes Siegeria a heaven [*and that's also the main reason why there have 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 Thyatis 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 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 administrate the land on behalf of the people and the king, and responds to both of his deeds. He can issue laws and decrees, may raise the taxes and has a seat on the Kingdom Council that advises King Sieger. The still king retains his power over the army (he's the only one who can call the populace to arms) and over the general inner and foreign policy, and is still due the taxes levied from the people. However, his decisions can be vetoed by the council if all the 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 Down 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 there up in 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 halfling minorities [*Siegerian gnomes are negligible, even though they are often employed by King Sieger in some of his obscure researches. Adik.*]. The Heldanners are the eldest group living in the area, but ever since the first Alphatian colonization of the Great Bay, they have been lowering their number in this part of Norwold. They are mostly herders nowadays, even though many still remain loyal to their fierce ways 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 them. Adik.*]. Along with the Heldanners, the halflings of Leeha have also lived here for centuries, and they seem content to be both Sieger's neighbors (those living in Leehashire) 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 are historical evidences that have 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 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 Durn 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 Durns 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 Down, 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 smooth 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 want the third child born with horrible malformations due to Sieger's magic, 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 Thayan 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 Thayan warmachine'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 Thayan forces on the border with Leeha's help.

In the meantime, Sieger returned to Siegeria and organized a hidden resistant front of Alphatians, Heldanners and halflings, together with some of his older and stancher supporters. In the following years, he was able to regain the population's support and to push the Thayan 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 Thayan settlers mostly) sided with the Thayan 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 Thayan 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 Thayan 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.

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 halfling. 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 ran 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 Down, who politely asked the editor to respect state secrets. Ed.*]

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 is said to rule over this region, and many tribes of hill and rock giants are at her service, along with a few orcs and goblins. Their raids are not widespread however, and some speculate that actually King Sieger himself has struck a deal with the wyrm, providing 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' drastic low numbers. Anyway, if you are not King Sieger, you'd better stay out of the Jagged Teeth if you want to reach the elder age.

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: Norwold, continent of Brun, peninsula on the south shore of the Great Bay.

Area: 9,478 sq. mi. (24,548 sq. km.).

Population: 90,000, including 2,000 halflings.

Languages: Alphatian, Elvish (Shiye-Lawr dialect), Hin (Lalor), Heldannic, Thyatian.

Coinage: 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 part of the New Alphatian Confederate Empire.

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 Alphatian 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 a 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 Alphatian disdain of non-spellcasters. Being removed from the former Alphatian 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 Alphatia 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, renaming 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 colors when Thyatis and Heldann sided with Glantri against Thyatis, 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 twice between AY 2010 and AY 1015 [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 Durn 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 Kaldmont AY 2014 [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.

The other major event concerns amassing a large defense force. King Ericall believes the Heldannic Knights will try to retake Oceansend anytime 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 (Barony of)

Location: Norwold, continent of Brun, southwest of Alpha, on the western foothills of the Wyrmsteeth Range.

Area: 1,496 sq. mi. (3,875 sq. km.).

Population: 3,000.

Languages: Alphatian, Heldannic.

Coinage: Crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp); barter common.

Taxes: 20% income tax, collected yearly.

Government Type: Barony; bears allegiance to the Kingdom of Alpha.

Industries: Fishing, herding (horse), agriculture.

Important Figures: Allisa Patrician (Baroness, human, female, F14).

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 wyrm-like beasts living in the nearby Wyrmsteeth Mountains, and from the occasional otherworldly monstrosity coming out of Redhorn barony to the north.

Further Reading: CM1 *Test of the Warlords*.

No description this year. [Adik and Arcadius provided us with basic dominion information, but no insight—watch for more next year. Ed.]

KAMELOTH (County of)

Location: Norwold, continent of Brun, southeast of Leeha, along the small Bay of Kameloth.

Area: 4,738 sq. mi. (12,271 sq. km.).

Population: 20,000, 77% humans, 17% halfling, 6% elves.

Languages: Alphatian, Heldannic, Hin (Lalor), Elvish (Shiye-Lawr dialect).

Coinage: Crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp); barter common among elves.

Taxes: 25% income tax, collected yearly.

Government Type: County; bears allegiance to the Kingdom of Alpha.

Industries: Fishing, agriculture, cattle, mining.

Important Figures: Shuren (Count, human, male, M18/F15), Jonas Whiteshore (Seneschal, halfling, male, H3).

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 fishes also prey on the smaller ones in Kameloth Bay. Dragons from the Wyrmsteeth make occasional forays into this territory as well.

Further Reading: CM1 *Test of the Warlords*.

No description this year. [Adik and Arcadius provided us with basic dominion information, but no insight—watch for more next year. Ed.]

ODINIA (Barony of)

Location: Norwold, continent of Brun, east of Alpha, near the entrance to the Great Bay.

Area: 3,492 sq. mi. (9,044 sq. km.).

Population: 2,350.

Languages: Heldannic, Alphatian.

Coinage: Crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp); barter common.

Taxes: None, inhabitants sometimes give goods to their baron to gain his protection against dragon attacks.

Government Type: Theocracy (barony ruled by the church); bears allegiance to the Kingdom of Alpha.

Industries: Fishing, mining (gold), crafts (shipyards).

Important Figures: Ulf Karlsson (Baron High Priest, human, male, P15 of Odin), Heinrich Niederhaus (Grand Knight of the Order of the Ash Rod, human, male, Pa10 of Odin).

Flora and Fauna: Odinia has marshes on its western shores, while a great valley extends from the northern shores to the southern foothills. The borders comprise also part of the northern tip of the Wyrmsteeth, and for this reason Odinia has its share of problems with wyrm preying on the farmers living in the valley. No real

herders exist in Odinia because of the frequent dragon and wyvern raids on cattle, and hunting is likewise very limited, although fishes abound in the Great Bay. Great evergreen sequoias, pines and oaks rise mightily in the foothills and in the lower parts of the Wyrmsteeth.

Further Reading: CM1 *Test of the Warlords*.

Description by Adik de Chevas and Arcadius.

Odinia is the Heldanners' answer to the southern theocracy of the Knights of Vanya. Here the faith in the Northern Gods is strong and sincere, unlike the imposed cult of Vanya in the former Heldann Freeholds. Was it not for the problems with the nearby dragons, Odinia would have already become a rich and powerful nation.

The Land

Half of Odinia's territory comprises the lowlands going from the foothills of the Wyrmsteeth to the south to the shores of the Great Bay to the north. This vast valley, known as Wiudental by the locals, is where the great majority of Odinians live, under the protective wing of the Church of the Northlands. The valley consists of many farmlands and a small trait 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 wrestled away from the *wattenmeer* and the bogs, separated from the sea by a dam and then reclaimed and cultivated. The Heldanners living here have been using *koog* for hundred years now, building dams with earth, rocks, sandbags and mud.

Wiudengrad, the capital of Odinia, has been built on the part of the coast not affected by the *wattenmeer* phenomenon. It is an important center for shipbuilding, and the Odinians use the abundant wood that grows in the southern part of the barony to make swift and resistant sailing ships, including lake and sea-going vessels. The capital is famous not only for its shipyards, but also for being the spiritual center of the whole land. Yggdrasill Hall (a majestic longhouse of Heldannic tradition) is the holy headquarters of the Church of the Northlands. Here priests, *godars*, 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. 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 heroes who have given their lives to defend Odinia from great perils, and each one is revered by the community as guardian warriors who now sit in Valhalla (Odin's Hall).

The southern half of Odinia consists of forested hills and mountains that belong to the Wyrmsteeth 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 Wyrmsteeth makes these mountains dangerous to live in. The few settlements here are mining villages who dig out gold and precious gemstones from the Wyrmsteeth's sides. There have been numerous draconic raids in the past, but the Odinians keep holding their position, especially since they are now protected by the Order of the Ash Rod's members. Many rangers and woodcutters also live in the woods and up the hills not far from the mountains.

The political system of Odinia is pretty straight: everything is in the hands of the priests of the church or 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 members of the Order of the Ash Rod. Adik.*]. Since they are the Gods' ears and mouths, nobody can really contest their judgments, so the Odinians have deep trust in their leaders' capacities and rarely question them.

The People

The Odinians are Heldanners to their heart. Few Alphatians live here, mostly in the capital of Wiudengrad, running fine shops and selling overseas the goods produced in Odinia. They have begun to meddle with the common Heldanners in the last years, getting to know and to like these heartily and spontaneous folk. 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 influence of the Church of the Northlands has even bettered their behavior, since they are now a bit more thoughtful and do not normally exceed in beverages and brawls. The Odinians as a whole are a simple but honest folk, with a great faith in the Immortals and in what they call "Wyrd." 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 Odinians revere that as the highest power in nature. Even Odin [*or Wiutan and Wiuden, as they call him. Arcadius.*] must knee in front of Wyrd, and this could well mean the Odinians are a fatalistic people.

As mentioned before, the Church of the Northlands is the dominant faith in Odinia, but it's slowly spreading its influence even to the other Heldannic communities south of the Great Bay. In fact, thanks to its *godar* (itinerant priests and paladins), the church now counts new shrines and temples even in Ossian, 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 Yggdrasill, the World-Ash. Then Odin All-father hanged himself to Yggdrasill 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. Until the day of the Ragnarok will come, when all the Immortals and mortals alike will meet their fate and Wyrd will prevail. This basically sums up the tenets of the church, which are also the Odinians' beliefs.

Recent History

Odinia was founded in AC 1004 by Ulf Karlsson, former High Priest of Siegeria. One night, he received an omen from Odin to travel eastwards and establish a new bastion of light and law in the land where sea came back and forth. He abandoned his position in Siegeria and went east, until he met the Heldanners living near the *wattenmeer*. There he founded his new barony, creating the new Church of the Northlands, with the goal of spreading it to the whole Norwold.

The first years were hard ones, especially because the Great War began shortly thereafter, and many times small pirate vessels were able to evade the blockade of the Strait of Todstein [*organized by the Draken navy to prevent Thyatis from gaining ground in the Great Bay and sending reinforcements to the dominions allied with Thincol. Adik.*] and hit the coasts of Odinia. If you include the continuous draconic raids that terrorized the country ever since gold was discovered in the southern mountains, you get the idea of Baron Karlsson's first years of rule. However, the Odinians did not lose hope, and thanks to the Church of the Northlands' preaching they began to think these were tests sent by the Immortals and that they had to resist adversities if they wanted a place in Valhalla. Many followers of the church united and in AC 1006 they formed a holy society, the Order of the Ash Rod, 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 Wyrmsteeth and Icereach Ranges, and is now recruiting new members for the Order of the Ash Rod to counter the Heldannic Knights' advance.

Don't Miss

Do not miss Yggdrasill Hall in Wiudengrad, for it is a really inspiring place to go, 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. Also, many priests have reported having had prophetic dreams while sleeping in this place, and the legend tells that High Priest Karlsson built this sanctified hall on the very ground where Thor's blood was spilled in the final battle against Loki. Obviously this is only a legend, but given the effects of the place, there might be some truth in it.

Another place to visit is obviously the *wattenmeer*, since it is a natural phenomenon that is unique to Norwold and really astounding. Be only sure to know when it is time to retreat to the *koog* once you're there, and do not stay there one minute more if you don't want to drown [*unless you can fly, of course. Adik.*].

Do Miss

Stay away from the southern region altogether. Although its lush forests are a breathtaking sight, the presence of the Wyrmsteeth 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.

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 the location 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 Gods 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 (Duchy of)

Location: Norwold, continent of Brun, on the shores of the gulf south of Alpha.

Area: 3,741 sq. mi. (9,689 sq. km.).

Population: 7,850.

Languages: Alphatian, Heldannic.

Coinage: Crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp).

Taxes: 30% income tax collected yearly.

Government Type: Duchy; bears allegiance to the Kingdom of Alpha.

Industries: Fishing, agriculture, hunting.

Important Figures: Black Duke (Duke, human, male, M20).

Flora and Fauna: Ossian is a great lowland valley nestled between the Ossian Bay and the Wyrmsteeth. Wild animals and monsters can be encountered in the southern regions, especially on the foothills of the Wyrmsteeth, 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*.

No description this year. [*Adik and Arcadius provided us with basic dominion information, but no insight—watch for more next year. Ed.*]

REDHORN (Chaosarchy of)

Location: Norwold, continent of Brun, southwest of Alpha, along the southern shore of the Great Bay.

Area: 498 sq. mi. (1,290 sq. km.).

Population: 800 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 otherwordly 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: Norwold, continent of Brun, southeast of Leeha, between Kameloth and the Free Plains.

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; bears allegiance to the Kingdom of Alpha.

Industries: Horse herding, hunting, agriculture.

Important Figures: Brogahn (Baron, human, male, F15), Barkal the Red (Tribe leader, human, male, F13).

Flora and Fauna: Ublaat-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 Ublaat-nor. Unicorns have been reported traveling regularly through the region.

Further Reading: CM1 *Test of the Warlords*.

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 1,800', 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 west lies the inhospitable Kingdom of Denagoth and east tower the peaks of the Wyrmsteeth.

ARCADIA (Barony of)

Location: Norwold, continent of Brun, west of Oceansend, in the Icereach Mountains, bordering Lake Gunaald.

Area: Approx. 500 sq. mi. (1,295 sq. km.).

Population: About 300, including 250 dwarves and 50 humans.

Languages: Alphatian, Heldannic, Dwarvish.

Coinage: 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.

Industries: Fishing, mining (gold), crafts (goldsmithing, weaponsmithing).

Important Figures: Arcadius (Baron, human, male, M20), Sandryth (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 scrubs then bare rocks on the towering mountainsides. Some rare chimerae and wyverns make lair in caverns high in the mountains, while dragons from the Wyrmsteeth 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 banks of the southern 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 Wyrmsteeth. 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's end 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 that 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 of his previous clan and was designed 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, 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 protect 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 gunaald 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 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 gunaald 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 AY 2002 [AC 1002. Ed.], and the erection of Tower Arcadia took until AY 2004 [AC 1004. Ed.] because of its uneasily-accessed 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 Wyrmsteeth 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 being allowed into their hidden city—in exchange for my help in having the humans and especially their lords not encroaching upon the draconic lands or slaying 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 into human business and hereby 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 places, just a handful of them to keep the *warbirds* in check. Thus he contacted a young, active red who 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.

ARCH OF FIRE (Efreet Kingdom)

Location: Norwold, continent of Brun, northeastern reaches of the Icereach Range.

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 2,500 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 resistant 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 Mountains. 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 flames 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 wastelands 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 more friendly than the efreet, they still have no cares 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 started 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 homeplane, 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 much 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 Alasdair 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 definitely 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.

CHEVAS (*Baronie de*)

Location: Norwold, continent of Brun, west of Oceansend, in the Icereach Mountains, on the south-eastern shores of Lake Alinor.

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.

Industries: Fishing, agriculture, mining.

Important Figures: Adik de Chevas (Baron, human, male, M19), Gilbert de Fausseflammes (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 scrubs 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*.

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 south-eastern 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 Wyrmsteeth, and both trim 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 different 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 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 great efforts. 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 literates that came to the dominion from 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 Ublaat-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 Ublaat-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 evidences 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 proofs of my capacity as a baron if I wanted to prolong my permanence here. So I invited a few friends from Nouvelle Averoigne 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 relative 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 the commoners and established the *Code des Lois*, the laws of Chevas. That was AC 1005, and the dominion has lived off 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 populace 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 fierce 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: Norwold, continent of Brun, west of Oceansend, in the Icereach Mountains, between the northern Lake Alinor and the southern Lake Gunaald.

Area: 498 sq. mi. (1,290 sq. km.).

Population: 1,000.

Languages: Heldannic.

Coinage: Mirror (sp); gems or barter commonly used.

Taxes: 15% income tax collected yearly.

Government Type: Barony; bears allegiance to the Kingdom of Alpha.

Industries: Fishing, agriculture, crafts (shipwright).

Important Figures: Winnefred of the Lake (Baroness, human, female, P18 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 fishes 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.]

TWO LAKES VALE (Barony)

Location: Norwold, continent of Brun, northwest of Landfall, in the Icereach Mountains, near the border with Denagoth.

Area: 498 sq. mi. (1,290 sq. km.).

Population: 800.

Languages: Heldannic.

Coinage: 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 fishes. Monstrous wildlife comes from gigantic fishes as well as from hippocrits, 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*.

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 Wyrmsteeth and runs along Norwold's eastern coasts ending just another 100 miles from the Wyrmsteeth northernmost tip. The Final Range peaks reach 1,500 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 400' 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.

IRONWOOD (Elven Barony of)

Location: Norwold, continent of Brun, southeast of Alpha, facing the New Alphatian Sea.

Area: 3,486 sq. mi. (9,029 sq. km.).

Population: 4,000, roughly 74% elves, 20% humans and 5% 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 (Baron, 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/P7 of Ilsundal), Shelingar (Lightseeker Clanholder, elf, male, F4/M3).

Flora and Fauna: The elven 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 Alphatian 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, elks, moose, wild boars and wolves. The land is a heaven 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 people, hsiao and metamorphs. Creatures such as basilisks, gorgons, chimerae, decapus and vegetal monsters have been spotted throughout the dominion.

Further Reading: CM1 *Test of the Warlords*, previous almanacs.

Description by Synthala of Aasla.

Even though I've been commissioned with writing an updated version of this interesting dominion from my editor, I must say that after my recent visit to Ironwood few has changed in comparison to what Alasdair MacCallum wrote the previous year. For this reason, I have used most of his notes in my commentary, changing things here and there where he didn't seem to catch the true meaning of the elven ways.

The Land

The Barony of Ironwood 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 and not widely known, but it seems it's a heaven 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 baron admitted that he copied the town plans of his birthplace, Rifllian, in the Kingdom of Karameikos. Synthala.*]. This is the city of Laran, where the baron is building a great port that will help boosting the economy of the nation and trading with the other countries. However, this is not the capital of the barony, 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 live in. The buildings have been built by human engineers and suit the human way of life. Also, the baron has provided the city with a complicate system of running water of gnomish design that makes everyone happy and above all clean.

The forest that covers the land almost extensively 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 baron is trying to create here. Packs 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 admitted to witness this breathtaking experience. It is indeed forbidden to any non-elf to venture into the forest, a law the baron passed in AY 2005 /AC 1005. Ed.J that makes Ironwood very similar to the foresthomes. This step has been taken to prevent the destruction of the ecosystem the Ironwood elves are slowly and patiently trying to build and protect, and all the elves living here support and enforce it. Fortunately I was able to come and go inside Ironwood without too many restraints, given my vows of friendship with the sylvan folks, but elves are however always a bit distrustful of humans walking under their sacred woods.

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 halflings 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 barony: 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 Ironwood is made of elves, with the few representatives of the human and other demihuman races living together in the town of Laran. The elves of Ironwood, 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 the baron when he founded the dominion about ten years ago. Then there are the Shiye, who already lived here when Lord Blackblade 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 among their brethren. The elves are just like any other member of their race found in the Old World, even though the influx of the Shiye culture has made them a bit more wise and proud 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 nowadays 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 Ironwood is to re-create 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 their possibilities, and are now trying to obtain 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. A very unlikely accomplishment, considering how the northern Shiye are fond of their secrecy and independence from one another [*which was also the cause that prompted them to leave Alphatia and settle in Norwold. Synthala.*], but who knows: considering Lord Blackblade has a whole elven lifetime to accomplish it, maybe his dream will come true in the distant future. Until then, he is content of establishing friendly relationships with the other elven communities living in Norwold and I don't think he will make any political attempts before he has obtained the full support and loyalty of the newly arrived Alfheimers.

During the past three years Lord Blackblade introduced in the barony 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 unify all the believers is that these deities are indissolubly 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 with the same extent for the major glory of the elven race. This way he is trying to prevent the religious disputes that might arise among the various priests and gives the elves the possibility to revere their own patron without angering the other believers or the Immortals. The pantheon of the Faith of the Ancestors so far comprises Ilsundal, Mealiden, Ordana, Eiryndul and Calitha Starbrow. However, since he only started this project during the last years, it has not been widely accepted yet. The baron 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. He has already a few followers, but they are only a small fraction of his barony (say about 10% of elves). Elves need time for this kind of things.

Recent History

The barony is fairly recent since it was founded in AY 2003, [*AC 1003. Ed.*] yet it is already remarkably stable for a frontiers land and enjoys friendly relationships with its 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 that represent the major clans of the barony: Taragin of Clan Lightseeker [*newly arrived Alfheimers.*]

Synthala.], Renshiye of clan Shalidye (Shiye) and Sythandria of clan Myihuinn (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 heaven 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 together, 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 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 relationship with all the druids living in 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 at 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 vegetal 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 miles 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 them his project, and many of them 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. Nowadays this small but ever-growing barony is on friendly terms with its human neighbors [*even though some of them actually covet its lore and natural resources. Synthala.*] and Lord Blackblade is trying to establish the religious basis for the future unification of the Norwold elves, even though problems persist about the primate of the faith and the choice of the spiritual leader. Also, not all the other elven communities of Norwold have established contact with Ironwood [*Shiye are really proud of their independence. Synthala.*].

Finally, according to some rumors the northern foresthomes may present an obstacle to Lord Blackblade’s dreams of glory. In fact, the human Treekeeper Zoltan [*lord of White Oak. Synthala.*] has a considerable influence on those elves, and he has so far rejected Lord Blackblade’s proposals, obviously irritating the elf. There is a religious issue going on between the two, and it’s far from being solved. According to hearsay, there has been only one occasion when the two lords have agreed on a common decision. 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. This is the only time they actually acted friendly towards one another.

Don’t Miss

There are at least two places to see if you're allowed to travel through Ironwood: 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 barony: 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 Lordness 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 an experimentation of all kind 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 tall tale rumor wants that once a year the Tree of Magic is visited by none others 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 in 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 walk 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, Vyolstagrad 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 restate his predominance over the region.

KILDORKAK (Dwarven Barony of)

Location: Norwold, continent of Brun, north of Oceansend.

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.

Government Type: Barony (independent dwarven stronghold).

Industries: Mining, crafting (gems, silver and gold).

Important Figures: Gard Rocktooth (Clanmaster, dwarf, male, F12), Niddrow (Forge Keeper, dwarf, male, F8/P8 of Kagyar).

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. The flora is 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: Norwold, continent of Brun, southeast of Alpha, on eastern shores of Norwold.

Area: 1,496 sq. mi. (3,875 sq. km.).

Population: 4,000.

Languages: Heldannic, Alphatian.

Coinage: 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, P14 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 heaven for all those who seek a safe enough hideout from the outer world.

The Land

Moonland is located just south of Ironwood, and its borders touch both the elven barony to the north as well as Vylstagrad 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 south-eastern valleys and on the low hills to the west and north. The woods are teeming with natural and animal life, and packs 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 nest 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 zones.

One could say that Moonland is a natural heaven for animals, and in fact the first major industry for the country is hunting [*and also fishing along the beaches of the New Alphatian Sea or in the ponds inland. Arcadius.*]. There are few farmlands, mostly along the coast, and the leaders of Moonland's communities seem to have no intention to boost 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 which range from one story shops to three stories 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 woods 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 Stamral. 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 parts may summon up to five people each (even foreigners) and have to explain them the problem, giving each their version of the issue. Then the summoned people give their vote to one of the two, and the part 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, mainly for reasons of protecting the country from outside dangers than for inner security. The Moonriders 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 took 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 AY 2005 [AC 1005. Ed.], leaving the barony nearly deserted and prey to bandits and tribes of humanoids coming from the north and west.

In AY 2007 [AC 1007. Ed.] 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 cove 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 resistance 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 AY 2010 [AC 1010. Ed.] 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 taxing was 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 Stamral 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 to reclaim it for now. However, its customs seem to attract many people, both free-willed individuals and wanted criminals, who still come numerous 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 one is completely different from the other. They are one of the greatest attractions 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.]*.

STAMTRAL (Duchy of)

Location: Norwold, continent of Brun, southeast of Alpha, on the Final Range's northern tip.

Area: 998 sq. mi. (2,585 sq. km.).

Population: 2,000.

Languages: Heldannic, Traladaran.

Coinage: 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 Stamral 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 *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.]

VYOLSTAGRAD (Duchy of)

Location: Norwold, continent of Brun, southeast of Alpha, on the Final Range's northern tip.

Area: 998 sq. mi. (2,585 sq. km.).

Population: 3,500.

Languages: Heldannic, Traladaran.

Coinage: 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 Vyonstagrad 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 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: Norwold, continent of Brun, northeast of Oceansend, on the western shore of the New Alphatian Sea.

Area: 499 sq. mi. (1,292 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 to the woodsmen.

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.]*

DIKHOFF (Barony of)

Location: Norwold, continent of Brun, northeast of Oceansend, on the western shore of the New Alphatian Sea.

Area: 499 sq. mi. (1,292 sq. km.).

Population: 1,700.

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*.

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: Norwold, continent of Brun, Walrus Island, about 200 miles east and slightly north of Oceansend.

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: Crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp); other currencies are accepted as well.

Taxes: 15% income tax.

Government Type: County bears allegiance to the Kingdom of Alpha.

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 Tremblaine (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*.

Description by Synthala of Aasla.

Ersenbal is one of the many lesser dominions that 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.J. Except for the three small villages of Ersenbal, Gerwen and Lerian, 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.J.

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. Lerian 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 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.J, 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 AC 993. 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 AC 997. 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. Typically 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 Lerian in charge during his absences. In fact, he was gone from AC 1004 to AC 1009 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 Westrourke 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 AC 1010, 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 AC 1013 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 take over 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 pine 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 east 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 wreckage 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.

OCEANSEND (Kingdom of)

Location: Norwold, continent of Brun, north of Landfall, on the coasts of the New Alphatian Sea.

Area: 9,977 sq. mi. (25,840 sq. km.).

Population: 42,000, including 3,500 halflings, 500 dwarves, and 200 elves.

Languages: Thyatian, Heldannic, Alphatian, Dwarvish (Kildorkak dialect), Halfling (Lalor dialect), Elvish (Shiye-Lawr dialect).

Coinage: Heart (gp), blade (sp), wall (cp). Heldannic coins will not be accepted by any locals.

Taxes: 20% income tax, 5% sales tax.

Government Type: Independent monarchy.

Industries: Agriculture (grows just enough for its own use), trade (by sea), fishing, mining, and trapping.

Important Figures: Olaf Yarrvikson (King, human, male, F10), Hermann Adalard (Former Heldannic Governor-General, now prisoner, human, male, Pa9 of Vanya), Shebb Woolsey (Baron, human, male, T17), Knolimer Knolin (Magist, human, male, M17).

Flora and Fauna: Many evergreen trees (especially pines and firs) to the north, west and south. Farmlands extend along the coast and in the heartlands. Wildlife includes packs of wolves, wild dogs and boars, with monstrous denizens limited to flying threats such as wyverns, manticores, griffons and the occasional roc from the Final Range. There are also several goblinoids in the Final Range that sometimes raze the western border.

Further Reading: CM 1 *Test of the Warlords, Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Synthala of Aasla.

As I approached Oceansend, the City of the Sea, I could feel the excitement in the air. The locals have just recently won their freedom from the Heldannic Knights, breaking their slavery.

The Land

Oceansend is rather large, with sturdy walls surrounding the entire city. It is situated along a beautiful deep-water beach into the Alphatian Sea, making it an ideal port. Oceansend is the largest and best-equipped port of all of Norwold. The water is remarkably clear for a seaport, and many of the locals make a profitable living fishing its bounties.

When compared to Alpha, there are no fancy buildings or statues or such boasting the wealth of the city. Instead, King Yarrvikson prefers for his residence to be a functional fortress rather than a palace. Like many other cities here in the wildlands of Norwold, Oceansend is well fortified. Siege weapons can be seen along the walls and various towers. The wall guards have also earned a well-deserved reputation with the crossbow, which they've no doubtfully shown the Heldannic Knights during their revolution.

The fields around Oceansend are dotted with farms and small villages. They are blessed by Zirchev with fertile crops and plenty of game animals to hunt. Some of the best inns and taverns "in town" are actually found in these surrounding villages, and many an Oceansender travels outside the city walls to find his entertainment.

A day's walk from the capital, going eastwards toward the southern fringes of the Tranquil Swamp, lies a small fortified city that is home to a vassal of King Yarrvikson. Shebb Woolsey is baron here, and the small dominion—no more than 20 miles across—pays homage and tributes to Oceansend. When the knights conquered the city in AY 2012 [AC 1012. Ed.], they didn't extend their grip on this small settlement as well, contenting to keep it permanently under siege. For this reason it is now in good shape and it's helping Oceansend in its rebuilding by sending harvests and conscripts to the king. Rumors want that its baron, and his magist, an odd fellow named Knolimer Knolin, may have had a big role in freeing the city in AY 2015 [AC 1015. Ed.], probably helping the Dark Masks thieves' guild.

The People

The people of Oceansend now live with joy and happiness, still celebrating the overthrow of the priests of Vanya. Everywhere one goes, you can easily see the black lion banners being desecrated and vandalized. In fact, it's probably the only reason they are still here, otherwise, I'm sure the king would have had them all burned.

Except for this, the people are proud of their small little kingdom. They are starting to become renowned sea merchants in the area, although I suspect it will be some time before they can rival the merchant princes of Minrothad.

Now, the Oceansenders are content with trying to make their city the greatest in Norwold. And they are intent on remaining completely independent; the citizens have voted a forced conscription of all men and women. Many voluntarily go to the military training lessons given by the king's men. Their goal is to have everyone in Oceansend be able to fight in case of another invasion. I believe this is still the aftereffects of the Heldannic occupation, and this spur to action will probably die down with time.

There were more dwarves and elves in the past, but nowadays, with the Heldannic Knights so near the kingdom's borders, these demihumans preferred to retire to safer areas. The dwarves went to the stronghold of Kildorkak, which has always been in good ties with Oceansend, while the Shiye sought refuge in the free forests outside Oceansend.

On a final note about the people, it seems that Yarrvikson has released all thieves from the city dungeons. This was the king's reward to the Dark Masks, the local thieves' guild, for their help in the defeat of the Heldannic Knights. Most commoners viewed this reward with mixed blessings; they are indeed grateful of the thieves' help, but also fearful that, now free, their houses will be robbed. It seems that the local guards are also somewhat more lenient toward members of the Dark Masks that they apprehend.

Recent History

Oceansend has always been an independent kingdom since it left the Thyatian fold. Around AY 1990 [*AC 990. Ed.*], King Ericall of Alpha claimed all of Norwold, including Oceansend, but the Oceansenders simply ignored this. Ericall never sent any military forces to conquer the city, instead opting to peacefully convince them to join his kingdom. During the Great War of AY 2005-2009 [*AC 1005-1009. Ed.*], a civil war bloomed in the nation of Alpha, and most of Ericall's lords claimed independence, leading to the anarchy we find in Norwold today. Oceansend simply kept on living as usual since they have always considered themselves independent. On the downside, with all the other nearby cities warring among themselves, Oceansend suffered problems with their trade industry.

However, it all changed with the arrival of the Heldannic Knights in AY 2011 [*AC 1011. Ed.*]. Unlike Ericall, the priests of Vanya conquered the city by force in AY 2012 [*AC 1012. Ed.*], and so it remained until late of AY 2015 [*AC 1015. Ed.*], when King Yarrvikson organized a coup backed by the Kildorkak dwarves, the thieves of the Dark Masks and the nearby Baron of Shebb and overthrew the knights' yoke, also taking advantage of the internal riots the knights were experiencing in that year. Now Oceansend is once more trying to regain its glory and trade of a decade ago, but the Heldannic threat is not yet forgotten.

Don't Miss

Oceansend's docks and wharves are filled with sailors that come from many lands both from the Old World and the eastern countries beyond the Alphatian Sea. It is a veritable source of information and a possible starting point for many would-be adventurers, since the Oceansend sailors are quite famous for their tales of sunken treasures and prized artifacts lost under the waves. Be sure to check by if you're looking for a job, there's always one for those who can dare and for the hardened sea-wolves types.

Another wonderful site to behold are the forests surrounding the heartlands of Oceansend, primeval examples of how Norwold was before the coming of civilization. Sometimes trappers and hunters find strange and exotic artifacts or centuries-old ruins in these woods, and they are still a mystery to many sages. So there's plenty of things to discover yet for those who're looking for fame and treasures.

Do Miss

Some of the old ruins which predates the settlement of Oceansend are eerie places with strange architectural features that seem totally out of place in these northern lands. Some legends tell of undead guardians that rise to protect whatever is hidden in these ancient chambers, and many treasure hunters have disappeared lately in the woods of Oceansend.

SERENITY (Barony of)

Location: Norwold, continent of Brun, northeast of Oceansend.

Area: 480 sq. mi. (1,243 sq. km.).

Population: 1,850.

Languages: Thyatian, Heldannic, Alphatian (the use of Alphatian 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 an easy prey have wrecked 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 enemy Barony of Dikhoff, especially vultures.

Coats of arms: Baron Siegfried Sixx: Black human skull between two sets of crossed black daggers forming two X (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*.

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, defensive 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 catch. In case of a siege, unless the enemy can afford a naval blockade [*which isn't the case of Baron Dimitri. Arcadius.*], the castle can be supplied with fresh fish and import 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 origin, mostly Alphatians, Thyatians and Heldanners. A good chunk of the population of Serenity is in the business of horse breeding, either growing corns, or 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 Norwold. 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 advanced 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 a lunatic 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 evidences. 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 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 sell 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 Tslamir 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 looks 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 advanced enemy forces or spies and saboteurs. I recommend abiding to 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: Norwold, continent of Brun, northeast of Oceansend, on the western shore of the New Alphatian Sea.

Area: 499 sq. mi. (1,292 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 sparrowhawks) 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 fishes and carnivorous plants) prey on the hunters who venture there to catch ducks, hens, coots and such.

Further Reading: CM1 *Test of the Warlords*.

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: Norwold, continent of Brun, northeast of Oceansend, on the western shore of the New Alphatian Sea.

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, hop and grain, leaving only the western low hills to pastures. As a result, most of Swordcoast is a farmland, with trails and earthen roads crisscrossing the countryside. All of the trees have been cut down, killing and driving away all woodland creatures formerly living here. Common fauna now includes domestic cattle (pigs, hens, cows and chickens) and the occasional stonemarten, 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*.

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.

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).

Languages: Thyatian (Hattian dialect, official), Heldannic, some Alphatian spoken in Landfall and vicinity.

Coinage: 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.

Industries: Agriculture (potatoes, wheat, other vegetables), cattle, mining, sheep, lumber, hunting, war.

Important Figures: Helga Schonberg (*Landmeister*, human, female, P12 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 Denagothian Plateau, 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.

No description this year. [Hendrik von Gultzer provided us with basic dominion information, but no insight—watch for more next year. Ed.]

DENAGOTHIAN PLATEAU

The are 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 ancestral 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.

DENAGOOTH (Kingdom of)

Location: Norwold, continent of Brun, north of Wendar and west of Norwold and the Heldannic Territories.

Area: 125,000 sq. mi. (323,750 sq. km.).

Population: 276,000, roughly 25% human and 75% humanoid; estimated demihuman (elf) population: 2,000.

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: Landry Teriak a.k.a. the Shadow Lord (King, vassalich, male, M14), Grumann (General, human, male, F13/T10), Durifern Widefarer (Clanmaster, elf, male, R15), Beasthunter (Clanmaster, elf, male, F12/M13).

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, elks, bears (all species, especially grizzlies), wolves (even dire wolves), wild boars, snakes and mountain lions. The land is a heaven 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 central region of Denagoth, what is commonly referred to as the Avien Plains, which is the only area I have been allowed to visit without hindrances, always escorted by a small group of soldiers gladly provided for my own sake by the Church of Idris.

[This report strangely arrived in perfect shape even though the rumors coming from the north want Mr. Dove 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 and the overall region, please refer to the previous Mystaran Almanac, AC1015. 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 minions. Going north from this spot, the forest leaves 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.

The southern part of the Avien Plains bordering the Forest of Geffron consists mostly of farmlands, orchards and cultivated fields, although the farmers grow barely enough food to satisfy the country's needs. It is to be noted that most of the crops grown goes to the ruling class of Denagoth, leaving to the farmers and lowest classes only the scraps. This has been cause of riots in the past, as some of the farmers in this area told me. The northern region is instead used to breed cattle and herding riding beasts for the army, both normal and monstrous in nature. The area known as the Essurian Grasses to the west, bordering the western part of the Great Forest of Geffron, is also devoted to the training and breeding of beasts. The meat and other byproducts derived from the cattle allow the Denagothians to survive the rigid and seemingly never-ending winters, when the fields do not produce anything. I have been told by my escort that the priests of Idris also travel the land during winter creating and purifying food in order to assist the populace, but up to now I haven't witnessed any of such occurrences.

The Avien Plains are windswept most of the year because of the lack of natural barriers to the north, and this has caused their actual state. I have motives to believe that the elves' magic prevented the weather from destroying the Great Forest of Geffron, which now seems in pretty good shape even though the elves aren't there anymore to maintain it. Probably the magic inherent to the forest allows it to resist the harsh weather to which the whole region is subject.

The two major settlements in the Avien Plains are Brakkah and Thariss. Brakkah (pop. 6,000) is located near the western border of the Lothenar Forest and is a typical Denagothian village with mixed inhabitants, only larger than the usual size. The town is surrounded by a sturdy 30' high palisade of magical hardwood whose properties are unknown to me. The town map is circular, with the Temple of Idris built in the main square as reference point for the life of the whole community. The buildings inside the town vary in shapes and materials, although most are wooden with the first story made of bricks and rocks. The dwellings have normally two floors and they rarely house a single family, because the Church of Idris encourages the citizens to live in close relationship with their neighbors. Each of these multi-familiar houses is regularly visited by its *irik-tanes* [roughly translated to "Holy Overseer." *C. Dove*], a priest of Idris who oversees the entire building and takes care of the families living in it. This way the church always knows where and when there are problems and may lend a hand to solve it. The town is regularly patrolled by the Shadow Army [*which serves both as the military force of Denagoth and as town guard. C. Dove*] and by the Wardens of Idris, which are the priests specialized in enforcing the law of Idris in Denagoth. I have not had the chance to visit Thariss, but the guards escorting me told me that the city is similar to Brakkah. As for the smaller villages of the Avien tribesmen, there are more soldiers of the Shadow Army here to keep an eye on troublesome agitators, and all the village walls have been destroyed after the last upheaval in the 10th century.

The People

There are numerous settlements in the Avien Plains. The great majority of the southern ones are inhabited by humans, while the northern ones feature a mixed population of humans and humanoids, who don't seem to have particular problems with this integration. The Avien tribesmen are a tough race of stubborn and proud people with a clear Antalian (Heldannic) lineage, while the northern Denagothians are stronger, tougher and more resistant to the harsh climate than the common northmen. They can be clearly distinguished from the Avien

tribesmen because their complexion is strangely darker, more similar to the Thyatian stock than to the classic northmen's. Also a strange fire seems to burn in their eyes, a light that sometimes makes them look very similar to the hairy humanoids, and maybe this could explain why they seem to have no problems in living side by side [*a long forgotten racial relationship might be the cause of this similarity. C. Dove.*].

The Avien tribesmen are illiterate and do not have a written language. They share a common oral tradition and I have found no evidence of a forgotten written language in their sites. Their cultural identity is deeply rooted however and this is probably the cause of the trouble they have been giving to the Church of Idris in all these decades. They resent being controlled by the theocrats and would like to return to their free ways, but the Church of Idris has deemed more appropriate to convert them into sedentary farmers for the welfare of the nation. A few nomadic Aviens still exist in the northern part of the plains however, but they are now a small minority. I have heard rumors saying that some of the Avien tribesmen still follow the cult of their ancestors, but since it is illegal inside Denagoth they probably worship their deities in secret.

As for the true Denagothians, they are deeply loyal to Idris and always follow the rules dictated by the church. They serve in the army regularly when they enter the appropriate age and have a strong sense of national unity that borders 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. For this reason they must be patient and teach the humanoids the way to become a true civilized Denagothian, and at the same time they must take inspiration from the humanoids' great perseverance and fierceness in order to remember what they were and always will be.

The humanoids of Denagoth, on their part, are much more civilized than the common brutal goblinoid of the Broken Lands. They are considered equal citizens of Denagoth, serve in the army and clergy just like the humans and may even attain important positions inside the military orders, even though they are normally left out the bureaucratic system for obvious reasons. Orcs are the most common species, followed by goblins, hobgoblins, gnolls and bugbears. All the humanoids share the same chaotic traits, even though their ways have become more controlled and organized thanks to the Church of Idris's intervention through the centuries. Theirs can now be defined a "controlled chaos," since everyone knows what's expected from them given their social position, and they try not to upset their overseers. However, they have the opportunity to discharge all their feral instincts at least once every day by going to special areas where they fight with one another or with other beasts and train both their body and their morale. This seems to be an established policy inside Denagoth and everyone is content with this.

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 wanted the Shadow Lord as the sole ruler of Denagoth are false, since it is in fact a perfect theocracy. 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

There is nothing special to visit in the Avien Plains, except maybe the great herds of riding animals to the north. It is a magnificent show to see all these animals roam the plains together like a great wave of living flesh, and even more astounding is witnessing how the monstrous specimens are trained and used by the expert Denagothians.

Do Miss

Do miss the whole southern region, which is a nest of rebels and unrest is common here. Unless you want to participate in a civil revolt, you should steer away from the Avien tribesmen, or at least do not trust them. Also the Essurian Grasses are not a hospitable place for the visitors, since they are located near the Forest of Geffron and the western border of the plateau, which is known for harboring packs of wild beasts and disgusting legions of undead that date back to the Essurian Kingdom and prey on the living.

ATLAS OF 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-raft 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 than 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.

[Unfortunately, one of our correspondents was in Gargoña near the end of the year when bloody events took place in the barony. It would appear that he was taken captive and imprisoned, preventing him from sending his completed atlas of the Savage Coast before our almanac went to the press. We expect him to be released soon, and get the well-detailed atlas of the region that you, the reader, are expecting from the almanac, in our next edition. Ed.]

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

Marina Takanitas is another new correspondent. At 23, she 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!

Atlas

YAVDLOM (Serene Divinarchy of)

Location: Continent of Brun, southern half of Serpent Peninsula (including Thanegia Island).

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), and fishing.

Important Figures: Msiba Jahi (*Bwana Ramla* (Great Prophet), human, female, P18 of Yav), Kondu Pako (*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 were 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 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:

Dellebram

Through efforts in Karameikos, *Joshuan Gallidox Publishing* has garnered the support and participation of the Alphatian 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 Alphatians for reports from the Hollow World.

Dellebram is a “common” Alphatian 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.

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.

Atlas

ALPHATIA (Empire of; a.k.a. Floating Continent of)

Location: Equatorial orbit, Hollow World.

Area: 1,968,134 sq. mi. (5,097,467 sq. km.), comprised of Ambur 11,723 sq. mi. (30,363 sq. km.); Ar 53,375 sq. mi. (138,241 sq. km.); Arogansa 135,183 sq. mi. (350,124 sq. km.); Bettellyn 172,595 sq. mi. (447,021 sq. km.); Blackheart 74,326 sq. mi. (192,504 sq. km.); Eadrin 49,883 sq. mi. (129,197 sq. km.); Foresthome 296,554 sq. mi. (768,075 sq. km.); Frisland 160,124 sq. mi. (414,721 sq. km.); Greenspur 90,787 sq. mi. (235,138 sq. km.); Haven 245,424 sq. mi. (635,648 sq. km.); Jafilia 111,239 sq. mi. (288,109 sq. km.); Limn 9,977 sq. mi. (25,840 sq. km.); Randel 187,560 sq. mi. (486,780 sq. km.); Shiye-Lawr 91,785 sq. mi. (237,723 sq. km.); Stonewall 15,963 sq. mi. (41,344 sq. km.); Stoutfellow 88,542 sq. mi. (229,324 sq. km.); Theranderol 123,710 sq. mi. (320,409 sq. km.); Vertiloch 49,384 sq. mi. (127,905 sq. km.).

Population: 5,096,000 (humans 97%, elves 2%, all others 1%). (Ambur 103,000; Ar 103,000; Arogansa 138,000; Bettellyn 330,000; Blackheart 45,000; Eadrin 90,000; Foresthome 85,000; Frisland 80,000; Greenspur 565,000; Haven 895,00; Jafilia 52,000; Limn 225,000; Randel 130,000; Shiye-Lawr 55,000; Stonewall 1,340,000; Stoutfellow 58,000; Theranderol 182,000; Vertiloch 620,000.)

Languages: Alphatian (official), Elvish (Shiye-Lawr dialect), Dwarvish (Denwarf-Hurgon dialect).

Coinage: *Crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher.

Government Type: Semiautonomous kingdoms owing loyalty to the imperial throne.

Industries: Agriculture, logging, exploitation of magic.

Important Figures: Eriadna (Empress of the Alphatian Empire, Queen of Vertiloch, Queen of Jafilia, 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 Emperors* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Dellebram.

As most readers are firmly aware, Alphatia has survived the sinking and found a new place within this Hollow World. With this realization before the common masses of the surface world, Her Imperial Highness Eriadna the Wise feels that there is the need to properly inform the readers about the particulars of the Floating Continent of Alphatia. Assigned the task rather late, the distance between Alphatia and Karameikos, and this publication's impending deadline time was a limiting factor towards the quantity of this material.

The Floating Continent of Alphatia is nearly identical to the land-bound version previously rested on the surface world: it is as immense now as it was then. With its lofty orbit of Hollow World and its being encapsulated by its own atmosphere, the continent is a world within its own right. Upon its surface rest all of the pre-war kingdoms, each bearing its previous attributes and geographical features. One will notice that certain scars do exist, denoting damage sustained during the sinking. Strangely enough, the common masses know nothing of the sinking or Alphatia's previous existence on the surface, so most afford the damage to memories of some massive earthquake and the resulting fires.

[Contact with the Hollow World has always been difficult to maintain for a private venture such as the Mystaran Almanac. The contacts needed to report on Alphatia are doubly difficult due to its isolated nature. Through the assistance of the Karameikan Court, the Alphatian Imperial Court has graciously contributed information on the continent. As such its contents are dependent upon the security doctrines of the imperial state. Hopefully future segments on this geographical region will be more substantial. Ed.]

Ambur: This kingdom is mostly flat, boasting ample fields and pasturage. The terrain is broken by occasional patches of light forests, which the inhabitants actively harvest for their timber needs. The kingdom prides itself on its promotion of the astrological studies and a passion for the theater. The kingdom's capital is Starpoint and is ruled by Queen Elshethara (human, female, M16).

Ar: Ar is, and always has been, a farming kingdom. Its open landscape is spotted with farms and towns, most hugging closely to the shores of Crystal Lake. Prior to the sinking the farms had fed the nobles who lived in the lofty palaces and estates of Floating Ar. With the floating islands left behind upon the surface world, Ar can focus its harvests' surpluses towards export. King Qinn (human, male, M11) rules Ar from the new capital of Ceafem. Ceafem was adopted with the loss of Skyreach, which remained with the floating islands.

Arogansa: Resting on the southern coast of the continent, this kingdom is rich in both forests and farmlands. Prior to the sinking, Arogansa had been renowned for its beaches and the tourists they drew. With the continent's lofty nature, the beaches now oversee only empty space; with this primary attraction gone, tourism has plummeted. Of course visitors can still find amusement in the kingdom's other attractions, and there are also the kingdom's noteworthy wineries. Its scenic wilderness will draw one to its natural beauty. Plus, there are ample venues of entertainment available to compliment the beaches. Of course the kingdom still favors the spellcaster, those not of that capability may find the kingdom quite unpleasant. Queen Detteria Scarback (human, female, M19) rules Arogansa from the city of Bluenose.

Bettelyn: This eastern kingdom is rich in farmlands and pastures. The Grey Mountains mark the kingdom's southwestern border. Bettelyn has a strong clerical body, venerating several Immortals. The kingdom is also renowned for its problems with its southern neighbor, Randel. Disagreements and skirmishes have plagued their pasts. Evidence of this is supported by the series of forts that guards its shared border with the Randel. However, since the sinking disagreements have been few and there have not been any reported skirmishes yet. Queen Llynara (human, female, M17), rules Bettelyn from the capital city of Citadel. Citadel is interesting, as it is a single building roughly the size of a mountain.

Blackheart: This kingdom is still a bastion for the mage who desires privacy and a sense of independence in their magical pursuits. Often considered a dark place for the dangerous and even morbid experiments enacted there, it is a place to be avoided. Each mage is the de facto ruler of his or her own estate, creating and enforcing its own laws and traditions. As long as their activities are contained within their own properties, interdiction from higher authorities is kept to a minimum. Ruling this kingdom is King Belgoroth the Lamer (human, male, C14). He rules from the capital city of Shraek.

Eadrin: Nestled on the southeastern coast of the continent, Eadrin is heavily covered with vast forests and boasts ample farmlands. Though it shares a border with Randel, there has been little disagreement between these two kingdoms; there are no defense works along either bank of the Randel River. Similar to its neighbor Arogansa, this kingdom's economy is heavily dependent upon tourism. However, Eadrin's beaches and entertainment venues have always been of secondary quality to those found in Arogansa. With its friendlier attitude towards non-spellcasters and a stronger agricultural base, Eadrin has a definite advantage in this new Alphatia with no surrounding seas. King Idon II (elf, male, F9/M10) rules Eadrin from the capital city of Archport.

Foresthorne: Located to the north, Foresthorne is a heavily wooded kingdom. Around Llyn Lake, the trees have been cleared to provide tracts of land to be farmed. The lake is also fished to subsidize the farm yields, to add variety to the kingdom's diet, and be used for export. The kingdom boasts a sizable elven population, roughly 10%, who mainly adhere to the wooded areas. Despite the culture clash, the elven and human communities have lived in peace for centuries. Queen Kikania (human, female, M12) rules the kingdom from the capital city of Greenwood.

Frisland: This northern kingdom lacks the fertile lands of its neighbors. However, its population is sparsely spread throughout its interior and works hard to encourage sustainable crop yields and healthy herds. It is not a wealthy kingdom, nor has its development been actively pursued—in truth, the kingdom is often forgotten as even existing. Ruling this kingdom is King Edjer the Twisted (human, male, M17), overseeing his kingdom from the capital city of Shiell.

Greenspur: This southern kingdom is heavily dependent upon its rich farmlands. Subsidizing its economy are the imperial military bases found within its borders. These farmlands and military bases are predominantly encapsulated within the kingdom's lowlands; as such that is where the wealth is. Still, the kingdom's cumulative wealth is sufficient enough to make it one of the continent's most prosperous. King Sildreth II (human, male, C15) rules the kingdom from the capital city of Eagret. Eagret has the honor of hosting Alphatia's largest imperial *skyship* base, an honor previously held by the kingdom of Haven.

Haven: This southern nation is known for its passion in the fine arts, an attitude that has drawn artists and art patrons to its interior. Examples of their efforts abound: murals, statuary, and paintings are everywhere. Some are individual exhibits; others are interwoven into the general architecture. Even the streets are composed of intricate

mosaics. Queen Kryndylya (human, female, C20) rules the kingdom from the new capital of Dovir—the sinking destroyed the former capital of Aasla. Aasla had been the heart and soul of the imperial *skyship* navy. However its destruction paved the way for Greenspur to assume that role.

Jafilia: This kingdom had once been the Imperial Territories and kept as a wilderness for royal hunting parties. Under Zandor's brief tenure as emperor of the continent, he ordered it settled. In the Hollow World, a revived Empress Eriadna temporarily dubbed the region Zandoria, then changed it to Jafilia. Jafilia has since become the center of the Alphatian Empire. Ruling Jafilia and the empire is Empress Eriadna (human, female, M20). She rules from the imperial palace in the city of Andaire.

Linn: This region is truly an interesting kingdom: founded as a social experiment, its citizens are non-human creatures. They have their own noble class of spellcasting creatures. Among its population, one can find all manners of races and creature types. Examples of forest folk, demihumans, humanoids, sentient undead, and lycanthropes can be found in a great variety of forms. It is peculiar to see creatures such as these living in a very human manner. Ruling this kingdom are King Drushiye (elf, male, F9/M10) and Queen Mellora (dryad). They rule from the capital city of Trollhattan.

Randel: This southeastern kingdom is graced with vast open plains. To the far north, lay the Grey Mountains. However, Randel's chief industries and exports are its military machine, military training, and its wines. In the past the kingdom could have claimed its forces being among the empire's elite, with many of the imperial navy and guard personnel claiming Randel as their birthplace. However, most of its fighting forces were stranded topside when the continent sank and the kingdom's remaining armies have been mostly absorbed into the imperial legions. Randel is highly tolerant towards able-bodied non-spellcasters, stemming from edicts long established to promote camaraderie within its armed forces. Historically at odds with neighboring Bettelyn, skirmishes and even their expected disagreements have been noticeably absent. Though the Randel have erected a wall between them relations with its western neighbor, Theranderol, are less hostile. Queen Junna (human, female, C13), rules Randel from the capital city of Rardish. Junna assumed the throne temporarily while her father, King Verothrics, went off to lead the Randel forces against Thyatis and Glantri. With his disappearance she has been officially crowned as the kingdom's monarch. A devout follower of Alphatia, her promotion of artistry and peace has not endeared her to the aggressive Randel.

Shiye-Lawr: This northern kingdom is the bastion for the empire's largest elven clan, the Shiye-Lawr. Considered malicious and cunning, the Shiye Clan holds sovereign rule over their densely wooded kingdom. The elves are known to be at odds with their human and non-human neighbors, going as far as enacting raids. The Shiye are nonetheless loyal to the empire, more so than one might expect from elves living in a human realm. King Acroshiy (elf, male, F10/M11) rules the kingdom from the capital city of Alfleish.

Stonewall: This kingdom boasts a large population and acts as the home base for several of Alphatia's armies. The kingdom is reliant upon the military, which feeds its economy. Perhaps it is this interaction that has bred in a heightened tolerance towards non-spellcasters, similar to that seen in Randel. Non-spellcasters can expect to be treated well, on a near-equal level as spellcasters. Of course only spellcasters can be nobles; that law has not been relaxed. King Koblan Dracodon (human, male, M14) rules the kingdom from the capital city of Draco.

Stoutfellow: With its rugged mountainous terrain, the kingdom is perfectly suited for the dwarves, halflings, and gnomes that call it home. The kingdom is impartial when it comes to non-spellcasters and spellcasters. However, the kingdom is designed to favor the inhabitants: the laws sway in favor of themselves. Buildings and accommodations are dwarf-sized, making even imperial visitors cramped and uncomfortable. Still, the kingdom is loyal to the empire. Queen Buthra Bofadar (dwarf, female, F12) rules the kingdom from the capital city of Denwarf-Hurgon, an exact duplicate of the one still found on Ionace in the outer world.

Theranderol: This pretty southern kingdom boasts rolling hills broken by expanses of lush forests. The Grey Mountains mark the extent of the kingdom's northerly border. The kingdom has strove to keep corruption out of its government. This served it well after the sinking, as the strong government was able to react quickly and effectively to aid in its recovery. Queen Eldrethila (human, female, M20) rules the kingdom from the capital city of Errolyn. For those that are unaware, Eldrethila is one of Empress Eriadna's children.

Vertiloch: Prior to the sinking, this kingdom had been the traditional seat of power for the imperial throne. As such, it had been a rich and lavish kingdom. With the destruction of Sundsvall in AY 2009 [AC 1009. Ed.] and the subsequent sinking, the imperial seat was moved to Jafilia. With much of its populace leaving or killed, Vertiloch has since struggled in its recovery efforts. Vertiloch still falls under the rule of Empress Eriadna (human, female, M20). With Sundsvall in ruins, the city of Ashar has become the kingdom's new capital. Of course the

empress has to devote her time to the empire, Jafilia, and Vertiloch and she has not returned to the old capital since the sinking.

Recent History

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 citizens 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 "Great 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 rebuilding to realize these. Perhaps they do recognize them, but subliminally the real truth is too difficult to remember or believe.

Regardless, the general population knows nothing of the Great War: the costly victories, the defeat of Thyatis, the goal of Glantri at hand, and the treacherous sinking caused by the Doomsday Device. 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 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 a need to need basis. Even now, years since the sinking, there is still much damage about. Eventually these projects will be addressed. However, one cannot dwell on such matters.

Don't Miss

To list the continent's notable sites in the confines on this publication would be difficult. The majority of the former attractions still exist. The most notable exceptions are sites dependent upon the now absent seas: Arogansa and Eadrin. Aasla and Sundsvall are in ruins, but even the ruined areas may draw the attentions of curious or sentimental visitors. Visitors making the long trek from the surface world would be remiss if they did not visit the new Imperial City of Andaire. Visitors are stressed to keep the memories of the empire's true history to themselves.

Do Miss

Though the recovery process is well underway, there are still areas that are dangerous. Ruins can be unstable and collapse. Dangerous creatures, freed from their confines, still roam portions of the countryside. Some of these creatures have taken residence in the ruined cities. And one must remember that this is still Alphatia and there still exist many of the dangers that existed before the sinking.

GENTLE FOLK (Elf-Lands of the)

Location: Continent of Iciria, Hollow World.

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 zzonga bush, some of the elves chew its leaves to gain its effects. Unlike the zzonga 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, deriving 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 Alphatians. Though such a meeting was inevitable, it was by mere chance of the fugitive Zandor that they came to the attentions of the Alphatians. With the Immortals Alphatia and Koryis as their patrons, it was only fitting that the Alphatian people offered their mortal patronage. This patronage has extended itself to Alphatia'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 Alphatia 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 Alphatian 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.

ICEVALE (Elf-Lands of)

Location: Continent of Iciria, Hollow World.

Area: 216,160 sq. mi. (559,855 sq. km.)

Population: 100,000 (5,500 in Argandir).

Languages: Elvish (Icevale dialect), Neathar, Antalian, Beastman.

Coinage: *Sol* (gp), *lun* (sp), *ston* (cp).

Taxes: None.

Government Type: Monarchy (heavily influenced by clan leaders).

Industries: Trapping, logging, leather goods, brewing.

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 Dellebram.

The Icevale Elves live in a frigid mountain environment. As an elven populace, Alphatia has a vested interest in establishing relations with them. So far, imperial observations have been carried out from a distance and by second-hand accounts.

The Land

The region that the Icevale lay claims to is one of rolling mountains with an arctic climate. Dense ageless forests cover the entire region. The elves have established a multitude of settlements throughout these lands, each having a population between 100 to 1,000. Of all of the communities, Argandir is its largest and is its capital. The city can be found upon a gentle slope of Mount Argan.

The People

The Icevale are strong and hardy elves. Standing a bit taller and having fairer complexions, they do deviate from their surface world brethren. Most have blond hair and either blue or green eyes. Also, they frequently don clothes made of fur and leather. The elves have thrived in the cold mountains, living in log home communities and making their living hunting, trapping and logging. A hearty people they entertain themselves with competitive activities such as dogsled races, archery meets, brewing contests, and ski races. In many ways, the

Icevale are comparative to an elven version of the surface world's Northern Reaches. Like people from that region, the Icevale venerate the Immortals Fredar (Frey), Fredara (Freyja), Wotan (Odin), and Donar (Thor) as their patrons. Some revere Ordana and Ilsundal, however they are not prevalent.

Recent History

The Icevale have their historical ties with the massive elven migration underground, back when members of their race activated a volatile Blackmoorian artifact. These years of subterranean refuge saw the Icevale making their way to the Hollow World. There, the Icevale made their way to and established themselves within their cold environment. They have often clashed with the Antalians and Beastmen, but on the level to be considered as threatening. Otherwise they tend to trade with these two peoples.

Don't Miss

There is a strange beauty in the cold mountain wildernesses, which only direct observation can do justice to. The wooden walled capital city of Argandir is also impressive, in a simple rustic way. And one simply must try to attend some of their competitions. The more hearty and adventurous may find their nature quite palatable. A more interesting site may be the active volcano, Mount Svelthys; lore tells of strange creatures, called fire dwarves, which supposedly reside in its interior.

Do Miss

Cold and rather backwards by Alphatian standards, the Icevale offer few creature comforts. A rough and tumble lot, weakling visitors should best avoid the Icevale. One should also remember that these are elves and view things differently than humans.

KUBITT VALLEY

Location: Continent of Iciria, Hollow World.

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), Zoranthis (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 Zoranthis, niece of the kubitts’ ruler. Taken to the floating continent, Zoranthis and her compatriots were not executed—in fact, they were treated with a near celebrity status and Zoranthis 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.

NEATHAR LANDS

Location: Continent of Iciria, Hollow World.

Area: 712,219 sq. mi. (1,844,647 sq. km.).

Population: 3,000,000 (in about 3,000 tribes).

Languages: Neathar.

Coinage: None (barter).

Taxes: None.

Government Type: Tribal monarchies.

Industries: Hunting, gathering, raiding.

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. Giant insects, boars, great cats, giant lizards, dinosaurs, crocodiles, wolves, and humanoids can be readily found.

Further Reading: *Hollow World* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Dellebram.

Although Neathar peoples can be readily found throughout the Hollow World, it is within the expansive Neathar Lands that they can be found in unique and great numbers. Likewise, the Neathar people are composed of various different peoples, each with their own unique social attributes. It would be a travesty to lump them all together as a single group—however given a space consideration that is exactly what we will do.

The Land

Striking a prominent portion of the central regions of the continent of Iciria, the Neather lands are mostly thick rain forests. Other terrain types are mountains, hills, swamps, forests, and plains. These lands offer refuge to numerous dangerous creatures as well as the Neather tribesmen. The various tribes have each staked out their territories from which they hunt and gather foodstuffs and other necessities of life.

The People

Though there is a great deal of variety within the tribes, the Neather are of a common race. A tanned Caucasian people, they don simple clothes crafted from animal skins or crude textiles. Ornamentation is simple, usually bead necklaces, armbands, bracelets, and anklets. Earrings denote a married female. When they choose to wear them, footwear is usually a type of sandal. In combat the Neather warriors fight as individuals, wielding stone-headed weapons and rarely wearing armor. With their poor weapons and lack of tactics, they have faired badly against more organized opponents.

The Neather are tribal, each tribe owing fealty to a hereditary chieftain. For most tribes, the male gender holds the majority of power. Some tribes do allow female chieftains and female warriors. The Neather prize individualism, perhaps explaining their disunity. The Neather are hunter/gatherers, often supplementing their stores by raiding their neighbors. Intertribal skirmishes and feuds are frequent—one source of hostilities is the Neather practice of “stealing” a mate from a neighboring tribe.

Recent History

The Neather are descendants of one of Mystara's original races. As the surface world Neather tribes began to succumb to the development of their fellows, the traditional Neather way was threatened. As each tribe faced eradication or adopted agricultural edicts, portions of their tribes were transported to the Hollow World. In this way, a vast and diverse collection of Neather peoples has accumulated in the Hollow World over an extended period.

In the Hollow World the Neather have flourished, despite their primitive societies. Though many of their neighbors are capable of fielding superior forces, the Neather have never been threatened with conquest. It was only with the arrival of the Heldannic Knights and Alphatians that they really began to come under fire. Though the Alphatians had to divert much attention to meeting the knights, they were able to conquer the Nogai tribe in a rather brief period. Unsurprisingly, the Neather took a dim view of the presence of both the Alphatians and Heldannic Knights.

With the Alphatian continent's rebirth in the void above, certain aspects of the Neather grew overtly suspicious of their intentions. Zorok, chieftain of one of the Toralai tribes, was the most vocal. Despite Empress Eriadna's proclamations of allegiance and promises of no more expansions, Zorok continued his suspicions. Zorok managed to unify other Toralai tribes in his unproclaimed war against the Alphatians, resulting in various raids and the sacking of the town of Dogrel [*located in Alphatian Neatherum. Ed.*]. In AY 2015 [AC 1015. *Ed.*] Zorok was captured in a failed assault on Haldemar [*Alphatian Neatherum. Ed.*]. While imprisoned, Zorok was influenced by personal matters to negotiating a peace agreement with the Alphatians.

Don't Miss/Do Miss

The Neather boast no large communities and no common ritual sites. One will have to search the vast Neather lands for any attractions. Given their level of civility, one can expect few creature comforts. Though peace is officially established between the Neather and Alphatians, visitors may find themselves received with hostility.

NEATHERUM (Kingdom of, a.k.a. Alphatian Neatherum)

Location: Continent of Iciria, Hollow World.

Area: 95,609 sq. mi. (247,627 sq. km.).

Population: 33,000: 11,000 Alphatians (including 500 gnomes and 500 dwarves) and 22,000 Neather (Nogai tribe).

Languages: Alphatian (official), Neather.

Coinage: *Crown* (gp), *mirror* (sp), *judge* (cp).

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher.

Government Type: Semiautonomous monarchy owing loyalty to the imperial throne (presently under imperial governor administration).

Industries: Military, raiding, agriculture.

Important Figures: Ezreilla (Governess, human female, M17), Trikard (Commander of Neatharum Army, 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 Icilia. 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.] Neatherum was alone in a hostile environment. With the rebirth came proclamations from the imperial throne: the Nogai slaves were freed and future Neatherum expansions forbidden. Dogrel struggled at these restrictions, often ignoring them. This led to his removal as King of Neatherum and his being replaced by Governess 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, Neatherum has continued its existence. Peace with neighboring Neather and coexistence with the Nogai are her crowning achievements and goals. Earlier deficiencies within the Neather armed forces have been remedied by the appointment of Commander Trikard to oversee the kingdom's military needs.

Don't Miss/Do Miss

There really isn't a great deal of attractions in Neatherum. The local Neather 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 Neatherum 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.

SELHOMARR (Empire of)

Location: Hollow World, continent of Suridal, western regions.

Area: 256,410 sq. mi. (664,102 sq. km.), including Ilarnnian Autonomous Region, otherwise area is 248,094 sq. mi. (642,563 sq. km.).

Population: 5,000,000 including the capital, Calimmis (pop. 350,000).

Languages: Lhomarrian (official), Ilarnnian, Neather.

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 27th (corresponding to Kaldmont 27th).

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), Dinaria (Empress, human, female, P(dr)3), Gallos the Aged (respected philosopher and historian, human, male, T4), Mirinasi (High Emissary, human, female, P(dr)15), Thessia (High Priestess, human, female, P17 of Xeron (Ixion)).

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.

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 Lhomarian people, of which I am a member. It was us who built much of the empire, who named it "Selhomarr"—which literally means "New Lhomarr," or "New Land of the Sea."

The bulk of our armies are Lhomarian 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 Lhomarians—tell tall tales, and enjoy great feasts. All the people of Selhomarr, especially the Lhomarians, look for opportunities to celebrate something, whether it is a good harvest, a birth, a marriage, or a great personal accomplishment. While the Lhomarians 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 Lhomarian neighbors, though I personally have not run into anyone expressing this opinion.

Among the Lhomarians 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 Selhomarians 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 heartlands of Selhomarr are 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. Likewise, the Forsaken Steppes, which lie southwest of the empire, are to be avoided, as they, too, are home to foul beasts of ill repute.

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 owlbeasts, displacer beasts, and their ilk.

Finally, rumors abound of unsavory cults operating in the larger cities of the empire—people who prey on the innocent to feed their own dark hunger. What sort of rituals they are said to practice I dare not consider; I cannot believe any Selhomarrian would allow himself to sink to such depths of moral decrepitude, but such things are mentioned in the byways of the empire.

FOCUS ON: HULE

Continuing with its effort to expand its presence in lesser-known areas of the world, the *Mystaran Almanac* focuses this year on the Empire of Hule and its surrounding region, whether they are satellites or independent nations.

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 extending 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 seen as 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 latest correspondent, Zoran Dragovic, about the holy land and its mysterious Master. We will also recount the events of the past decade and a half, 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. 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 Hule

Here is our list of correspondents that give us detailed information on the nations, places, and events of Hule and its surroundings:

Zoran Dragovic

Zoran Dragovic has been the main source of information about Hule and the neighboring countries in the last six years. His regular reports to Lucien Chassebois (his friend and former scholar of Glantri, now in Darokin) have unveiled many secrets about Hule and gave scholars of the Old World a more precise picture of the sociopolitical landscape of the Midlands.

Atlas

[Unfortunately, the atlas entries for Hule and its neighbors will not be included in this year's almanac. We apologize for the delay, and hope that Zoran is not rotting in a Hulean prison somewhere. Ed.]

Recent History

Year AC 1000

Spring, AC 1000: With the Yezchamenid Empire rebuilding itself under its young *shah*, and the Yezchameni-Zuyevo border stable, *Tsar* Andrei takes the opportunity to extend Zuyevo's influence into the northern Yazak Steppes. The united front that the humanoids of the Yazak Steppes had put together in the 980s has long since fallen apart with the humanoids degenerating into internecine warfare. This gives Zuyevo the opportunity to rebuild Kulikovo's satellite fortresses of Kustany and Aktynkidze. Zuyevan forces also begin securing the eastern bank of the Yalu River north of the Kulikovo Fortress.

Summer, AC 1000: The Black *Rajah* of Jaibul is held in check by Haldemar of Haaken, a wandering Alphatian prince, while trying to take over the neighboring *mumlyket* of Putnabad. The *rajah*, an ally of the Master, is forced to withdraw his claim over the Sindhi lands.

Fall, AC 1000: Haldemar of Haaken and his crew unfold an attempt by Hulean agents to usurp power in Slagovich, the city is freed from Hulean influence. Later, the party stumbles upon a joint Heldannic and Hulean plot to invade much of the Old World. The Master is forced to delay his planned invasion of Sind, the Heldannic Knights undertake a vengeful spree against the Alphatian flying vessel and her crew. From this point on, the official contacts between the Heldannic Knights and the Master grow thinner from increasingly divergent interests and fear of being caught by other political-military powers.

Year AC 1001

Spring, AC 1001: Encouraged by agents of the Master, scores of humanoids from the lower valley of the Hyborean River move south to the hills at the northeast of Sind. Their arrival is equated by numerous raids that ravage eastern Kyurdukstan and Grouzhina. They also ravage the land known as Remindana, the kingdom of an important dragon, who will disappear from the region.

At the other end of the Midlands, goblins from the Yazak Steppes attracted by the prospect of rich plunders promised by the Master's agents, begin a trek across the empire. As they travel the land, they are met by the resistance of the human communities along their road. Damages are particularly important in Olgaria, where the arrival of new monsters from the east convinces more and more Olgarians to join the underground rebellion headed by the Church of Traladara clergy.

Summer and Fall, AC 1001: More humanoids come from the plains of central Brun toward Hule. On their way, they confront the Sardjik, which drive them into the Dvinzinian range. Walking along the border of the two countries, the humanoids are finally able to cross into Hule, even though they suffered heavy casualties. The Master grants them dominions in the Black Mountains. Overpopulation among the humanoids of the Black Mountains trigger small-scale conflicts and endless disputes. The Master calms down the situation by promising endless riches to both the newcomers and the former inhabitants of the mountains.

Seeing the arrival of thousands of humanoids in the empire of the Master as a threat, the neighboring lands begin to build up their defenses. Border clashes between Hule and Dvinzina are more frequent than ever. The Chengouch are forced to penetrate deep in the southern Black Mountains in order to root out the bases of humanoid raiders. Even Kyurdukstan sends an representative to Hule charged to present the official protests of the local clan leaders against Hule politic in the Black Mountains; he is coldly sent back.

Year AC 1002

Winter, AC 1002: Agents of Hule are dispatched to Sind, many of them will rapidly climb up the Sindhi social ladder through the use of corruption, deception and assassination. The Master slowly sends more eyes and ears to Sind in preparation of a forthcoming invasion.

Spring, AC 1002: Hulean spies disguised as Sardjik merchants discover the existence of an extensive cave system under the Plain of Fire while traveling through the Desert of Sind. Scouts are sent to map down the entire underground system. Some of them are captured by the local Graakharians, but many escape the gnolls and elves and bring their precious information back to the Master.

Summer, AC 1002: News about the discovery of new precious ore veins in the Bylot Hills trigger a mini gold rush across the empire and beyond, as Sardjiks and Azards come all across the empire to the remote hills. There are even some people from the not-so-distant Empire of Zuyovo to come to the hills. Hule attempts to exercise its rule over the hills, but the Master is too occupied by his western plans to commit new forces at the opposite end of the empire.

Contacts are made between the Master's agents and the Black *Rajah* of Jaibul. A treaty of friendship and "enhanced trade" is signed between the two nations. Holy men flock to the far Ryaset. They use the territory of Hule's new ally as a stepping stone to enter Sind and propagate their faith on the Master's orders.

Having rebuilt Kulikovo's defensive bastion, *Tsar Andrei III* orders 30,000 Zuyevan infantry and 5,000 cavalry into the northern Yazak Steppes to exterminate the humanoid tribes there. This begins a long war of attrition with those humanoids.

Fall, AC 1002: New waves of humanoids pour into the Black Mountains from the north. Their passage nearly brings a new war between Dvinzina and Hule, as Dvinzinian villages are burnt down by the incoming hordes. Surprisingly for the Dvinzinians, the Master personally apologizes for the destruction caused by his "guests," he even sends two carts full of gold in order to repair the damages. The Dvinzinians are appeased, but still worrying. A loose alliance treaty is signed between Dvinzina and Sardjikjian in order to stop further humanoid migration. Balits from the Midlands Steppes are engaged to help prevent new arrivals of humanoids in the region.

Ismet Gorky is sent to Sayr Ulan, under the guise of being a diviner from a distant eastern country, he meets Kiritan ul Nervi, the *rajadhiraja*'s brother. His influence over the man grows stronger every month. Ismet becomes the main wildcard (with the knowledge of the Graakhalian caves) of the Master in Sind.

Year AC 1003

Winter, AC 1003: A group of ogres and orcs from the northern Hyborean Valley led by Grazhur Yzhorgan storms the winter camps of several Balitan clans. The northeastern Douzbak city of Noumalik is also plundered and occupied. Grazhur proclaims himself *Shazar* of Yzhor. People of the Midlands are more and more enraged about the Master's immigration policy.

Spring, AC 1003: The humanoids of Yzhor are reinforced by new humanoids from the far north, they raid deep into the Douzbak lands. The Douzbak central government is slow to react; discontent grows among the countryside population, as they see the capital city, Tashgoun, as a decadent and corrupted city.

All too happy to see a potential ally causing trouble to his northern enemies, the Master hires Azard mercenaries to help the humanoids of Yzhor in their struggle against the peoples of the Midlands. Unfortunately for them, they decide that the Ozungan Plateau is the fastest and easiest way from Azardjian to the newly found Shazardjian of Yzhor. Many among them will meet their destiny in the ambushes set along the road by the Ozungan elves, only about 20% of the mercenaries will reach Noumalik.

Summer, AC 1003: The hagiarchy's best military officers are sent in the Black Mountains to oversee the training of the humanoids. Chengouch spies warn the Black Dagger head that something is being prepared by the Master in the mountains. The information, however, is kept secret by the Chengouch leaders, to preserve surprise if they are to be the prey of the Master.

Humanoids from the Janizary Lands are displaced to the Black Mountains. Many Huleans flee at the rumor that trolls from the Rockwater Marsh are being transferred to the front. The march is nevertheless organized enough as to cause as little problem as possible along the way.

Ustalam Banshybek, a hermit of Douzbak origin, comes back from the distant Endworld Mountains Range. He finds his homeland in total chaos as the humanoids of Yzhor are progressing toward the capital without much resistance. His attempts to meet Queen Niyazi are all met with condescension or ignorance as the court would not consider receiving a man of such social status. Disillusioned about the ability of the court to solve the growing humanoid problem, the hermit goes back to the north in search of allies among the northern barbarians. *[Ustalam doesn't know it yet but he isn't from Douzbakjian and never was a hermit, he is the new reincarnation of Dorfin still on his path toward immortality. The following years of travel and diplomacy among the northern tribes will allow him to unveil the truth he has forgotten. Ed.]*

A conflict among Grouzhinian and Glantrian traders is sold by the death of three Glantrians and one Grouzhinian in Smolini. Glantrians are banned from the country, trade across the Adri Varma Plateau is disrupted. *[This is an effect of the struggle between Rad and Ixion, many Grouzhinians being followers of Ixion. Ed.]*

Fall, AC 1003: Reinforced by new tribes from the Hyborean Valley, the humanoids of Yzhor try an offensive against the elves of Ozungan. They are met with strong resistance and forced to withdraw while suffering heavy casualties.

An imperial juggernaut runs frenzy in the streets of Magden. The news of the Master's new secret weapons spread throughout the country. The holy men begin a vigorous campaign against anybody willing to speak out the "wrong thoughts" about the magical constructs.

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 into the welcoming arms of the Master in Hule.

Year AC 1004

Spring, AC 1004: Everywhere in the empire, rotting corpses escape their graves and spread terror in the rural communities and city. Troops of undead begin their long march toward the Black Mountains. The whole country's population locks itself inside in fear of the creatures of the dark.

Maharaja Kabir Rudraksha of Kadesh is contacted by the agents of the Master. They promise him with the control of Peshmir if he supports Kiritan in his upcoming coup. The *maharaja* agrees and secretly prepares his troops.

Summer, AC 1004: A detachment of Talmav settlers arrive 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*.

The actions of the Hulean agents in Sind spark violent caste friction across the country. The growing social tension inside the country diverts the *rajadhiraja* from the news of military buildup in the Black Mountains.

New contingents of goblinoids from the Yazak Steppes are added to the already gigantic army in the Black Mountains. Once again, they wreak havoc all along their path, Olgar being the worst-hit part of the empire.

Fall, AC 1004: Growing tensions among the humanoids in the Black Mountains threaten to spark a major war in the region. Nevertheless, the stage is set for the Master to advance onto Sind. Agents spread the rumor of underground riches in the cave complex under the Plain of Fire, causing hundreds of wealth-hungry humanoids (about a third of the Master's forces in the Black Mountains) to head for Graakhalia. The Graakharians fight fiercely, then desperately as band after band of orcs, goblins, bugbears, hobgoblins and other humanoids press deeper into Graakhalia's labyrinth.

A southward surprise offensive by the Yzhor humanoids allows them to lay siege around Sardzka-Bozen, in southern Douzbakjian. The Douzbaks are overwhelmed by the swift offensive and are forced to retreat inside the city after suffering heavy losses. Help comes hastily from Sardjikjian, weary of the Douzbaks' impotence and worried by the humanoids being at its frontier. While nominally part of Douzbakjian, the city becomes under Kiteng's tutelage.

Chengouch spies in the Black Mountains report of the rapid move of the Hulean troops toward the underground network of Graakhalia. The Council of the Black Dagger is held in urge to discuss about the action to undertake. A close vote of 12 to 9 in favor of keeping this information secret, prevents the Chengouch to send an emissary to Sind. The decision is justified by the fear that, would the Master learn about their knowledge of his plans, he might take steps to violently retaliate against the small country.

Year AC 1005

Winter, AC 1005: Humanoids secure Graakhalia's upper levels against the elves and gnolls. More forces are moved into place by the Master. Kiritan ul Nervi, egged on by Hulean agents, stages a coup against his brother. The counter-uprising of Sind's people is met by thousands of humanoids and Hulean troops appearing out of the earth itself to fight on the side of the new *rajadhiraja*. More humanoids pour into Sind from the Plain of Fire and the eastern foothills of the Black Mountains, reinforced by Urduuk nomads and a tribe of ogres from the Sind

Desert. Kiritan's forces quickly gain control of Sayr Ulan, the *rajadhiraja* flees to Ulimwengu. Fleeing Sindhi seek shelter in the valleys of Kyurdukstan, where they are warmly welcomed by the locals.

Spring, AC 1005: Taking advantage of the Master's concentration over his strategy in Sind, the Monzag resistance sparks an uprising in Pusztòk. In a few days, the forces of Balàzs Khuen are able to liberate the city from its Hulean garrison. Monzags across the country rejoice for what seems to be the first step toward the liberation of their country. More tribes from the Sendarian Forest enter the Hulean protectorate to help their cousins shake Hule's control over the region.

Rajadhiraja Kiritan ul Nervi consolidates his position as Sind's new ruler. Many *rajas* accept the situation, seeing an opportunity to increase their own power. Only the *rajas* of Jalawar, Baratkand and Peshmir refuse to recognize Kiritan's claim to the crown.

Renardois traders from Preuve set up a formal trading post in the Zuyevan port-city of Kishinev. Renardois trade with Zuyevan has been increasing in the past few years and the establishment of the trading post cements the friendly relationship between the two countries.

Encouraged by the arrival of fresh troops from the north, Grazhur Yzhorgan marches on Tashgoun. He is met with fierce resistance from the Douzbak cavalry, but inadequate training and equipment seal the fate of the Douzbaks. Siege is laid around Tashgoun in early Klarmont, still, it is an incomplete siege since the capital city is continually supplied through the Yalu Sea. The court is almost unaffected by the siege and resumes its lavish life as most of its luxurious products are brought by ships. Meanwhile, the city's population is experiencing with scarcity and frustration.

Summer, AC 1005: Resolute to quell any kind of unrest that might disrupt the march of his armies abroad, the Master and powerful wizards summon infernal creatures and send them in Monzag. The ensuing retaliation is horrible as fiends and nightmarish creatures from other planes are unleashed in the streets of Pusztòk and the northern valleys of Monzag. The rebels are quickly overwhelmed by the magical creatures and are forced to retreat chaotically to the northern forests. The losses in terms of lives are terrible, but the few months of uprising have allowed the rebels to extend their network of resistance to the entire country.

The three *rajas* of Sind who refused to acknowledge Kiritan as *rajadhiraja* attempt to overthrow the usurper. Opposed from without by Kiritan's Hule-backed forces and from within by spies and stooges, the attempted coup fails miserably. Kadesh seizes the opportunity to invade Peshmir.

Fall, AC 1005: Corrupted sentinels guarding Tashgoun walls leave a hatch open during the night. In less than an hour dozens of humanoids pour into the sleeping city and break open the city's doors. The hordes of Grazhur Yzhorgan are free to enter the city and to sack its fabulous riches. Grazhur has every members of the court crucified outside the walls of the royal castle. He renames Tashgoun into Wogar, in respect for his patron, and chooses it as the new capital of his reign of terror.

In Azardjian, followers of magical researches associated with Rad are slain by Grouzhinian fanatics. The assassins are chased by the Azard troops deep into the Grouzhinian territory until they bounce in a detachment of this country's military. A clash ensues that triggers a war between the two countries. Kavkaz is slowly brought into the same madness as the Old World.

Year AC 1006

Winter, AC 1006: His power over Sind now relatively secure, the Master convinces Kiritan to invade Darokin. The combined forces of Sind's armies and the Desert Nomads overwhelm Darokin's defenses and drive the republic's armies before them.

Slowly becoming aware of his mission, Ustalam Banshybek spends the winter on the northern coast of the Yalu Sea, among the nomadic tribes of the central steppes of Brun. There, he learns the ways of the nomads, and poses as a prophet. His displays of powerful magics make a great impression over the nomads, who profit of the annual gathering to settle cross-tribes disputes and unite under Ustalam's banner.

Spring, AC 1006: Confident in the upcoming victory over the eastern nations, the Master sends some of his reserve troops to take advantage of the religious war in the Savage Baronies. Though surprised at first, the

baronies unite to overcome the new threat and are able to hold Hule at bay even given the superior manpower of the northern empire.

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 are begun—Laika, Rzev and Andropov. 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 Magnitogorod and Sharya.

Chandra ul Nervi hastily pulls together his own army of Urduk nomads, mercenaries, brigands, and outlaws from the Barren Plains and the Sind Desert to retake Sind while its fighting forces are occupied in Darokin. Panicking, Kiritan withdraws his armies from Darokin to meet his brother's threat. The Master's forces, weakened by this sudden loss of manpower, begin to lose the ground they had gained in Darokin.

Having convinced three important tribes of northern nomads, Ustalam tries to push the humanoids of Yzhor out of northwestern Douzbakjian. Swift cavalry raids on both sides lead to no clear military decision. The conflict evolves toward a stalemate, the forces of Ustalam unable to reach Noumalik. Meanwhile, confident in his minions' superiority in combat, Grazhur Yzhorgan mounts a surprise offensive across the central Midlands Steppes toward Kiteng, the Sardjikian capital.

Summer, AC 1006: Seeing that Kiritan has pulled out of the western front, the Master is forced to withdraw the troops he had committed to the offensive in the Savage Baronies. The Savage Baronies celebrate their victory over the common enemy.

As the eastern armies drive the Desert Nomads from Darokin, Kiritan's armies barely manage to hold off Chandra ul Nervi's irregular troops. Disgusted with this turn of events, the Master diverts his reserve forces to reinforce Kiritan's armies—rather than sending them to Darokin as originally planned. The Master relinquishes his hold on Darokin but tightens his grip on Sind.

Taking advantage of the conflict between the Azards and the Grouzhinians, and of Hule's preoccupation in the east, Dvinzina sends an invading force against Azardjian. The intervention of Dvinzina in the bilateral conflict between Azardjian and Grouzhina sets stage to yet another divisive Kavkazian war. However, just days after the Master's retreat from Darokin, a huge meteor slams into northern Darokin. Tremors resulting from the impact can be sensed as far as the Black Mountains, waking up the local telluric activity and a violent seism rocks all Kavkaz. Seeing in this earthquake a sign of the Immortals, the warring parties turn to their motherland hoping to help the reconstruction of the worst hit regions.

Fall, AC 1006: Hulean divisions are sent after Chandra ul Nervi across the Great Waste to Ulimwengu. The few soldiers and humanoids who survive the resulting massacre bring word of Ulimwengu's magical defenses back to Hule.

Throughout summer, a strange game of cats and dogs has taken place between the humanoids of Yzhor and the Sardjik cavalry in the central Midlands Steppes. Few real battles have taken place and the biggest skirmishes have been sold by the orderly withdrawal of one of the adversaries. With winter coming, however, it is no time to stay in the wind-bitten grasslands. Grazhur's armies are forced to retreat toward Sardzka-Bozen, in a pledge to take the Sardjik-held city. They find that some forces of Ustalam are already there reinforcing the Sardjik. Wishing to kill two annoyances with a sole blow, Grazhur sends the core of his army against the Sardjik-northern nomads coalition. He is surprised to arrive in a city emptied from its population... and even more surprised at the news that the slicker and faster human cavalry was able to reach and take Tashgoun, his capital, during his journey toward Sardzka-Bozen. He prepares to lay his winter camp in the emptied city, while Ustalam and his nomads rejoice in the newly-freed capital of the Douzbak.

Year AC 1007

Winter, AC 1007: Hule and the Kavkaz experience one of their coldest winter in years as the dust from Alphaks's meteor and numerous small volcanic eruptions cloud the sun's rays. Huge snowfalls block most of the

Kavkazian valleys during an especially long winter. The populations who were hit by the earthquake are particularly exposed to the temperatures as few have had the time to rebuild a decent home.

Days before the thawing of the last ices over the Yalu Sea nomads from the northern steppes land around Noumalik. A siege is quickly laid by these new allies of Ustalam. The local orc captain, Hurrouek Jir'dramt, knows it's a matter of time before he is overwhelmed by the nomads. He surrenders the city and begins a march to join the remnants of the army of Yzhor in Sardzka-Bozen.

Spring, AC 1007: Kiritan vows to root out the last of his brother's supporters and begins a systematic program of oppression. The Master of Hule and his agents are more than happy to assist. Scores of desperate Sindhi flee into the desert or in the mountains of the Kyurduks. Among them is Rehmin, a brigand from Baratkand who takes the head of an eclectic band of Urduk, Kyurdak, Sindhi, and Graakhalian refugees dedicated to the end of the Master's empire.

The small force of Hurrouek reaches Sardzka-Bozen, only to found Grazhur's army battered by months of famine and intensive cold. Grazhur is only the shadow of the great war leader he once was, who keeps mumbling that he has been betrayed by the Immortals, and, sometimes, starts running without reason while shouting to invisible demons. Concluding that his former leader is definitely insane, Hurrouek takes upon himself to continue what once was the humanoids' goal: to reach Hule. The day of the departure, Grazhur is nowhere to be seen.

Summer, AC 1007: While being constantly harassed by the Sardjiks' cavalry, the remnants of the Yzhor army reach the northern border of Azardjian. The unprepared Azards are surprised by the sudden invasion of a humanoid army still strong of hundreds of desperate and hungry warriors. The troops ravage most of the countryside in northern Azardjian before being met by a significant Azard response.

An expert strategist, Rehmin surprises many Kyurduks by a blitz campaign to subdue as many Kyurdak clans as possible. The Sindhi brigand begins a meteoric rise among the Kyurduks clan society. He establishes his main stronghold in the southwestern portion of Kyurdukstan, near Hayebil. Clanmasters in Djukhra and Nidzhman are increasingly worried by Rehmin's growing power, they feel even more threatened by the rumors of dragons fighting on the side of the brigand.

Ustalam retakes the ghost city of Sardzka-Bozen, taking prisoner an insane orc, who is sent to Tashgoun's dungeons of oblivion. Strong of his alliance with many northern nomadic tribes, Ustalam begins the task of uniting them in a coherent force and starts sending emissary to the neighboring countries to build an alliance against Hule. Tales of a forgotten nomadic empire stretching as far as the southern warm seas reappear in the elders' mouths. Ustalam himself calls for the conquest of a new empire as big as Dorfin's for the nomads to roam freely.

Prince Lomov representing the Zuyevan Empire visits Louvines, the capital of Renardie. He holds in-depth friendly discussions with the Renardois king and a formal alliance is signed. Prince Lomov's military attaché also holds discussions with his opposite number—amongst the matters discussed is a joint crusade against the humanoids of the western Yazak steppes.

Fall, AC 1007: Elves fleeing Alfheim's invasion by the shadow elves reach the Desert of Sind and Kavkaz; some of them join the forces of Rehmin while others settles along their brethren of the Ozungan Plateau. Despite the mistrust of the native elves, ties begin to develop between the two groups.

Attacked from every side by the Azards, the humanoids of Yzhor quickly retreat to the hills of the Borderlands where they are free to rest in a more hospitable zone.

Growing political struggles in Kyurdukstan lead to the grouping of the clan head along three broad alliances: Rehmin's crusaders in the central Kyurdak Valleys; Djukhra's barons, to the east; and the forces of Tharar Arbaneshid around Nidzhman. The three powers play chicken for a while waiting for one to make a diplomatic or military mistake, but none come before the first snows, when the three groups are isolated in their respective valleys.

Year AC 1008

Spring, year 1008: The mistake comes from Tharar's sides when Kyurduk raiders allied with him plunder some Grouzhinian villages near the two countries' frontier. Houriani, Grouzhina's capital, is preparing for retaliation, when an envoy from Rehmin arrives and proposes a deal: his armies will bring the guilty in front of the Grouzhinian law, if Grouzhina accelerates its military buildup at its eastern frontier, near Azardjian and eastern Kyurdukstan. More than happy to avoid depleting the eastern border with Azardjian, the Grouzhinians begin to add pressure on the eastern barons, freeing Rehmin from their menace. His army begins a swift attack against the western clans already undermined by internal conflict over the decision of attacking Grouzhina.

Agents from the Master meet the humanoids of Yzhor. They are told that Hule would be glad to welcome them if they want. Hurrouek and his troops are incorporated among the ranks of the regular Hulean army.

In Sind, spring is marked by the beginning of what will be countless uprisings, civil unrest, riots, and assassination attempts against Kiritan's power. The Master is enraged about his way of managing the country, and orders him to tighten his control or suffer the consequences.

Summer, AC 1008: Kazmens and Balits join the rank of Ustalam in order to participate in the great project of creating a gigantic nomadic empire in the Yalu River Basin. The teachings of Ustalam act like a magnet for the diverse nomadic tribes of the steppes of central Brun.

Even though no one would dare speak out publicly against the Master's control of the empire, many in Hule begin to think that the old tyrant time is done. The military reversals in Darokin and Ulimwengu as well as the growing cost of control over Sind feeds the discontent about the state of the empire.

After a short siege, Nidzman is taken by the forces of Rehmin, thus finalizing the control of the northwestern half of Kyurdukstan by his troops.

Fall, AC 1008: The Heldannic plague hits Sind and, later, the Kavkaz. The disease takes a heavy toll in all the social strata of Sind, and also increases the burden of misery suffered by the population. In Kavkaz, the plague is particularly vicious in Azardjian, Chengouch and eastern Kyurdukstan. Rehmin and his people are mostly spared from the disease thanks to the high number of clerics of diverse obedience among them.

Year AC 1009

Spring, AC 1009: Kazmen scouts following the Yalu River Valley southwards stumble upon a northbound Zuyevan detachment. A merciless skirmish ensues from which no clear victor emerges. Both sides believe that they are on their own lands. The surviving Zuyevans quickly withdraw to the Andropov Fortress on the southern bank of Nyezhin River to call for reinforcements. The Kazmen are nowhere to be found however, as they themselves withdraw to inform Ustalam of the developments. Ustalam learns that he is not the only one with a goal of creating an empire stretching along the banks of the Yalu River.

More abuses by Kiritan ul Nervi in Sind forces more Sindhi to flee; many end up in Kyurdukstan reinforcing the growing armies of Rehmin and his crusade against Hule.

The Heldannic plague hits Hule, hurting the Master off-balance while many clerics are abroad trying to save the high hand of Hule over Sind. The plague is seen by the population as an Immortal condemnation of the Master's policy, but only a few, short-lived, civil unrest ensue.

Summer, AC 1009: Chandra ul Nervi surrenders. He agrees to abide the Master's rule in order to stop the abuses his people suffer. The Master sees this as a way to quiet Sind's unrest and promptly replaces Kiritan with Chandra ul Nervi. Kiritan is sent to Greatrealm never to be heard about again.

Rehmin and his troops move into the western valley, hoping to unite Kyurdukstan before winter. He is met with strong resistance from the local barons.

Talmav cavalry spearheading Zuyovo's expansion northeast of the Tunguska Forest skirmish with Douzbakjian horsemen riding westward from their nation. The ancient homelands of the Yevo more than 1,000 years ago were slightly north of the steppes where these clashes occur. The Zuyevans fully intend to reclaim their homelands

and will brook no interference with this birthright. *Tsar* Andrei, enraged with the Douzbakjian presence, orders Zuyevan troops northwards to support the Talmav outriders.

Fall, AC 1009: Yielding to the superior numbers of Zuyevan troops in the steppes west of Douzbakjian, Ustalam recalls his troops from the region. Ustalam realizes that fighting a war with both Hule and Zuyevo would be suicidal. To realize his destiny, and reward his allies with great conquests, he decides to adopt a non-confrontational policy with Zuyevo and instead move south against Hule

The Week Without Magic impedes most of the actions taking place in the region. Rehmin disappears from the battlefield during a critical combat, his forces left without the help of their clerics and of their traditional dragon allies are routed by the forces of the western barons. As even Rehmin has mysteriously disappeared, his forces start to think that the Immortals have failed them. However, after a week of disorganized retreat, Rehmin and the dragons reappear and he starts rebuilding his troops' confidence lost during the week without magic.

The Master also disappears during a critical week for Hule. During this week of chaos minions of dark planes are unleashed and run amok in the streets of the main cities, dark wizards die unexpectedly from the loss of their magic, creatures long held in the Dark Wood rampage throughout the Hulean countryside, the clerics of the Temple of Chaos find themselves stripped of their powers, and sectarians proclaiming the coming of the apocalypse start enflaming the population. Finally, after a week of turmoil in the empire, the Master reappears even if he looks quite weakened, he retakes the control over the hagiarchy and launches a critical offensive to prevent the situation from getting out of hand.

The worst-hit country in the region is probably Azardjian, which relied the most on magical niceties. The elementals of diverse spheres common in the country are set loose and wreak havoc in the cities, many buildings collapse in the capital killing thousands, and, worst, the archmage dies of accelerated aging as do many of most powerful Azard magic-users, thus triggering a vivid succession struggle. The Week Without Magic has, in fact, decapitated the Azardjian ruling class, plunging the country into one of its worst civil wars as magic-users compete for the archmage title.

Year AC 1010

Winter, AC 1010: Much like in the Old World, the 1009 winter is particularly snowy and communication within and through the Black Mountains are nearly interrupted. Avalanches are frequent in the highest valleys and exert their toll on the Chengouch and Kyurduk populations. In the Hulean Empire, the Northern Military Route is almost impracticable. Taking advantage of their better mobility and of their experience of snow and winter conditions, the rebels of Monzag extend their resistance network inside the empire as the Hulean authorities have nearly lost contact with the remotest regions.

Spring, AC 1010: Floods of historical proportions hit the Great Hulean Basin. The main Hulean cities located along the rivers are flooded, Khuur is the single most affected Hulean city as the Rostin and Thanat Rivers rise about five meters over their normal level. In the Black Mountains, landslides and deadly avalanches threaten any moves.

Since land-based attacks on the eastern richest lands are impeded by the climatic situation and by the situation in Sind, and since his own fleet has not been rebuilt since the terrible naval defeat of AC 975, the Master hires mercenaries and pirates from the Black Eagle Barony and the Savage Coast to harass Darokin's overseas trade. The Sea Reavers become a major threat to trade in the Malpheggi Bay.

Summer, AC 1010: Taking advantage of disorganization brought to the western barons by last year's terrible winter, Rehmin's troops and their Grouzhinian allies strike at them. Progression toward Djukhra is steady during most of the season.

Seeing the evolution of the military situation in Kavkaz as a threat to his plans of southward conquests, Ustalam Banshybek launches a diplomatic offensive to clear the path leading to Hule. The Sardjiks, earning a lot from their commercial arrangement with the Master, are against a formal alliance with someone dedicated to the end of Hule, an alliance assured of retaliations. Sendaryan tribes and the Monzag rebels, on the other hand, are more than happy to improve their contacts with an ally as big as Ustalam's confederation of tribes. Finally, more interested by eastward conquests in Azardjian, Dvinzina declines the offer to turn against Hule.

Darokin strikes the new pirate threat, but its navy is unable to root out the pirates from their hideouts.

The struggle to find a new archmage in Azardjian intensifies. As many prominent wizards are killed during duels or vendettas, the country loses most of his primary military might.

In Hule, several goblinoid tribes revolt against the Master and start plundering the neighboring lands. Their main reason for revolting is the terrible condition in which winter has left them and dissatisfaction with the riches plundered in Sind and Darokin.

Farther west, the Empire of Zuyevko annexes the small Kingdom of Drazde. Still recovering from a violent civil war, the Yezchamenid Empire (Drazde's former suzerain), hindered by pro-Zuyevan rebel factions, is unable to impede the Zuyevan progression. The annexation of the small kingdom opens a new front in Zuyevko's struggle with the humanoids of the Yazak Steppes. It also opens the door for increasing Zuyevan influence on the Greater Yalu Bay region.

Fall, AC 1010: The humanoids' rebellion is strongly met by the Master's loyal troops; few of the rebels are spared.

Djukhra falls to the hand of Rehmin's forces. The last western barons surrender or join the brigand's ragtag troops. For the first time in its history, Kyurdukstan is unified under the rule of a sole man.

The armies of the Sublime Octagon Order of Dvinzina pour into the territory of Azardjian, they progress easily in the devastated country and meet little or no resistance along the way to Azkoran, where they mainly find rubbles and desperate people. Winter stops their offensive after some one third of the country is under Dvinzinian rule. The Azards are too divided over the question of succession to turn against the foreign threat.

Year AC 1011

Winter, AC 1011: The first Day of Dread is seen with worry by all in the region, but, unlike during the terrible Week Without Magic, notwithstanding a few creatures set loose, the damages are minor and no important character disappears.

Spring, AC 1011: Pirates hired by the Master continue to be successful in escaping the Darokinians. More ships are boarded and sunk.

In Sind, a new religion develops among the Shehid mystics ranks. The followers of Gareth extol a philosophy against the intervention of Immortals in mortal affairs, a religion that puts aside the old worships.

Seeing the invasion of Azardjian by the Dvinzinian religious fanatics as a threat, Rehmin and his Grouzhinian allies make a coordinate offensive against Azardjian and occupy the remaining two-thirds of the country. The infuriated Sublime Octagon Order has no choice but to accept the division of Azardjian. The part of the land occupied by Dvinzina becomes the nexus of religious intolerance in the region, and the two other thirds become harbors for the persecuted.

Summer, AC 1011: In Kavkaz, the military situation is frozen, with Azardjian divided in three roughly equal slices. Diplomatic overtures by the Grouzhinian-Kyurduk alliance toward Dvinzina are dryly refused.

Dvinzina turns toward the Confederation of the Northern Tribes as a mean to overcome the new unfavorable situation in Kavkaz. Rehmin and his allies propose an alliance with Ustalam's forces as both are looking to the end of the Hulean Empire, but strangely, the emissaries are harshly repelled at the border of Douzbakjian. Sardjikjian is increasingly isolated in the developing networks of alliances in the Midlands, but is even more uncomfortable about an alliance with Hule.

Surprised by the quick transformation of the Midlands' military-political landscape, the Master tries to influence the balance of power in his favor by encouraging unrest among the Azards. But the results are, at best, mitigated since the revolts don't bring an Azard leader charismatic enough to wake up the national fiber.

Contacts are made between the Zuyevans and the exiled Olgarian Church of Traladara. The Olgarian Church and the Zuyevan Orthodox Church share many similar sympathies so the Empire of Zuyevko 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 1011: The new situation in the Midlands forces the Master to dispatch new troops at the northeastern border. The cost of the occupation of Sind is growing as troops are nearly extended to their limits.

Courted by both Midlands' alliances (the one led by Ustalam Banshybek, and the other by Rehmin), Chengouch prefer to keep their traditional neutrality.

Year AC 1012

Winter, AC 1012: The Huleans undergo a major crackdown against the Freedom Warriors of Sind, one of their prominent leader, Bel Valin, is charged with treason charges. The Master is confident that the resistance group will be quickly crushed by his agents and the local Sindhi administration.

Summer, AC 1012: In order to ease the tensions growing once more in the Hulean humanoid communities, the Master launches a swift invasion of the small city state of Nova Svoga. The weak state is quickly conquered by hordes of humanoids coming from the Janizary Lands.

In Kavkaz, the standoff continues, and more Azards flee the Dvinzinian portion of their state.

Fall, AC 1012: Hulean emissaries meet with the members of the Signatory Council of the City States over the question of the conquest of Nova Svoga. The Huleans guarantee that there won't be more military actions taken in the region.

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, Zuyev dis派ches some of its Talmav troops to take control of the mineral-rich Freeland 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.

Year AC 1013

Winter, AC 1013: More troops are pulled out of Sind to face the threats to the Hulean control over the western parts of the empire despite the worsening of the situation in the eastern possessions of Hule.

Spring, AC 1013: A massive Hulean counterattack is mounted against the Talmav troops of the Empire of Zuyev in the northern Bylot Hills. They are met with strong resistance from the Zuyevans and are also harassed by the Sendaryan tribes from the Zanovoi 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 depleting 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. The Sardjik response to the invasion is to turn toward Rehmin and his allies for help. Help is granted on the spot, and from the region they occupy in northern Azardjian, thousands of the best Grouzhinian troops will come to the rescue of the fledgling Sardjik government.

Under the weight of the Hulean onslaught, the Zuyevans retreat from the Bylot Hills to their possessions east of 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.

The Sindhi armies are less and less able to contain the unrest brought by the followers of Gareth and the Freedom Fighters. The Master's pressure on Chandra ul Nervi is growing since the rebels disrupt the economic

activities in the region in which they are active. A threat of massive retaliation on the Sindhi people is addressed to the *rajadhiraja* if he is to fail.

Fall, AC 1013: Pouring in the battle more troops from Bulzan and the Janizary Lands, the Master is able to tilt the military balance to his advantage in Olgar. Although the main cities are regained from the Olgarians' hand, most of the countryside is in a state of guerrilla warfare. The Master hesitates to adopt a scorched-earth strategy against the rebels since important revenues derived from this protectorate would be exhausted for the years to come.

Meanwhile, as more troops from the northern frontier arrive, Monzag rebels and Sendarian nomads undertake a series of quick raids to test the Hulean resistance and affect the troops' moral.

Increasingly worried by the actions of the northern nomads of Ustalam, the Chengouch council decides to support Rehmin's side economically, even if they do not commit troops into the ongoing war in Sardjikjian.

Year AC 1014

Winter, AC 1014: Kiteng is taken by the Confederation of the Northern Tribes; the Grouzhinian-Sardjik alliance undertakes a strategic withdrawal to reinforce the eastern part of Sardjikjian.

Spring, AC 1014: Chandra ul Nervi asks for Hulean assistance to crush the followers of Gareth, and squadrons of humanoids are sent to put an end to the teachings of the religious sect. At first they are held in check by the fortified religious, but in the end the Huleans are victorious, and the mystic imprisoned; only to be freed a week later by bandits.

The humanoids of Hool's Great Migration enter the territory of Sind at Chandbali (at the northeastern border with Darokin), their arrival brings more trouble to the already shaky military control of Hule over Sind.

Willing to disrupt the reinforcements of Rehmin's alliance's troops in eastern Sardjikjian and finish its conquest of Azardjian, Dvinzina attacks Grouzhina in northern Azardjian.

The Master's troops in Olgar finish cleansing the area of the last obviously rebellious groups. The 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 Zuyovo's plans to extend its influence in the Converted Lands.

Summer, AC 1014: Throughout Sind, the Freedom Fighters intensify their guerrilla actions, thus adding pressure on the already over-extended military of Hule and further degrading the level of revenues received by Hule from its occupation of Sind. Furthermore, the humanoids of Hool start raiding the Sindhi countryside in eastern Sind. The Master is quickly coming to realize how much of a hassle it is to continue occupying Sind.

Meanwhile, the efforts of the Master to trigger a war in the city states are finally rewarded as Slagovich and Zvornik declare war at each other.

In Kavkaz, the Dvinzinian troops are routed at the doors of Sakirdeby by Rehmin's alliance. However, the Sardjiks are forced to leave Nyaburd to the hand of the northern nomads. Ustalam's troops are finally positioned to launch their attack on Hule and make contact with the Dvinzinians, but time his needed to secure this position against Rehmin's forces.

Fall, AC 1014: The Great Migration is defeated by the Sindhi army in Jalawar and forced to retreat in the wilderness of Atruaghin. Also, dissent among the Freedom Fighters and the followers of Gareth has halted most of their guerrilla attacks.

Confident that the current trend in Sind will stabilize his control over his eastern possessions, the Master undertakes a bold move to prevent the northern nomads from entering Hule: some of his best troops are sent in the Borderlands to prepare a surprise attack against Nyaburd. This wasn't to count on the alliance between the Ustalam and the Sendarian tribes, so the Hulean troops quickly find themselves locked between the Sendarian

Tribes, the northern nomads and Dvinzina. The Master is forced to commit more troops to help the front-line, thus dragging the Hulean military in the Kavkazian conflicts.

Year AC 1015

Spring, AC 1015: Contrarily to the Master's expectations, the rebellion intensifies in Sind. Nagpuri is liberated by the Freedom Fighters and the followers of Gareth. From this newly liberated *mumlyket*, the rebels undertake many guerrilla operations in the neighboring lands of Gunjab, which will lead them to take Raneshwar, Gunjab's capital city. Also, uprisings shake Hule's control in Jhengal. Adding to the Sindhi's rebellion, the once-thought-to-be-destroyed Great Migration resumes its raiding activities in Jalawar.

Meanwhile, the Master's troops' situation in the Borderlands is growing desperate as the northern nomads are nearing Hule's northern border. Help comes from the most unexpected side: Rehmin and his troops, a group renowned for their hatred of the Master's empire, strike at the back of the northern nomads by launching a surprise attack against Nyaburd, their base of operation in Sardjikjian. This is just enough for the Master to be relieved and to withdraw his troops from the Borderlands.

Summer, AC 1015: The Hulean military in Sind strikes back against the rebels. They lay siege around Raneshwar. The only victory of this months-long siege is the death of Anand Brishnapur—one of the rebel leaders—while he was attempting a sortie. Also, in Jalawar, the Huleans are able to secure a decisive victory during the siege of Sambay over Hool's Great Migration, which is definitely pushed into the doldrums as Hool is captured by the Huleans.

Troops from around the empire are gathered to the northeastern frontier as the northern nomads of Ustalam Banshybek are amassing armies in the newly-conquered Borderlands. However, while the Master is preparing the defense of Hule, the nomads are occupied to resume the threat on their eastern flank. In a combined effort to root out Rehmin's forces of western Kavkaz, Ustalam's troops and the Dvinzinian army pounce on the Grouzhinians and Sardjiks only to be surprised by a lightning offensive from the Chengouch territory by Rehmin's troops on Dvinzina itself. The Dvinzinian troops are forced to withdraw disorderly to defend their capital while the nomads face the core of the Sardjik-Grouzhinian forces. The result of the last set of combat are mitigated and leave the three sides (Hule, the northern nomads and Rehmin's alliance) in much or less the same situation as previously. The only major change is that Rehmin's alliance now has a direct outlet at the Hulean border since it has secured control over southern Dvinzina and controls the Çuyak Tepe.

The rebellious speech of Peshmir's *maharaja*, Hara Rudraksha, sparked unrest in Karakandar, an uprising quickly crushed by the Hulean forces in the *mumlyket*.

The agents of the Master are able to turn the Great Migration's remnants on their side after convincing Hool that it will be easier for him to retrieve the sacred Blue Knife if he's allied with the Master.

Fall, AC 1015: Intensive military buildup on every sides in and around Dvinzina. The troops of the three lords (the Master, Ustalam Banshybek and Rehmin) gather to defend their territory during the winter and prepare for next year.

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 Hyborian steppes. Also, he masses a number of regiments at Zablin for a push south toward 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.

Adding a new sore spot to the Master's unsteady empire, Regent Stephan Karvich takes advantage of the last warm days to attack the Hulean garrison in Nova Svoga.

FAMOUS PEOPLE

Distinguished Dead

Aw'ar: The demi-ogre and chief priest of Sumag died of natural causes on Kaldmont 18, AC 1015. What effect this will have on the state of religious affairs among the people of Sumag (on the western side of the Immortals' Arm Mountains) is unknown.

Azcotica: The Emperor of the Azcans in the Hollow World was shot by a poisoned dart shortly after sacrificing the Azcan hero Papalotl. Given that clerical magic is ineffective on Kaldmont 28 (the day of the poisoning), it is unlikely that he survived the assault. Azcotica was 33 years old.

Brishnapur, Anand: A mystic of the Shehid Order in Sind, Anand dedicated most of his 35 years to righting injustices to his fellow men. Since receiving a vision in AC 1011, he has been a strong supporter of the new Immortal Gareth, and has been one of the key figures in the fight against Hulean oppression in Sind. He was slain on Klarmont 11 of last year, while fighting to protect his people from an ambush.

Erendyl, Gilfronden: The elven general was captured by forces of the Shadow Lord during an assault on the city of Drax Tallen last year. Not long afterwards, on Eirmont 5, he was beheaded by the Shadow Lord himself as a demonstration of that monarch's power.

Galeifel, Garafaele: Radiant General of the City of Stars. The greatest general of the shadow elves was slain while defending the Temple of Rafiel from invading Schattenalfen on Kaldmont 28 of last year. The general was 569 years old.

Grunalf, Aeleris: An elven scout. He and several companions were slain on Swiftmont 3, AC 1015 while exploring the southern forest of Geffron atop the Denagoth plateau.

Hordson, Geir: The son of Hord Dark-Eye and Yrsa Svalasdottir, former king and queen of Ostland. On Ambrymont 6, the 19-year-old was slain in battle. Ironically, his death was instrumental in the peace agreements between the Cnute and Ostman clans of Ostland.

McDuff, Myra: The Baroness of Uigmuir was finally laid to rest on Swiftmont 4, AC 1015. Evidently, she had been dead for nearly half a century, her ghost lingering and running the affairs of her dominion. After being reunited with her long lost son, Angus McClintock (nee McDuff), she was able to at last pass on to Limbo. The baroness was 24 at the time of her death in AC 970.

McGregor, Brannart: There are unconfirmed reports that the Prince of Klantyre may have met his demise sometime in AC 1015. The 89-year-old sorcerer has been more reclusive than ever, leading some to speculate that he may no longer be among the living. Possible causes are Ethengar nomads (who rampaged through his dominion last year), or members of his own family.

Moglai: The Great *Khan* of Ethengar met his demise in battle with Glantrian forces on Fyrmont 20 of last year. Having nearly slain Prince Jaggar von Drachenfels in single combat, the mighty warrior was slain by Ludwig von Hendriks, the "Black Eagle." Moglai *Khan* was 57 years old.

Papalotl: The Azcan hero of the people was sacrificed to the Immortal Atzanteotl on Kaldmont 28, AC 1015. For the past several years he had wandered the Azcan countryside performing miracles and benefiting the commoners of the empire. Eyewitness accounts of his sacrifice report that his body was transformed into a winged serpent and flew into the sky, causing the appearance of the mysterious new blue sun in the Hollow World. This almanac makes no claims as to the accuracy of these rumors.

Smith, Ben: Commander of Fort Whitestone, located outside Cimarron County in the Savage Baronies. He was killed on Ambrymont 22 while battling an invading horde of Flat Nose goblins. The young commander was avenged at the Battle of Mustang shortly thereafter by his uncle, Sir John of the Wain, Duke of Cimarron.

Virayana, Jherek: Prince Virayana was killed in the defense of his principality of Krondahar on Fyrmont 4 of last year. His body was incinerated in spectacular combat with an Ethengar *hakomon* (wizard). He is survived by his three wives, two sons, and numerous concubines. Prince Virayana was 57 years old.

Famous Folk

Bergthor Haraldson: King of Vestland. The eldest son of the former king Gudmundson, Bergthor was educated in the Minrothad Guilds, after which he adventured extensively among the nations of the Old World. Born AC 983. Hair: black. Eyes: blue. Height: 6'. Bergthor's imposing, bear-like appearance is at odds with his thoughtful, compassionate nature. Combat Notes: AL LG; AC 3/6 (scale mail and *shield* +2); MV 9; human male F11; hp 84; THAC0 10; #AT 2/1 (long sword); Dmg 1d8+3 (*long sword* +1); S15 I14 W9 D10 C16 Ch12; ML 16; weapon specialization: long sword. Magical items: *shield* +2, *long sword* +1.

Ghazan Khan: Son of the late Oktai, Ghazan has risen to become the newest *khan* of the Taijits. He publicly denounced his father after proof of Oktai's treachery surfaced, and swore his allegiance to the Great *Khan* of Ethengar. He is a tormented young man, torn between his hatred over his father's treason and his loyalty to the man. Born: AC 994. Hair: black, shaved on top. Eyes: brown. Height: 5' 5". Wiry build; long mustache. In the Taijit tradition, Ghazan always wears some sort of head covering. Combat Notes: AL LN; AC 3 (banded mail); MV 12; F7; hp 41; THAC0 14; #AT 3/2 (saber or 2 composite short bows); Dmg 1d6+3 (*saber*+2) or 1d6 (composite short bow); Save F7; S14 D15 C11 I12 W10 Ch13; ML 14; weapon specialization: composite short bow. Magical items: *saber* +2.

Haarl: The bugbear Haarl fell victim to a *charm* spell cast by Killing Moon on one of the latter's early adventures, and accompanied him back to civilization. Since then, he has become a valuable (if not always reliable) companion to the Tiger clan wizard. Born AC 988. Hair: gray-black. Eyes: red. Height: 7' 2". This awkward giant is constantly breaking things—but is silent as the night when stalking his prey. Combat Notes: AL CN; AC 7 (chain mail and dexterity penalty); MV 9; bugbear male F8; hp 52; THAC0 13; #AT 2/1 (morning star); Dmg 2d4+9; S19 I8 W5 D5 C15 Ch6; ML 14; weapon specialization: morning star. Magical items: *collar of stiffness* (see AC4—protects wearer from effects of swords of sharpness and vorpal weapons.)

William Hazard: As a non-spellcaster raised in the slums of Vertiloch, William Hazard had few opportunities to make a his way in life. He joined the Alphatian army at the age of 16, and managed to be promoted through the ranks over the course of a distinguished military career. He retired from the army following the capture of Thyatis in AC 1009, where he retired to a farm in Bellissaria. His old friend, Commander Broderick, has managed to coax him out of his idleness for one last campaign against Mario's Marauders. Born AC 971. Hair: blond. Eyes: green. Height: 6'. Ruggedly handsome, lean build. He still bears scars on his back from a time when he was falsely accused of assaulting a superior officer. Combat Notes: AL NG; AC; MV; human male F14/T2; hp 89; THAC0 7; #AT 5/2 (light crossbow) or 2/1 (broad sword); Dmg 1d6 (light crossbow) or 2d4+2 (*broad sword* +1); S17 I12 W9 D15 C17 Ch13; ML 17; weapon specialization: light crossbow. Magical items: *broad sword* +1, *spyglass of seeing* (this item functions exactly like the *gem of seeing* in the DMG). (Note: Hazard and the members of his company are elite forces that are specially trained in the use of the crossbow. They utilize a kit similar to the Sharpshooter kit in PHBR6: *The Complete Book of Dwarves*. If not using that accessory, simply treat him as a light crossbow specialist with a rate of fire of 2/1 and a damage rating of 1d4).

Jemugu Khan: Son of Chagatai, Jemugu rose to take his father's place as *khan* of the Yakkas upon his father's death (of natural causes). He shares his father's vision of an Ethengar Empire, and was a loyal follower of Moglai *Khan*. Since the Great *Khan*'s death last year, Jemugu has turned his attentions to finally ridding the world of the hated Taijit clan. Born: AC 968. Hair: black, shaved on top. He wears a topknot. Eyes: brown. Height: 6'. Jemugu is massive figure for an Ethengar. Tall and imposing, he still manages a commanding presence even though he is getting on in years; his tendency to wear gaudy clothing only draws further attention to him. Combat Notes: AL LN; AC 3 (*banded mail* +1); MV 12; F13; hp 80; THAC0 8; #AT 5/2 (sabre or 2 composite short bows); Dmg 1d6+6 (sabre) or 1d6 (composite short bow); Save F13; S18/34 D12 C16 I9 W13 Ch10; ML 16; weapon specialization: sabre. Magical items: *banded mail* +1, *ring of spell turning*.

Killing Moon: Born in a Tiger Clan tribe, Killing Moon was persecuted for his studies in the magical arts. His life was saved by Finn Nimbletoes, a halfling merchant from Darokin. He has steadfastly served the halfling ever since, even following the merchant on his expedition to the Lost Valley of Hutaaka. Born AC 984. Hair: black. Eyes: green. Height: 5' 11". The copper-skinned Atruaghin native dresses in snakeskin clothing, in the manner of his totem-animal (the viper). Combat Notes: AL LN; AC 6 (*bracers of defense*); MV 12; human male M9; hp 27; THAC0 18; #AT 1 (blowgun) or spell; Dmg 1d3 + poison or by spell; S13 I14 W11 D9 C12 Ch12; ML 15. Magical items: *ring of human influence*, *bracers of defense*.

Manghai Khan: The heir to the Golden *Khan* has a difficult legacy to follow. He has been frantically attempting to unify the tribes of the Sea of Grass ever since they fragmented. It remains to be seen whether Moglai *Khan*'s son will be as capable of leading the Ethengar people as his predecessor. Born: AC 982. Hair:

black, shaved on top. Eyes: black. Height: 5' 9". Manghai is of slender build and has piercing dark eyes like his father. He often dresses in fine silken clothing. Combat Notes: AL N; AC 5 (scale mail); MV 12; human male F11; hp 62; THAC0 10; #AT 2 (sabre or short bow); Dmg 1d6+1 (sabre or *short bow +1*); S14 D15 C14 I13 W9 Ch13; ML 15; weapon specialization: composite short bow. Magical items: *short bow +1*.

Angus McDuff: During a raid into Glantri early in his career, Thar the orc-king kidnapped a minor noble, Lady Myra McDuff, and forced her to bear him a son; Angus McDuff is the product of that union. The infant Angus was rescued from Thar's clutches when forces from Fort Nordling drove the orc and his legions out of Glantri. He was raised by teachers at the Great School of Magic, under the name Angus McClintock, and rose to become a professor emeritus. Always shunned for his hideous looks, Angus left Glantri to explore the world, and eventually stumbled onto the lost city of Oenkmar. He remained in the ancient city for years, until he was forced to flee during the shadowelf invasion of AC 1012, whereupon he returned to the Great School of Magic, bringing a wealth of information about the ancient city and its people with him. Born: AC 970. Hair: white. Eyes: gray. Height: 5' 6". Angus's orcish heritage is evident to any who see him. From his porcine nose to his rotten teeth, he is truly an ugly sight to behold. He has long since given up any hope of attempting to disguise his appearance in public. Combat Notes: AL LG; AC 7 (*ring of protection +3*); MV 12; M15; hp 28; THAC0 16; #AT 1 spell; Dmg By spell; Save M15; S9 D14 C11 I18 W12 Ch6; ML 10. Magical items: *ring of protection +3*, *Boccob's blessed book*.

Qenildor Erewan: Baron of Celedyl. For years, Qenildor waged a fruitless guerrilla war against the goblinoids of the Great Crater. As a Glantrian noble, he now hopes to fight from within the system. Born AC 967. Hair: blond. Eyes: blue. Height: 5' 7". Qenildor is always armed and most often seen wearing his military uniform. Combat Notes: AL CG; AC 5 (elven chain mail); MV 12; elf male F9/M10; hp 55; THAC0 12; #AT 3/2 (sabre), 2/1 (longbow), or by spell; Dmg 1d6+5 (*sabre +3*) or 1d6+4 (*longbow +4*) or by spell; S16 I15 W14 D13 C16 Ch12; ML 17. Magical items: *sabre +3*, *longbow +4*, *boots of elvenkind*.

Thunder: Born to one of the premiere noble families in Bluenose, Arogansa (Alphatia), Thunder grew accustomed to the good life at an early age. Upon reaching adolescence, his family was scandalized to learn that their only son (he has two older sisters) was unable to utilize magic. His family allowed him enough money to become gentry—the highest status a non-magic user can attain in Alphatia. He quickly tired of his lesser status and journeyed to Thyatis, where he quickly rose through the social ranks due to his good looks and foppish charm, and his antics with one of the premiere adventuring companies of Thyatis. He disappeared from the social scene during the Great War, but returned a few years back to become one of the most publicly admired members of the empire—the fact that his adventuring companions are influential military and governmental figures didn't hurt any, either. Born: AC 976. Hair: blond, tied in a ponytail. Eyes: amber. Height: 5'9". Thunder is a strikingly handsome man with a wiry build. He dresses in the latest fashions and always carries his jeweled rapier and stiletto at his side. Combat Notes: AL NG; AC 5 (*ring of protection +2*); MV 12; T11; hp 46; THAC0 15; #AT 1 (rapier or stiletto); Dmg 1d6+1 (rapier) or 1d3+2 (stiletto +2); Save T11; S15 D17 C12 I12 W13 Ch16; ML 12. Magical items: *ring of protection +2*, *stiletto +2*.

Most wanted infamous villains

Blackguard: This notorious thief first made his appearance in the nation of Arogansa in Alphatia many years ago. He gained fame through his dazzling burglaries on nobles' houses—made all the more unbelievable due to the fact that there was no evidence that he possessed any magical abilities of his own to foil the magic users' precautions! He, or someone claiming his name, eventually resurfaced in the city of Thyatis, where he once again performed some amazing burglaries—most notably on the homes of visiting Alphatian dignitaries. Though he disappeared for a time during the Great War, recent thefts in the city of Thyatis on the homes of expatriate Alphatians bear his calling card—a black velvet domino mask. There is a 5,000 *lucins* reward for his capture, alive. Born: unknown. Hair: unknown. Eyes: unknown. One unconfirmed sighting noted a figure dressed entirely in black, bearing a vast assortment of tools and carrying a long sword. Combat Notes: AL NG; AC 5 (*ring of protection +2*); MV 12; T11; hp 46; THAC0 15; #AT 1 (long sword); Dmg 1d8+1 (*long sword +1 luck blade*); Save T11; S15 D17 C12 I12 W13 Ch16; ML 12. Magical items: *ring of protection +2*, *long sword +1 luck blade*, possibly other assorted items to aid in theft.

Pierre Duchamps: This Glantrian wizard is a known werewolf and is suspected of being the leader of the *Loups de la Guerre* (the War Wolves). There is a reward of 10,000 *ducats* on his head—alive or dead. Born AC 981. Hair: black, flecked with gray. Eyes: blue. Height: 5' 8". Duchamps always dresses impeccably, and is constantly grooming himself (even in werewolf form). Combat Notes: AL CE; AC 9; MV 12; human male M10; hp

26; THAC0 17; #AT 1 (dagger) or spell; Dmg 1d4 or by spell; S9(11) I15 W9(7) D14 C12(13) Ch16 (stats in parentheses are for werewolf form); ML 12. Magical items: *brooch of shielding*.

Ismet “the Butcher” Gorky: One of the Master of Hule’s most trusted and effective agents, he escaped capture during the battle of Sayr Ulan. He is wanted for atrocities committed against the Sindhi people during the Hulean occupation. For his heinous crimes, the *rajadhiraja* is offering a bounty of 750 *gurus*. The reward is only good if he is brought in alive, so that he may be put on trial. Born AC 974. Hair: bald (shaved). Eyes: brown. Height: 5' 10". The Butcher dresses in the traditional outfits of the Master’s Diviners—red robes, a black leather mask, mace, and a crystal amulet. A master of disguise, Gorky could appear to be almost anyone. Combat Notes: AL LE; AC 8 (leather armor); MV 12; human male F13; hp 62; THAC0 8; #AT 2/1 (mace); Dmg 1d6+4 (*mace +1*); S16 I17 W12 D13 C10 Ch9; ML 13; weapon specialization: horseman’s mace. Magical items: *mace +1, cloak of the bat*.

Hoolg Red Mane (a.k.a. Hool): A direct descendant of the orcish hero Big Chief Sitting Drool, Hoolg Red Mane was well bred to become chieftain of Red Orcland. He studied with the tribal shamans at an early age, and eventually turned his sights to tribal politics, quickly rising to leadership of his people. He is rather unusual for an orc, in that he prefers to study a foe before battle, in order to learn all his secrets. It is partially for this reason that he was chosen by his patron Immortal, Wogar, to lead the latest Great Goblinoid Migration to find the lost Blue Knife. Born: AC 976. Hair: long, shaggy red hair. Eyes: blue. Height: 6'. Reddish skin; vaguely simian facial features. Hool often wears tribal facial paints and feathers. Combat Notes: AL LN; AC 5 (leather armor and *headband of protection +2*); MV 12; P9 of Wogar; hp 40; THAC0 16; #AT 1 (hand ax) or spell; Dmg 1d6+1 or by spell; Save C9; S16 D15 C11 I14 W14 Ch12(15 to other orcs); ML 15. Magical items: *headband of protection +2*.

Hutai Khan: Hutai *Khan* was captured by Oenkarians and sent into slavery at a young age. He eventually escaped, after learning much from the Oenkarians, and returned to take over as *khan* (chieftain) of Hobgobland. He finally returned to Oenkmar in AC 1012, to get his revenge on his former master Xilochti, only to learn the orcish priest had already fled the city. Together with Alebane and Tlatepetl, Hutai *Khan* managed to survive the shadowelf takeover of Oenkmar and return to the surface world. Born: AC 968. Hair: rusty brown. Eyes: red. Height: 6' 7". Pale orange skin; vaguely oriental facial features. Dresses like an Ethengar warrior. Combat Notes: AL LE; AC 4 (chain mail and shield); MV 12; F11; hp 5; THAC0 10; #AT2/1 (scimitar); Dmg 1d8+4 (*scimitar +2*); Save F11; S13 D14 C12 I12 W14 Ch14; ML 14; weapon specialization: scimitar. Magical items: *scimitar +2*.

Angus McGregor: Prince of Klantyre. A child prodigy, Angus progressed quickly as a sorcerer. His obsession with magic rivaled that of his grandfather Brannart, whom he managed to destroy in AC 1015. He still fears that the elder McGregor will return to take his revenge. Born AC 990. Hair: red. Eyes: blue. Height: 4'. His studies of the *Radiance* have stunted his physical growth, so that Angus appears to be a young, freckle faced boy. Combat Notes: AL CE; AC 4 (*ring of protection +4* and dexterity bonus); MV 12; human male M15; hp 28; THAC0 16; #AT 1 (knife) or spell; Dmg 1d3+1 (*hornblade +1*) or by spell; S7 I18 W12 D16 C8 Ch12; ML 12. Magical items: *ring of protection +4, hornblade +1*.

Moghul Khan: Born a normal yellow orc of the Broken Lands, Moghul *Khan* rose to become a clan chieftain. During a raid into New Averoigne, he was inflicted with lycanthropy, and was transformed into a devil swine—an evil lycanthrope with the abilities to turn into a hog and *charm* others. Doubtless it was these abilities that allowed him to become the *khan* (chieftain) of Yellow Orkia. He didn’t join in Thar’s ill-fated assault on Glantri in 1006, preferring to stay in the Broken Lands. He was driven out of Yellow Orkia by the shadow elves, and is currently staying in Orcland, where he raids the Ethengar *Khanates*. The great *khan* will pay a hefty bounty for him, dead or alive. Born: AC 970. Hair: dusty brown hair, knotted in a pigtail. Eyes: cold, icy blue. Height: 5' 5". Dull yellow skin; overweight with ugly pekingese facial features. Combat Notes: AL CE; AC 10 (3); MV 12; F9; hp 50; THAC0 12; #AT 2 hand (1 tusk) or *charm*; Dmg Special (as per martial arts table +3) (2d6) or *charm*; Save F9; S16(18) D14(13) C13 I15(16) W9 Ch11(9) (stats in parentheses are scores for devil swine form); ML 12; weapon specialization: martial arts, 2 slots (+2 to hit and damage; +2 chart bonus). Magical items: *nose ring of invisibility*.

Nizam: Gnollish *pasha* (chieftain), Nizam distinguished himself at an early age with his holy crusades against gnollish heretics of northern Ylaruam. Upon his return to the Broken Lands, he was quickly placed on the South Gnollistani throne as tribal chieftain. Nizam suffers from multiple personalities—a sign of favor of his patron Immortal, Ranivorus—which served him well in his early political career. Now, as he enters old age, however, he is little more than a babbling madman, useful only as a tool of Ranivorus, who has His own plans for the legendary Blue Knife and the Great Migration. Born: AC 977. Hair: tan Mohawk, mostly gray. Eyes: gray. Height: 6' 9". Light brown hair with black spots. Nizam’s normal tendency to hunch over is greatly exaggerated with his age. He wears puffy pants in the Ylari style and a long, black cloak. Combat Notes: AL CE; AC 10; MV

12; F11; hp 54; THAC0 10; #AT 2/1 (sabre); Dmg 1d6+4; Save F11; S17 D13 C12 I14 W9 Ch14(16 to other gnolls); ML 16; weapon specialization: sabre. Magical items: none.

Tlatepetl: Born Pactli in the orcish city of Oenkmar, this red orc grew up into a life of slavery and sent off to the *tlachatl* pits at an early age. There he blossomed into a great *tlachatl* player and team leader, the idol of the masses. As must inevitably happen, his team eventually lost to another, and was sent to the temple of Atzanteotl to be sacrificed. He was rescued from certain death by Lord Zott Tehuantipoca, the general of the Oenkmarian army, as much for his demonstrated leadership abilities as to pull one over on Xilochtli, the high priest of Atzanteotl. Renamed Tlatepetl, to hide him from the clergy, he quickly rose in the ranks of the Oenkmarian army, eventually taking over as general upon the death of Lord Zott in AC 1012. He bears a strong hatred of priests and shamans to this day. Born: AC 990. Hair: bright orange. Eyes: blue. Height: 5' 11". Dull reddish hide; simian facial features. Tlatepetl's body is covered with numerous scars, testimony to his days as a *tlachatl* player and prisoner of the Oenkmar clergy. Combat Notes: AL LE; AC 3 (scale mail); MV 12; F10; hp 70; THAC0 11; #AT 2/1 (footman's mace); Dmg 1d6+5 (*mace +2*); Save F10; S14 D17 C16 I13 W10 Ch12 (15 to other orcs); ML 16; weapon specialization: footman's mace. Magical items: *mace +2, periapt of wound closure*.

MYSTARAN MISCELLANEA

Classifieds and Personal Ads

Wanted: Misplaced gauntlet. Identifiable by intricate carvings of a ram's head on a bed of roses. Generous reward for return. Or will sell its matching counterpart. Inquire at the Black Heart Lily in Mirros, Karameikos.

Wanted: Return of a matched pair of daggers, stolen late last year. No description needed. I know who has it and where you are. Due to the cunning displayed in their theft, returning them now will not incur any repercussions. Noncompliance will result in vindication. This is your only warning.

Wanted: Adventurers. Employer is always on the look out for able-bodied adventurers willing to perform unusual duties for mages. Duties include collecting spell components and providing security. Hirelings will be paid per individual job. Apply at Karameikan School of Magecraft, Krakatos, Karameikos.

Wanted: Ornate weapons. Swords, maces, bows, armors, shields, battle axes, etc. Desired for personal collection and for resale. Weapon sales and appraisals available. See Ferrous, Delbart, or Qerrous at "The Warrior Warehouse" in Mirros, Karameikos.

Wanted: Old Books. I represent a group of people most interested in the collecting and studying of ancient history. We are always on the outlook for tomes to add to our collection. Serious offers only. Lucrative payment sums for genuine articles.

Wanted: Vampire. In my pursuits to offer a cure for this affliction, I am in need of a "living" vampire or nosferatu to use as test subject and for study. Preference towards willing vampire for security purposes. For more information contact Juliannus Trigateri through your local Thyatian embassy.

Wanted: Ethengar ponies. Top prices for healthy mounts. Am also looking for Ethengar willing to train horses and their intended riders. Competitive wages. Contact Captain Domarr through your local Darokin embassy.

Wanted: Individuals desiring adventure, discovery, and the promise of wealth. Influential group planning an expedition to the sunken continent of Alphatia. Equipment such as sea vessels needed. Access to a *submersible* most welcomed. Reward based on individual contributions of manpower and material. Contact Merchant Prince Gersin of Seahome, Minrothad Guilds.

Wanted: Information regarding the whereabouts of the crews of the Alphatian *skyships* "Ki-rin," "Pegasus," "Maelstrom," and "Zephyr." A reunion for the *Skyship* Squadron is planned for later on in the year. Officers and crew are encouraged to attend to commemorate the centennial anniversary of the squadron's founding. Contact your local NACE official for further information.

Wanted: Alphatian War Paraphernalia. Avid collector of the arms and armaments and uniforms used during the Great War. Enchantments not a priority but are welcomed. Contact Captain Horatio Trumpet of Ierendi, directly or through the Ierendi embassy.

Wanted: Able-bodied individuals. Talimoun's Terrors is always on the lookout for stout and hardy men and women to fill its mercenary ranks. Competitive wages based upon individual skills and talents. Some applicants may be held on retainer. For more information contact Commander Talimoun's office in Corunglain, Darokin.

For Sale: Weapons. Circumstances have delivered upon my person some 200 short swords, 300 spears, 100 heavy crossbows, and 100 polearms. Will sell piecemeal or preferably as a single unit. Large orders will receive greater discounts and delivery. Serious inquiries only. Contact Merchant Prince Argo Deltrim of Harbortown, Minrothad Guilds.

For Sale: Wine. Stocks include both Arogansa and Randel vintages. Uncommon since the end of the Great War, am willing to part with the casks for a modest sum. Contact Merchant Prince Argo Deltrim of Harbortown, Minrothad Guilds.

For Sale: Sailing vessel. Accepting offers on the merchant vessel "Marshow's Merrow." Hull in excellent shape. Captain's quarters modest but comfortable. New rigging and sails. For more information contact Serge Pepopov in Mirros, Karameikos.

For Sale: Riding horses. A variety of mounts worthy of the most discerning rider. We even have several examples of horses bearing strains of the famed Alfheim breeds. Custom saddles and bridles also available. Contact Yorshynn Stables of Darokin.

For Sale: Just about Anything and Everything. I am Terstrix Montereu. I am a self-proclaimed acquirer of special and unique items. If you need something I can get it or direct you to a source. I work either from commission, finder's fee, or by acting as a buyer. Discretion and confidentiality assured. For inquiries contact me at my office in Athenos, Darokin.

For Sale: Estate auction. The family of the deceased famed adventurer Talimanus is liquidating his personal. A lifetime's worth of interesting and unique items up for auction. The disposal is scheduled for Eirmont 1st AC 1016 at the family estate in Thyatis City. Admission for the event is 500 emperors per person. Contact Markos Sterenopolis in Thyatis City for further information.

Missing Person: Zerross "the Fletcher". Last seen fighting the Shadow Elves in Canolbarth. Rumored to have been seen traveling north, either to Glantri or Wendar. Friends and family in Karameikos wish to inquire as to his health and whereabouts. Information can be forwarded through the Alfheim ambassador in Mirros, Karameikos.

Missing Person: Captain Deandre Adronus of Thyatis. Last seen during the fighting at Retebius. Body was never recovered. Family anxious to know her whereabouts or fate. Information can be sent to the Adronus family in Thyatis City or forwarded through your local Thayan embassy.

Missing Person: Crew of the Thayan war galley "Sea Eagle." Long overdue for arrival in the Hinterlands and presumed lost. News of the fate or whereabouts of any of its crew is most welcomed by their families. For a list of the crew or to provide information, contact your local Thayan official or embassy.

Missing Person: Arterio Berilius of Thyatis. Last seen in the area of northern Darokin. This is a plea from his family during their time of need. "Arterio, come home. Father is dead. The family needs you."—Mother, Serrenna, Tobius, and Jaserus.

Missing Person: Vladerynn of Alphatia. Missing since the Great War, her fate is needed to resolve the future of her estate. Unless news is forwarded by year's end, the estate will go to her heirs. Any information must be certifiable. Fraudulent reports will be viewed as a dishonorable insult. Creditable reports will be rewarded. Contact the Kingdom of Blueside on Bellissaria, the NACE Council at Ionace, or your local NACE ambassador.

Missing Person: Tibyolt Supplefeet of the Five Shires. Last seen in the company of a trade caravan bound for Ethengar and Ylaruam three years ago. Rumored to have been seen in Tel Akbir two years ago and Minrothad City six months ago. Friends and family desire information on his well being and whereabouts. Personal plea from relatives "Tibby... they have found the scroll. He has confessed and you have been exonerated. Please come home."—Father, Myorsha, Little Kim, Toby, and Jakko.

Missing Person: Lieutenant Gustov von Deirmont of Aalban, Glantri. Reported missing since early last year, months prior to the Ethengar invasion. Anyone with information regarding him or his fate should contact Prince Jaggar von Drachenfels through the Glantrian embassy, the Glantrian judiciary, or the Glantrian military.

Other Famous Publications

a review of other publishing houses' famous issues, by Belzamith Fingertackles

While doing some researches for this year's edition of the *Mystaran Almanac*, I came into possession of the first issue of a small publication called the *Tome of Mystara*. I was thrilled at the prospect of browsing through the pages of the promising booklet; with such a title, I reasoned, it surely must contain some insights into our world that even I, co-editor of the *Mystaran Almanac*, may not know about and may find useful. I was not disappointed.



The first issue is a several dozen pages book with illustrations, full of arcane lore, information on strange places, people and events, very useful to the adventuresome traveler. I was surprised as to the depth of the articles, who have that *je ne sais quoi* of information gained through the most unusual channels, you know, the behind-the-scenes one.

Of course I tried to get in touch with the editors of the tome. It is rumored that the compilers are a wizard and an itinerant priest, but no one is certain, and that was all I could find about them so far; I don't even know where country they operate from. I hope to meet them, before the second edition if I can, both to congratulate fellow editors for a job well done, and maybe to share some information with them—I so wish I had access to the sources they have!

I came across a copy of the *Tome of Mystara* quite by mere luck, and I have no clue as to how many copies of the first issue are in circulation. Since as far as I know only one copy of a magical printing press exists and is used by our company, I can only come to the conclusion that the *Tome of Mystara* is duplicated by magic, something that can quickly become expensive for a publication with a large audience. Yet the first issue mentions a quarterly edition release, which means that issue #2 should be available shortly after the publication of the almanac. I look forward to it, and I hope the reader will also get the opportunity to complete his or her library with every issue of the *Tome of Mystara*!

Gossip, Rumors, and Such Tavern Talk.

In their travels across Mystara, the contributors to the *Mystaran Almanac* often come across tellers of local lore, legend, and gossip. Whether it is from community elders, wizened sages, reclusive oracles, or your average commoner, the common tie is that all were overheard in taverns by the patrons. Of course the editors of the almanac have not the time or resources to investigate and verify each of these—nor would we want to do that as that would undermine the reason for offering these to the reader. Nonetheless the excerpts are humorous and should be considered as entertainment only.

“These Shadow Elves... I hear tell that they are busy fighting amongst themselves. Whichever faction comes out the winner will probably cause all sorts of trouble for us surface dwellers.”—Tavern patron in Threshold, Karameikos.

“I tell you, I have poured over Claransa’s book on this Hollow World of hers. It got me to thinking if that place’s peoples have had their memories altered then what about the memories of ourselves. What if our perceived histories are but the fancy of the Immortals? What does that make us and what are we to become?”—Distinguished-looking tavern patron in Krakatos, Karameikos.

“The way I hear it the Alphatians are blowing smoke up our arses. This whole hoopla about peace and love and rebuilding is but to put us off of our guards. Think about it... all that that people lost during the war and with victory so close. You know how those people are. You think that they are just going to let stuff like that slide. A sailor friend of mine said that he saw signs of an Alphatian buildup. I think they are reorganizing their armies and getting ready to continue the war.”—Tavern patron in West Portage.

“I say pox on them foreigners. The elves are okay. They keep to themselves deep in country. No one but rubes and monsters live out that way. But the Alphers, well they could care less about us lowly Karameikans. To them we’re but infantile barbarians suckling at the Alphatian teet for our intellectual nourishment. I see it everyday. They gotta put their noses everywhere, showin us how to do things. Sheez... we did all right for ourselves way before they showed up. Mark my word, if they have their way we’ll all be speakin Alphatian before it’s over.”—Tavern patron in Mirros, Karameikos.

“I heard that Prince Etienne is still alive and in very good health. Seems like the old boy was pretty fed up with the way things were going on within the parliament and Council of Princes. Some say he’s foregone politics and is filling his time working on his magical pursuits. Others say he is still politically active, working anonymously in the background without the hindrance of Glantrian law.”—Tavern patron in Kopstar, Bergdoven, Glantri.

“You remember that beast, the Behemoth? Notice how it happened to show up right after the war. And notice how it ain’t been seen recently. Quite a coincidence given Nayce becoming stabilized. I would not put it past those blokes to have been behind the thing attacking shipping.”—Tavern patron in Harbortown, Minrothad Guilds.

“Hollow World ...bah. Sounds like a bunch of hooey to me. Sounds like Alphatian propaganda to me. Think about it. Why would the Immortals go through all of the trouble to recreate Alphatia in the Hollow World when it would have been just as easy to rebuild it on its original location? And what purpose does placing them in the Hollow World serve?”—Tavern patron in Glantri City.

“I tell you I just don’t like it. You know how those elves love their trees. Do you seriously think that they are going to let the loss of their old lands pass. All this talk about them working with the shadow elves also strikes

me as being odd. From my understanding, the shadow elves despise the elves that live on the surface. Personally I see bad things on the horizon. It would not surprise me to see them and the Alphatians draw us into a war to regain those lands.”—Tavern patron in Mirros.

An Alternate View of the Adventuring Profession

As told by Jakko “Long Bolt” Karovich in the Blackheart Lily, Mirros, Karameikos.

Aye laddie... pay no mind to those fanciful tales the bards spout so lavishly. Believe you me I know first hand what really goes on out there in that particular line of work. You see I used to be what you might call an adventurer. You don't think they call me “Long Shot” cause of my libido. Nope I used to be in that line of work... pretty good too. I could very well hold my own with the war ax and castrate a gnat at fifty paces with my old crossbow. Ask anyone around here.

Yep... I started out with aspirations of defending the meek, making the world a better place, and gaining a share of wealth and glory. But all that is a load of crap. First off... the term “adventurer” is crap. More correctly you are a sellsword... a mercenary and at times even a hired thug. You see noble deeds are out there aplenty... however there are few noble acts that pay off in good ole hard coinage. You see... adventuring is expensive. Arms and armor must be maintained and replaced. You'll also be on the outlook for means to better protect yourself... preferably with magic.

Aiding a peasant village will gain their thanks and admiration, however peasants cannot offer much in the way of pay. At best you'll get a few meals, a comfortable bed, and a bit of shelter for a few days. You'll never be able to stay put for long. You'll have to be abroad looking for tasks, for both coinage and glory. Also you'll notice that you'll soon wear out your welcome. Gratitude will quickly turn to wariness. Remember not only are you and your party members an added drain to their stores, you are also something to be feared. You're outsiders, armed to the teeth and having dispatched a threat that they feared for so long.

Like I said you'll be traveling a lot. And that takes more gold. You'll need provisions and lodgings. And for some reason you'll find yourself forever having to buy a new horse. For some sinister reason, your mount rarely lives long. Horses seem to attract arrow fire and abuse from your attackers. Also, when your supplies run low that horse can become your meal for several days. Which brings up another thing... out in the wilderness your food will be vital. Sometimes you'll have to hunt and forage to get by. Be careful though... I cannot count the times I suffered for days with a runny stomach from some bad berries or water.

Travel is a necessary part of the profession. However, traveling involves spending a great deal of time out on the road. For the most part, “out there” is the realm of the ‘noids, wolves, and other hostile predators. As soon as you leave the confines of a city, town, or village you are out in their environment and subject to being attacked. Even worse you have to watch out for brigands. They're everywhere and are usually well armed and skilled at ambushing the traveler. Hell... even here you can find brigands and hostile creatures but a day's ride from Mirros.

The bardic tales of lost ruins and dungeons boasting treasure troves are crap. Oh I'm sure that some still exist, but for the most part ruins have already been picked clean. Any gold you find there will be from newly moved in occupants. ‘Noids and the like love to set up shop in places like that. And they aren't going to be too happy with you dropping by. And you'll probably be outnumbered by these creatures. You'll also be fighting them on their turf. And don't be fooled by their looks, the nasties are by no means foolish brutes. Brutes they may be, but deadly brutes they are.

Their occupants aside, dungeons and ruins are not the most amiable places for a human to be. They are dark, wet, and often hold foul fumes. All perfect reasons for other nasty creatures to call them home. I remember many times when we stood in some flooded corridor, knee deep with filthy brackish water, straining through torchlight for a glimpse at what lay ahead us. Just imagine what your poor robe clad mage would be going through. To make matters worse, the ‘noids are used to those types of things. Heck... you could say they even love that crap.

Let's say you go through all trouble and clear out the nasties. What do you get? A few handfuls of assorted coins. Maybe some decent weapons. Heck you may even find a potion or two... perhaps a bit of magic. But look at your efforts. By Halav... thirty forty individuals dead and you may break even as far as your costs. You may even lose a few of your own. And death is a constant companion of the adventurer. No matter how good you are... and how careful you are... you will lose people. It's a hard thing too. These are friends... no comrades... whom you fight beside. You become more than friends with them. I don't know how to describe it... I guess you have to go through it to properly understand it.

You had better forget about romantic relationships. Oh sure... you'll look all spiffy in your adventuring gear. Probably draw your share of tavern wenches. May even draw in a few reputable lasses as well. That may sound fun. But trust me, it'll get old. It's still fun mind you... but you'll find yourself wanting a woman you can say that you truly love. A woman you want to bear your children... not some tart.

Whatever noble aspirations you had at the beginning, reality may place morality in a secondary position to financial need. You probably will take up the sword in less than noble tasks... many that may be deemed illegal. That's where your more financially lucrative jobs will be. However, there will also be more danger, both from the parties involved and possibly from the local guard. You do a good job and you'll find yourself getting more jobs like that. It's good steady money so don't knock it. And until you find one of those mythical treasure troves, it's about as close to a motherlode as you are going to find.

I'd also like to point out that there are not a lot of old adventurers. Likewise, retired adventurers are few. Death is a constant companion. You are either dealing it out or getting it dealt to you. The pursuit of gold and glory is a never-ending beacon for "the big haul" being just around the corner, over the next hill, or in this next cave. No haul is ever big enough to sate the perceived financial need. And sadly the thrill gets into your blood. It's like zzonga... you have to have it in your life. I mean, you've been all over the realm. Seen this and that. Lived on the edge. Could you go back to farming? Could go back to a normal life? Nope... the stuff's in ya too deep.

Me, I lucked up. I started off with the usual crap jobs, mostly paying for our upkeep. We settled in to a few regular employers. Did a few jobs here and there. We got lucky a few times and gained a few items that proved to draw quite a healthy sum. I lost some good friends. Even lost a woman I might have married. We did a few jobs for the monarch... piddling stuff... but it legitimized us. One job had me take a nasty halberd blow to my side. Spent weeks healing up. Gave me the time to think. I took my meager nest egg and invested in a normal life, setting myself up with a small farm. Ten years later I have expanded and am considered a pretty well-to-do individual. Got me a lovely wife, three young ones, and a nice home.

Don't get me wrong, we scavenged quite literally a king's ransom in my adventuring days. However, the costs and flagrant spending pretty much wiped all of that out. Such spending is the way of that carefree lifestyle. I have earned more gold and have more to show for my ten years of business life than I ever did in my years of adventuring. And I'll admit that I still get the itch to take up the blade. Luckily there be enough wolves and the like around the farm to sate that thirst. And I have been known to hire out to the king to help train new recruits. Anyway... take my advice as you will. If you ignore it, you won't be the first.

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>Wharlin</i>	<i>Nyxmir</i>
late winter	Vatermont	<i>Vuuldiir</i>	<i>Hiskmai</i>	<i>Morlin</i>	<i>Amphimir</i>
early spring	Thaumont	<i>Maehin</i>	<i>Yalmai</i>	<i>Hralin*</i>	<i>Alphamir*</i>
middle spring	Flaurmont	<i>Odelin</i>	<i>Haimai</i>	<i>Hwyrlin</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>Bahrlin</i>	<i>Vertmir</i>
midsummer	Felmont	<i>Goldaun</i>	<i>Lingmai</i>	<i>Buhrlin</i>	<i>Tslamir</i>
late summer	Fyrmont	<i>Fyrtal</i>	<i>Tringmai</i>	<i>Klintin</i>	<i>Andrumir</i>
early fall	Ambrymont	<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>Tembiiir</i>	<i>Rinpoch</i>	<i>Jhyrlin</i>	<i>Eimir</i>
early winter	Kaldmont	<i>Dauntil</i>	<i>Komai</i>	<i>Kulldlin</i>	<i>Burymir</i>

*: marks the first day of the year.

Mystaran Horoscope

This year, dear almanac readers, we have a special treat for you. We have managed to convince Madame Feliona of Nouvelle Averoigne to explain how the position of the stars, moons and planets affect our every day lives. Madame Feliona is the most respected seer and fortune teller of the nation of Glantri, and her predictions to date have been found to be over 95% accurate. So, dear readers, we hope you enjoy what she has to say.

"First of all, it's all wrong! All the horoscopes given in the previous versions of these almanacs are phonies written to please the credulous and to make a quick *ducat* for the writer.

Well, the predictions were, at least. First of all, lets us view the basics of determining your totem sign. There are twelve totem constellations found circling our planet, and these provide the power to shape your destiny, if you let them. They form an almost perfect circle around our sun, in the order of Manticore, Hydra, Centaur, Basilisk, Chimera, Gorgon, Griffon, Dragon, Salamander, Pegasus, Warrior and Giant. Legends claim that each constellation appeared when the first of that given race died and was rewarded with an eternal resting place by the Immortals that watch over them. The Dragon constellation is therefore the soul of the Great Old One—patron Immortal of the Dragons—'s favored follower, just like the Centaur houses the soul of Ixion's favored centaur worshiper. Those with the proper powers and magic can communicate with these souls, and from them, divine the future of those they watch over.

The Warrior is a human spirit, and was renamed the Warrior when Vanya, mistress of War and Conquest, took over the responsibilities of maintaining the constellation and placed Her favored warrior soul into it. Ancient texts even indicate that the constellation changed shapes when that happened, from a normal human to a man bearing a sword and shield. This indicates that the Immortals take turns controlling the constellations and reshape them to Their own favored forms. It appears Vanya was the last one to earn the ownership of a constellation, but how the Immortals determine who gets one next or when to change still remains a mystery. I have been searching for more proof about these changes for quite some time now.

Still, how does this determine your sign, you ask. When you are born, your sign is determined by whichever constellation happens to be located behind the world of Mystara compared to the sun. If you were looking at the infinite cosmos from above, you would be able to trace a straight line from the sun to Mystara and then to your guardian totem. There are many false rumors about how your constellation is chosen, the most common being whichever constellation marks the horizon when you are born, but these are all false. It is most definitely the one in a straight line away from the sun that has been chosen to watch over you. Which one it is changes on a regular cycle that perfectly matches the months of the year. You can therefore determine your star totem simply 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.
Ambrymont	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.

Now, how do the star signs determine your destiny? That is a secret of the Immortals. But we can read the signs they show us and help determine what fate they have in store for you.

First of all, all the stars of a star constellation are the brightest white, whiter than any of the other stars in the heavens above. All except for one in each constellation, that is. These 12 stars (one per constellation) are red. When you look up into the sky at night, you can usually see four to eight small little pinpricks of red; those are

the stars I am talking about. They are the eyes of the constellations, from which they can see and guide your destiny.

These eyes, however, move about throughout the sky and are never found in the same place twice, at least, not in any human lifetime. Legends claim that they are large glowing red cities that fly throughout the heavens. A more imaginative story I have read claimed that they are large cities that roll upon a large wall of black crystal that encircles our entire universe like a shell or sphere. Who inhabits these cities is unknown, but legends claim that it is the former souls that were once inside the constellations. No one soul can ever be the favored of an Immortal, so the soul within the constellations is constantly changing, and previous souls move on to the city so they can continue to watch over their favored mortals still living on Mystara. It is said that in each city lies a portal to the realm of their Immortal, so that when a given soul is finished observing the realm of the living and ready to move on, he or she (or it) may then enter the realm of its Immortal. Some brave adventurers I have known decided to try and use those portals to visit the realms of the Immortals—I have not heard from them since they left over five years ago.

Anyway, the eyes move about in a circle around our sun and world. As they move, they cross into the area of the other constellations, and since they represent different Immortals and attitudes, a conflict usually occurs.

The eye of a given star sign is called the star, so the eye of the Centaur Constellation is known as the Centaur Star, while the eye of the Hydra Constellation is called the Hydra Star. The constellations themselves are known as houses. Where the constellation of the Manticore is located is called the House of the Manticore, for example.

Now, the horoscope is read by both determining in which house your star is and what other stars are located within your house. Some stars get along, but most don't. When your star is located in a rival house, that house blocks its view and control of your destiny. This will create periods of bad luck and ill omens for those who are guarded by that star. Likewise, when an enemy star is within your house, it also influences you in a negative way, but not as much as the house is always more powerful than the stars; however, the more stars in the house, the more influence they can achieve (yes, it is possible to have multiple stars in your house at once). If your star is in a friendly house, it can continue to control you without interference. If a friendly star is within your house, it can also grant you a few more benefits, but again not as much as your own star. When your own star is located within its house, then you are the luckiest person around.

As for which constellations are friendly and which are enemies, that all depends on the souls within them and can vary over time. Later I will describe how they are currently aligned.

The readings are taken on the last day of the year, Kaldmont 28, and this will give an overall outcome of the following year.

Note that each star moves at a different speed, and crosses a different number of constellations in a given year. Some stars only takes 3 years to go all the way around and arrive back at their own house again. For others, it takes 12 years. However, every 12 years, all stars are found in their respective houses. At this point in time, all forces cancel each other out and it is the time when mankind makes its own fate (or, some say, that powers beyond the Immortals decide our fate). Sometime nothing happens, sometime major events happen. The last such conjunction was in AC 1009, when the Great War ended, Alphatia sunk beneath the sea, the week without magic occurred, and the Day of Dread got its yearly start. Yet in AC 997, no such cataclysmic even occurred (at least none that we are aware of). I just can't wait to see what will happen in AC 1021.

Rumors state that when a new Immortal takes control of a constellation, the speed of its star will change to match the whims of the new Immortal.

Manticore Star: The Manticore Star traverses 5 houses every year. Starting at the House of the Manticore, it will be located in the following houses every year afterwards: Gorgon, Warrior, Basilisk, Salamander, Hydra, Griffon, Giant, Chimera, Pegasus, Centaur, Dragon, and finally Manticore again after 12 years. The Manticore is currently friendly with the Warrior and Griffon, and enemies with the Pegasus and Gorgon.

Hydra Star: The Hydra Star traverses 11 houses every year. Starting at the House of the Hydra, it will be located in the following houses every year afterwards: Manticore, Giant, Warrior, Pegasus, Salamander, Dragon, Griffon, Gorgon, Chimera, Basilisk, Centaur, and finally Hydra again after 12 years. The Hydra is currently friendly with the Gorgon and Chimera, and enemies with Dragon and Centaur.

Centaur Star: The Centaur Star traverses 9 houses every year. Starting at the House of the Centaur, it will be located in the following houses every year afterwards: Giant, Salamander, Gorgon, and finally Centaur again after 4 years. The Centaur is currently friendly with the Pegasus and Griffon, and enemies with Hydra and Giant.

Basilisk Star: The Basilisk Star traverses 3 houses every year. Starting at the House of the Basilisk, it will be located in the following houses every year afterwards: Griffon, Pegasus, Manticore, and finally Basilisk again after 4 years. The Basilisk is currently friendly with the Giant and Chimera, and enemies with Pegasus and Centaur.

Chimera Star: The Chimera Star traverses 2 houses every year. Starting at the House of the Chimera, it will be located in the following houses every year afterwards: Griffon, Salamander, Warrior, Manticore, Centaur, and finally Hydra again after 6 years. The Chimera is currently friendly with the Hydra and Basilisk, and enemies with Salamander and Dragon.

Gorgon Star: The Gorgon Star traverses 3 houses every year. Starting at the House of the Gorgon, it will be located in the following houses every year afterwards: Salamander, Giant, Centaur, and finally Gorgon again after 4 years. The Gorgon is currently friendly with the Hydra and Salamander, and enemies with Manticore and Centaur.

Griffon Star: The Griffon Star traverses 7 houses every year. Starting at the House of the Griffon, it will be located in the following houses every year afterwards: Hydra, Salamander, Basilisk, Warrior, Gorgon, Manticore, Dragon, Centaur, Pegasus, Chimera, Giant, and finally Griffon again after 12 years. The Griffon is currently friendly with the Manticore and Centaur, and enemies with Giant and Warrior.

Dragon Star: The Dragon Star traverses 6 houses every year. Starting at the House of the Dragon, it will be located in the following houses every year afterwards: Hydra and then Dragon again after only 2 years. The Dragon is currently friendly with the Warrior and Salamander, and enemies with Hydra and Chimera.

Salamander Star: The Salamander Star traverses 1 house every year. Starting at the House of the Salamander, it will be located in the following houses every year afterwards: Pegasus, Warrior, Giant, Manticore, Hydra, Centaur, Basilisk, Chimera, Gorgon, Griffon, Dragon and finally Salamander again after 12 years. The Salamander is currently friendly with the Gorgon and Dragon, and enemies with Chimera and Warrior.

Pegasus Star: The Pegasus Star traverses 5 houses every year. Starting at the House of the Pegasus, it will be located in the following houses every year afterwards: Centaur, Dragon, Manticore, Gorgon, Warrior, Basilisk, Salamander, Hydra, Griffon, Giant, Chimera, and finally Pegasus again after 12 years. The Pegasus is currently friendly with the Centaur, and enemies with Manticore and Basilisk.

Warrior Star: The Warrior Star traverses 7 houses every year. Starting at the House of the Warrior, it will be located in the following houses every year afterwards: Gorgon, Manticore, Dragon, Centaur, Pegasus, Chimera, Giant, Griffon, Hydra, Salamander, Basilisk, and finally Warrior again after 12 years. The Warrior is currently friendly with the Manticore and Dragon, and enemies with Griffon and Salamander.

Giant Star: The Giant Star traverses 8 houses every year. Starting at the House of the Giant, it will be located in the following houses every year afterwards: Dragon, Basilisk and finally Giant again after 3 years. The Giant is currently friendly with the Basilisk, and enemies with Centaur and Griffon.

Of course, all this is but a quick explanation. Other cosmic events, such as the position of Matera, will play a great role in any given year. Which stars the moon eclipses or which houses it hides causes the small variations between days or even seasons that will not follow the yearly predictions. To fully understand all these small nuances would take years of study and cannot possibly be explained within a few pages in the almanac.

Horoscope for AC 1016

Now that we have all the explanations before us, lets us look at what the future holds for AC 1016.

Manticore: The Manticore Star is located in the House of the Giant, while the Basilisk Star is located in your own house. Neither are friends or enemies, so the Manticore can do as it pleases. It's time to create new opportunities for yourself. Your energy level will be high, so expect life to be upbeat, exciting, and full of adventure. This year also presents a turning point, and many new directions and goals should be pursued.

Hydra: The Hydra Star is located in the House of the Griffon, which is fine. Unfortunately, the Dragon Star is currently in the House of the Hydra, which can cause a bit of trouble. People will not be giving you what you want, so you will have to use your resourcefulness to go and get it. If you focus on what you want to bring into your life, many positive rewards will be yours.

Centaur: The Centaur Star is located in the neutral House of the Gorgon and the Gorgon Star is located in your own. This is one of those years that you could find yourself being pushed and pulled in different directions. Try

to keep your focus and not get overly distracted with your social life. Your high cycle is just beginning and many opportunities could come about in many unexpected ways. Any past pressures will now be released—so expect all the answers to come rolling in.

Basilisk: With your Star in the House of the Manticore and the Salamander Star in your own house marks things as relatively neutral. You shouldn't expect miracles or the world to fall at your feet just because you aren't feeling loved. Being overly sensitive, it's best if you try to thicken your skin and do not take anything personally over the next year or two. Your professional life offers much challenge, so make sure you brush up on all your skills. This is not a year to leave anything to chance, especially if it involves a financial or career decision.

Chimera: The Chimera Star is currently in the House of the Griffon. Luckily, no stars are located in the House of the Chimera this year, allowing better fortunes to shine your way. The growth cycle that you've been experiencing over the past few months will continue as you keep planning for your future and achieving your goals one step at a time. You're ready to blaze new trails and create new directions for yourself with much more confidence and self-esteem. Be assertive and let everyone know what is yours and what you intend to achieve.

Gorgon: The Centaur Star is located in the House of the Gorgon while your Gorgon Star is located in the House of the Centaur. This makes it one of those years in which you could find yourself being pushed and pulled in different directions. Try to keep your focus and not get overly distracted by your studies. Still, you will finally make that great find you have been looking for the past few years.

Griffon: The Griffon Star is located in the House of the Dragon, which is in itself not so bad. However, two stars are visiting your house this year, notably the Hydra and Chimera. This will distract your star sign, leaving you to more or less fend for yourself. Stability and balance are what you should be seeking, otherwise you might suddenly take on more than you can handle.

Dragon: The Dragon Star is currently at the other end, sitting in the House of the Hydra. This is splitting up your cosmic energy tremendously. Also, two visitors, notably the Griffon Star and the Giant Star in the House of the Dragon will keep you rather preoccupied. This means that you should look both ways before getting yourself into trouble this year. You may find yourself rubbing others the wrong way—when you least expect it. This is a good time to make use of that Dragon independence and avoid unnecessary social interactions.

Salamander: The Pegasus Star is currently hiding within the House of the Salamander, while the Salamander Star is off in the House of the Basilisk. Neither of them are your enemies, but neither of them are your friends either, giving you no benefits or problems. You'll be making a lot of decisions this year, and that Salamander practicality will come in real handy. Once you finally make up your mind and take a stand, the road will be cleared and you'll be able to achieve the best for yourself, both personally and professionally.

Pegasus: The Pegasus Star is currently in the House of the Salamander, which gives no benefits or ill fortunes. Luckily, no visitors are found in the House of the Pegasus, allowing more beneficial energy to pour down upon you. Anything you initiate this year will be accomplished with a minimal amount of difficulty and effort. Romantically, if you're interested in playing the field, the summer will bring you lots of fun and games.

Warrior: The Warrior Star can be found in the House of the Giant, who although not an enemy, is still rather confrontational. You will be presented with roadblocks that may require certain adjustments on your part, and any unresolved issues should be finalized at this time. Still, overall you will have a good year, and perhaps even find the love of your life.

Giant: The Giant Star is currently poking around in the House of the Dragon. Meanwhile, the Warrior and Manticore Star are inhabiting the House of the Giant. This will cause minor troubles, but nothing that Giant strength can't handle. Be bold—but not rash—when faced with risky propositions and financial ventures.

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 City (Darokin)	DDC Compound	Diplomacy, Global Trading, Geopolitics
Dengar (Rockhome)	Skarrad High Seminary	Architecture, Engineering
Erendyl (Glantri)	Eruwan Dateless University	Botany, Horticulture, Zoology
Evemur (Rockhome)	Syrklist Conservatory	Mining, Metallurgy, Geology
Glantri City (Glantri)	Great School of Magic	Magic in all its forms
Harbortown (Minrothad)	School of Harbortown	Navigation, Commercial Shipbuilding
Ierendi City (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 City (Minrothad)	Minrothad Institute of Trading	Economics, Trading & Marketing
Norrvik (Westland)	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 (Flying City) 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 City (Thyatis)	Imperial Academy	Land Warfare, Diplomacy
Thyatis City (Thyatis)	College of Lucinius (a.k.a. <i>Collegium Arcanum</i>)	Magical Warfare & Engineering
Thyatis City (Thyatis)	Academy of Music	Music, Storytelling, Construction of musical instruments
Vyonnes (Glantri)	Beaux Arts de Vyonnes	Art & Entertaining
Ylaruam Town (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 mostly addressed, 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 (Westrourke)	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

Economica

Currency Exchange Fees

Currency	Fee	Currency	Fee
Aegos	5%	Karameikos ²	10%
Almarrón	No Fee	Minrothad	5%
Atruaghin	No Fee	NACE ²	5%
Cimarron	No Fee	Ochalea ²	10%
Darokin	5%	Ostland	15%
East Portage ¹	5%	Pearl Island	15%
Ethengar	No Fee	Rockhome ³	10%
Five Shires	5%	Sind	15%
Gargoña	5%	Soderfjord	No Fee
Glantri ²	10%	Thyatis	10%
Heldann	No Fee	Vestland ²	10%
Helskir	10%	Wendar	10%
Hule	15%	Ylaruum	30%
Ierendi ²	10%	Yavdlom	5%

Most nations add 5% surcharge to the regular fees for exchanging gems and treasures.

- (1) Though East Portage 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 1016) in Review

This year, besides the usual economic chart about the major seaports and trading centers, we're proud to offer you a short but detailed review of the economic year written by some of the most accomplished economic experts of Mystara. Enjoy the reading and good luck for your business.

Old World and Beyond (*courtesy of the DDC*)

If AC 1015 was dubbed as one of the darkest years for traders all over the Old World, then so must a similar analogy be placed upon them for AC 1016. However, unlike the previous year's mercantile practices, AC 1016 does offer some promises for improvement. Still, the level and quality of business has varied from merchant to merchant and throughout the year.

Darokin's mercantile trade has taken a serious blow this year as many of its usual market kingdoms have been eroded. The once lucrative Overland Trade Route has been disrupted, causing the flow of trade to stymie and even halt. The civil unrest in Ylaruum has essentially closed off that lucrative market place to Darokin merchant caravans. The humanoids of the Broken Lands remain a threat to those caravans that choose to run that gauntlet to reach the northern kingdoms. Hopefully recent political moves will aid in caravan movements through that region.

Though the Glantri/Ethengar war has subsided, the situation in that region is still uncertain as far as merchants are concerned. The Glantrians are fully involved in rebuilding the damage caused by the war and strengthening itself militarily; with its treasury depleted by the costs of war, the populace has been footing the bill in the form of added taxes, leaving far less in the way of disposable income for luxury imports. For their part the Ethengars have

found themselves politically and socially in disarray; as each clan bids for power, there is little time for the acquisition of foreign goods. Without the consolidated rule of the fallen Moglai *Khan*, caravan safety is also a pressing concern.

Easterly Selenica has faired badly. Not only has its chief marketplace, Ylaruam, been closed off to their merchants, they also have had to subside fears. Wedged between the Shadow Elves and Ylari, the very safety of the isolated trade-city is in question. Selenica fears attack from the more isolationist government who may see a threat in the large open-minded Ylari populace there; this populace, with its “infidel ways and allies,” could be seen as a threat to the suddenly conservative Ylari government. Likewise, the militant Shadow Elves are still a mystery and therefore a threat to the precariously narrow land corridors that connect Selenica to the rest of Darokin.

Sea-based trade has also been disastrous for Darokin’s merchant fleets. The physical losses to House Linton and the overly aggressive trade practices of the Minrothaddan guilds have undermined many of Darokin’s overseas markets. With Minrothad’s newfound relationship with Thyatis, regaining these lost markets will be made even more difficult. With the Sea of Dread living up to its name, the faraway ports of the Isle of Dawn and NACE are dangerous to venture to and are not nearly as profitable as they use to be; stiff competition with other traders.

Even spacious Thyatis has been disappointing. Though economic reforms have given hopes that that empire would improve economically, the civil war has disrupted several of Thyatis’s key ports and made trade expeditions there difficult. It is truly a shame as war does offer the trader an avenue to supplement supplies and other materials diverted to the war effort. With their new relationship and a lessened tariff on their goods, the Minrothaddan traders have strengthened their presence in Thyatian ports; still subject to the tariffs, Darokinian merchants are having a difficult time competing. If the civil unrest continues, Darokin merchants see ample opportunity to make supply runs to Thyatis City, which has been under siege and mostly supplied by sea.

Relations, both commercial and political, have been severely strained by events initiated this year by Minrothad. Long established trade relationships have all but been dismantled by their assault on House Linton and underhanded trade practices afterwards. The guilds seem to be focusing their mercantile attentions towards the Thyatian ports, which are understandably needy of their wares. The Minrothaddan people will soon learn just how dependent they themselves were upon Darokin, especially our grain, livestock, and the raw materials that feed numerous guild industries.

The Northern Reaches, the Heldannic Territories and Norwold are also very difficult to reach, except by ship, and Rockhome looks almost unreachable. All have seen conflict this year, including pirate raiders. Doubtless the conflicts have put a strain upon the local industries, a burden that Darokinian traders would love to help lift. However, personal safety, politics, and uncertain market values have to be properly weighed in planning any trade ventures there.

The good news is that trade with Karameikos, the Five Shires, and Ierendi have not been too disappointing. Karameikos in particular has proved its viability as a market for Darokinian wares. Most noticeably are the refugee Alphatian nationals living there, who can and will purchase more luxurious goods. Alphatian ports are still a tempting marketplace; however despite the NACE’s assurances to the contrary, pirate activity still seems to be a threat to shipping. Ventures to Alphatian ports are risky proposals as is, both financially and physically, the pirates just add another factor to figure into one’s own potential profit margin.

DDC Press Bureau, Darokin City, Kaldmont, AC 1016

NACE (*courtesy of the NACE embassy in Karameikos*)

The lands and peoples of the NACE have made steady progress in their rebuilding efforts. As things have stabilized, trade has flourished, mainly between the NACE’s kingdoms themselves. Foreign traders are more than welcome to drop anchors and hawk their wares. With only a 1% tariff on foreign goods (Karameikos and Alphatian kingdoms excluded), Alphatian ports offer ample opportunity for the visiting traders.

It should be noted beforehand that Alphatian kingdoms have a very strong agricultural base. Items such as grains are in abundance, the surplus available at a highly competitive price. Exotic fruits and vegetables are in high demand, as are certain types of meats. Mostly, tradesmen will find the market lucrative for wares not common from Alphatian industries, or at least made uncommon since the sinking of the mainland.

It should be said that pirate activity in Alphatian waters has been a problem to shipping, both foreign and domestic. However, the NACE’s doctrine has made huge strides to secure its waters and insure safe passage.

The consolidation of the various islands and destruction of several pirate havens have bolstered the safety of the sea-lanes.

Sea of Dread (*courtesy of the Minrothad Merchant Sailors Guild*)

This year has been most gracious to the people of Minrothad. The guilds have been blessed by great strides into new markets and markets normally controlled by other nations. Most notably are our advances in Thyatian markets as our new status within the Thyatian Empire has afforded the guilds a lessening of the tariffs that Thyatis places on foreign traders. These markets have been beneficial for both peoples as Thyatian ports offer marketplaces desperate for materials depleted by the civil unrest.

Always dependent upon the tenacious Sea of Dread, Minrothad has attained a virtual monopoly upon the ports of surrounding lands. Not content with the complacency of easy markets, Minrothaddan traders have spread their attentions further abroad to bring to the peoples of Mystara the most exotic and alluring goods found. Trade expeditions to Alphatian lands are a definite plan, as to profit both peoples and renew old business practices, and are made more profitable thanks to the Thyatian agreements with the NACE. Agreements with Kastelios have also opened up the markets of the southern continent, which includes the Hinterlands. The guild masters are confident of Davania becoming a series of highly lucrative trade stops, not only as market places, but also as sources of new and rare items to offer the rest of Mystara.

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.

City	Nation	Class	Modifiers to Price Adjustment
Aaslin	Notrion (NACE)	B	Grain -10 Animals +3, Wine +4, Meat +5, Textiles +1, Common Metals +3, Dyes +3, Glassware +3
Aegopoli	Aegos (NACE)	D	Grain +3, Meat +3, Animals +3 Weapons +5, Oil +3, Glassware +3
Akesoli	Darokin	D	Fish -5, Porcelain -3, Tea -2, Textiles -3 Salt +2, Silk +1, Spices +1
Akorros	Darokin	C	Fish -4, Hides -5, Meat -3 Cloth +1, Grain +1, Semiprecious Stones +1, Wine -2
Alchemos	Meriander (NACE)	D	Grain -3, Meat -1, Common Wood -2, Precious Wood -2, Oil -4 Textiles +2, Salt +1, Glassware +3, Common Metals +2, Gems +1
Alinquin	Dawnrim (NACE)	B	Grain -1, Meat -4, Fish -3, Textiles -3, Furs -2, Animals -2 Common Wood +2, Beer +1, Pottery +1, Wine +1, Glassware +1
Alpha	Alpha (NACE)	C	Grain/Vegetables -4, Meat -3, Precious Wood -1 Ivory +6, Coffee +8, Weapons +2, Wine +4, Armor +4
Altendorf	Heldann	D	Animals -1, Dyes -1, Grain/Vegetables -1, Meat -1 Weapons +2, Armor +2, Pottery +2, Salt +1, Common Metals +1, Common Wood +1
Athenos	Darokin	D	Gems -2, Glassware -5, Ivory -4, Meat -2, Monsters -2

			Animals +1, Precious Wood +2, Porcelain +2
Atruaghin	Atruaghin	E	Coffee -4, Mounts -3, Tobacco -6, Textiles -2, Weapons -1 Beer +3, Semiprecious Stones +2,
Azurun	Hule	C	Grain -3, Cloth -2, Gems -2, Glassware -2 <i>Red Steel</i> +5, Common Metals +1, Salt +1, Dyes +2, Silk +1
Beitung	Ochalea (Thyatis)	C	Silk -5, Grain -1 Wood +1, Rare Books +, Art +2
Biazzan	Thyatis (Thyatis)	D	Silk -2, Spices -2, Tea -2 Animals +3, Ivory +1, Rare Books +2, Mounts +1
Blueside	Lagrius (NACE)	D	Fish -4, Common Wood -3, Grain -1, Meat -1 Common Metals +1, Glassware +1, Porcelain +1
Castellan	Soderfjord	E	Common Metals -4, Dyes -2, Semiprecious Stones -2 Armor +3, Fish +2, Pottery +1, Weapons +2
Ciudad Real	Gargoña	D	Art -1, Musical Instruments -3, Grain -1 <i>Cinnabryl</i> +2, Rare Books +3
Ciudad Tejillas	Almarrón	D	Silver -4, Cloth 2, Tobacco -1, Coffee -3 <i>Cinnabryl</i> +1, <i>Red Steel</i> +2, Rae Books +2
Corunglain	Darokin	C	Gems -3, Monsters -2, Semiprecious Stones -2 Grain +3, Hides +3, Pottery +3, Weapons +2
Darokin City	Darokin	A	Common Metals -3, Common Woods -4, Grain -2, Ivory -2, Textiles -3 Gems +3, Monster +3, Mounts +3, Precious Metals +4
Dengar	Rockhome	B	Armor -1, Gems -3, Weapons -1 Animals +5, Grain +6, Tobacco +6
Dunadale	Heldun (Thyatis/NACE)	B	Porcelain -2, Weapons -2, Monsters -4, Gems -2 Tea +5, Ivory +4, Grain/Vegetables +5, Glassware +3
East Portage	East Portage (NACE)	C	Beer -1, Grain -1, Dyes -2 Common Wood +2, Tea +2, Coffee +1, Animals +2
Edairo	Thothia (NACE)	B	Grain -1, Fish -2, Common Wood -1, Wine -1, Ivory -1, Furs -1 Cloth +1, Tea +2, Porcelain +1, Spices +1, Silk +3, Precious Metals +2
Ekto	Ekto (NACE)	D	Weapons -1, Dyes -1 Grain +3, Fish +2, Common Wood +4, Common Metals +4, Tea +1
Ethengar (no set city)	Ethengar	E	Hides -3, Mounts -1, Salt -3 Common Metals +6, Common Woods +5, Tea +3
Feather Fall	Aeria (NACE)	C	Grain -1, Meat -1 Common Wood +1, Oil +1, Glassware +2, Rare Books +3, Gems +2

Freiburg	Heldann	D	Animals -1, Porcelain -1 Armor +5, Oil +4, Weapons +5
Glantri City	Glantri	B	Monsters -5, Rare Books -2, Pottery -6 Gems +4, Glassware +3, Tobacco +3, Weapons +4
Grauenberg	Heldann	E	Animals -2, Common Metals -4 , Hides -1 Oil +4, Dyes +1, Salt +2, Fish +4, Grain +1, Coffee +4, Common Wood +1, Weapons +1, Armor +1
Hockstein	Heldann	E	Hides -2, Common Wood -1,, Beer -1 Spices +4, Gems +3, Weapons +2, Armor +2, Salt +2, Fish +1 Animals +1, Grain/Vegetables +1
Harbortown	Minrothad (Thyatis)	C	Fish -2, Dyes -2, Animals -1 Spices +1, Meat +2, Wine +1
Helskir	Heldun (Thyatis/NACE)	D	Dyes -3, Salt -2 Fish +2, Hides +3, Coffee +4, Pottery +1
Horken	Horken (NACE)	C	Grain -1, Meat -2 Common Wood +5, Tea +1, Spices +1, Textiles +1
Ierendi	Ierendi	C	Fish -2, Precious Metals -2 Dyes +3, Cloth +3, Animals +5, Silk +3, Meat +2
Jaboor	Ylaruam	E	Coffee -2, Oil -3, Glassware -3 Meat +3, Spices +4, Wine +2, Weapons +1
Kelvin	Karameikos	C	Glassware -2, Pottery -3, Precious Metals -2 Ivory +3, Meat +1
Kerendas	Thyatis (Thyatis)	C	Beer -2, Grain -2, Meat -3, Wine -2, Mounts -1 Common Metals +4, Common Woods +2, Dyes +1, Oil +1
Kopstar	Glantri	D	Dyes -2, Oil -5, Precious Metals -3 Precious Woods +4, Semiprecious Stones +3, Spices +2
Minrothad	Minrothad (Thyatis)	B	Coffee -2, Tea -2, Beer -2, Fish -3, Dyes -1 Pottery +3, Cloth +1, Precious Metals +1, Gems +2, Common Wood +3
Mirros	Karameikos	C	Animals -1, Common Metals -2, Common Woods -2, Hides -3 Armor +1, Mounts +2, Rare Furs +4, Weapons +1
Newkirk	Westrourke (Thyatis)	B	Dyes -5, Armor -2 Coffee +3, Gems +3, Porcelain +2
Norrvik	Vestland	C	Salt -3, Silk -4, Weapons -3 Cloth +3, Ivory +3, Pottery +4
Oceansend	Heldann	D	Books -1, Common Wood -3 Dyes +2, Salt +1, Grain +3, Silk +3
Sayr Ulan	Sind	B	Rare Books -1, Salt -2, Spices -3 Common Woods +4, Fish +4, Tea +3

Seagirt	Pearl Islands (Thyatis)	D	Vegetables -5, Fish -3, Gems -3, Pottery -2 Grain +3, Precious Wood +2, Wine +3, Weapons +1
Seahome	Minrothad (Thyatis)	D	Wood -3 Silk +2, Dyes +4 Hides/Furs +2
Selenica	Darokin	B	Cloth -3, Precious Wood -1, Rare Books -1 Dyes +4, Fish +6, Glassware +3
Shireton	Five Shires	D	Beer -4, Grain -2, Tobacco -5, Wine -2 Coffee +3, Fish +2, Tea +2
Skyfyr	Esterhold (NACE)	D	Grain -1, Beer -1, Common Metal -2, Precious Metals -2, Gems -2 Animals +2, Wine +2, Meat +1, Weapons +3, Mounts +2, Armor +3
Slagovich	Slagovich	C	<i>Cinnabryl</i> -3, Fish -2 Common Metals +2, Salt +1, Spices +3, <i>Red Steel</i> +3, Weapons +1
Smokestone City	Cimarron	C	Ale -2, <i>Cinnabryl</i> -2, <i>Smoke Powder</i> -2, Wheellocks -1 Grain +3, Meat +1, Salt +1, Spices +1
Soderfjord	Soderfjord	C	Common Woods -4, Grain -1 Armor +2, Wine +4
Spearpoint	Surshield (NACE)	C	Grain -2, Meat -2, Weapons -2, Armor -2, Wine -1 Common Metals +1, Salt +1, Glassware +1, Spices +2
Stahl	Rockhome	C	Ivory -3, Monsters -3, Precious Metals -4 Grain +4, Meat +4, Silk +5, Textiles +5
Tameronikas	Ylaruam	E	Animals -3, Cloth -2, Tea -3 Glassware +2, Porcelain +2, Salt +4, Weapons +1
Tanakumba	Yavdlom	C	Cocoa -4, Coffee -3, Fish -3, Gems -1, Precious Woods -3, Ivory -2 Grain +4, Meat +3, Silk +2, Precious Metals +4
Tel Akbir	Thyatis (Thyatis)	D	Beer -2, Coffee -1, Oil -2 Cloth +3, Dyes +3, Hides +3
Tenobar	Darokin	D	Cloth -4, Fish -5, Pottery -5 Hides +2, Precious Metals +2, Salt +3
Thyatis City	Thyatis (Thyatis)	A	Armor -1, Mounts -1, Silk -1, Weapons -1 Gems +3, Grain +4, Oil +3, Precious Metals +2, Rare Furs +4
Trikelios	Trikelios (NACE)	D	Grain -2, Fish -1, Beer -1 Common Wood +2, Common Metals +1, Tea +1
Verdon	Minrothad (Thyatis)	D	Woods -1, Cloth -1, Books -3 Furs +3, Dyes +3, Silk +1, Salt +3
Vyonnes	Glantri	E	Rare Furs -3, Textiles -2, Wine -1

			Beer +4, Meat +5, Silk +3, Grain +2, Weapons +1
Wendar City	Wendar	D	Wood -3, Hides -2, Rare Furs -1 Weapons +2, Textiles +3, Cloth +2, Salt +3, Grain +5
Ylaruam	Ylaruam	B	Oil -1, Porcelain -3, Semiprecious Stones -4 Coffee +4, Mounts +4, Tobacco +4, Weapons +2, Armor +1
Zeaburg	Ostland	C	Fish -3, Cloth -2, Textiles -1 Common Woods +2, Meat +5, Weapons +3

In addition to the contemporary economic resources available from Darokin, the NACE, and Minrothad, we here at *Joshuan Gallidox Publishing* have also been afforded similar reports from Sardjikjian. It should be noted that the two reports offer distinct differences in price modifiers on common ports reported by both. *Joshuan Gallidox Publishing* neither supports nor disqualifies either source of information as being the legitimate source.

City	Nation	Class	Modifiers to Price Adjustment
Angorit	Yavdlom	E	Mounts-3, Ivory -3, Precious Woods -2, Fish -2, Gems -1, Spices-1 Textiles +1, Grain +2, Silk +3, Precious Metals +3
Ayskudag	Hule	B	Fish -3, Grain -2, Gems -1 Common Metals +1, Silk +2, <i>Red Steel</i> +3
Azkoran	Azardjian	C	Cloth -3, Wine -2, Common Metals -1, Common Woods -1 Meat +1, Animals +1, Books +2, Monsters +2, Salt +3
Azurun	Hule	C	Grain -4, Cloth -2, Gems -1, Glassware -1 <i>Red Steel</i> +3, Common Metals +2, Salt +1, Dyes +2, Silk +1
Baratpur	Sind	D	Arts -3, Salt -2, Mounts -1 Grain +1, Weapons +2, Common Woods +3, Fish +3
Boa Mansao	Texeiras	B	Wood -3, <i>Cinnabryl</i> -1, <i>Red Steel</i> -1 Weapons +1, Armor +1, Gems +2, Precious Metals +2, Books +3
Boyâzka	Hule	D	Fish -3, Glassware -2, Gems -1 Meat +1, Common Metals +2, <i>Red Steel</i> +3
Ciudad de Leon	Torreón	D	Weapons -3, Grain -2, Common Woods -1, <i>Red Steel</i> -1 Common Metals +1, Meat +1, Pottery +2, Wine +2, Porcelain +3
Ciudad Huelca	Guadalante	E	Animals -3, Mount -2, Grain -2 Armor +1, Weapons +2, Semiprecious Stones +2
Ciudad Matacán	Saragón	D	Books -3, Grain -2, Meat -2, Animals -1 Art +1, Cloth +2, Silk +2, Glassware +3
Ciudad Real	Gargoña	D	Art -1, Musical Instruments -3, Grain -1 <i>Cinnabryl</i> +2, Books +3
Ciudad Tejillas	Almarrón	E	Tobacco -3, Precious Metals -2, Coffee -2 Weapons +2, Armor +2, Silk +3
Cirkara	Hule	D	Grain -3, Animals -3, Meat -2, Spirits -1

			Common Metals +1, Porcelain +2, Glassware +2, Precious Metals +3
Debredladany	Monzag	D	Animals -3, Mounts -2, Fur -2, Common Woods -2, Grain -1 Glassware +1, Spices +2, Silk +3
Dubrax	Robrenn	D	Grain -3, Common Woods -2, Fish -2, Spices -1, Furs-1 Books +1, Precious Metals +2, Pottery +3
Dunwick	Dunwick	A	Weapons -3, Fish -2, Beer -2, Glassware -1, Armors -1 Wine +1, Meat +2, Spice +2, Grain +3
Duzhar	Sardjikjian	C	Glassware -3, Porcelain -2, Mounts -1 Tea +1, Precious Metals +2, Weapons +3, Armor +3
Erdnidze	Chengouch	D	Hides -3, Textiles -2, Animals -1, Monsters -1 Spices +1, Mounts +2, Salt +3
Erzmin	Hule	D	Animal -3, Meat-3, Pottery -2, Common Metals -1 Weapons +1, Armor +2, Oil+3
Eyf	Robrenn	E	Spices -3, Semiprecious Stones -2, Common Woods -1 Weapons +1, Armor +2, Slaves +2, Precious Metals +3
Gundegard	Eusdria	C	<i>Red Steel</i> -1, Beer -3, Fur -2, Spice -2, Common Woods -2 Books +2, Glass +3, Semiprecious Stones +1
Hayebil	Kyurdukstan	D	Textiles -3, Monsters -2, Spices -1 Oil +1, Tea +3
Houriani	Grouzhina	C	Semiprecious Stones -3, Fruits -2, Coffee -1 Weapons +1, Armor +1, Silk +2, Grain +3
Ienzvan	Dvinzina	C	Fruits -3, Books -2, Gems -1 Armor +1, Weapons +1, Meat +2, Mounts +3
Iskilü	Hule	E	Common Woods -3, Precious Woods -2, Mounts -1, Grain-1 Weapons +1, Common Metals +1, Oil +2, Armor +3, <i>Red Steel</i> +3
Jahore	Sind	D	Textiles -3, Silk -3, Fish -2, Gems -1, Precious Metals -1 Tea +1, Dye +1, Common Woods +2, Mounts +3, Precious Woods +3
Jaibul	Jaibul	D	Slaves -3, Precious Metals -2, Oil -2, Weapons -1 Common Woods +1, Silk +1, Wine +2, Spices +2, Gems +3, Books +3
Jandak	Hule	C	Grain -3, Weapons -3, Armor-2, Books-1 Wine +1, Precious Woods +1, Ivory +2, Monsters +2, Gems +3, Silk +3, <i>Red Steel</i> +3
Jehrom	Hule	D	Glassware -3, Cloth -2, Textiles -2, Mounts -1 Common Woods +1, Salt +2, Silk +3, <i>Red Steel</i> +3
Karakandar	Sind	B	Fish -3, Semiprecious Stones -3, Grain -2, Precious Metals -2, Common Woods -1

			Silk +1, Spice +2, Mounts +3
Khamrati	Sind	D	Salt -3, Animals -3, Mounts -2, Precious Metals -1, Textiles -1 Weapons +1, Grain +2, Fish +2, Common Woods +3
Khuur	Hule	C	Grain -3, Glassware -3, Cloth -2, Books -1 Wine +1, Precious Woods +1, Ivory +2, Monsters+2, Silk +3, <i>Red Steel</i> +3
Kiteng	Sardjikjian	A	Porcelain -3, Textiles -3, Animals -2, Meat -2, Mounts -1 Books +1, Common Woods +2, Pigments +2, Precious Woods +3
Kladanovic	Slagovich	D	Fish -3, Mounts -2, Precious Metals -1, Gems -1 Common Woods +1, Grain +1, Spices +2, Silk +2, <i>Red Steel</i> +3
Kulnovo	Olgar	D	Grain -3, Spirits -2, Mounts -1, Animals -1 Common Woods +1, Weapons +2, Silk +2, Armor +3
Latehar	Sind	E	Hides -3, Common Metals -2, Common Woods -2, Precious Metals -1, Rare Furs-1 Weapons +1, Cloth +2, Beer +3
Leominster	Bellayne	C	Textiles -3, Cloth -2, Books -2, Grain -1, Weapons-1 Tea +1, Silk +2, Spices +2, Wine +3
Louvines	Renardie	B	Wine -2, Grain -1, Spice -1 Weapons +1, Armor +1, Books +2
Magden	Hule	B	Grain -3, Meat -2, Animals -2, Gems -1, Spices-1 Tea +1, <i>Red Steel</i> +2, Oil +3
Mahasabad	Sind	C	Tea -3, Spices -2, Common Woods-1 Grain +1, Precious Metals +1, Gems +2, Semiprecious Stones +3, Books +3
Miriestiu	Bulzan	D	Meat -3, Animals -3, Weapons -2, Grain -1, Armor-1 Spices&Books+1, Dye+2, Porcelain+3
Mons-en-Plecy	Renardie	E	Fish -2, Cloth -1 Common Metals +1, Dye +2
Naral	Sind	E	Salt -3, Hides -2, Meat -2, Animals -1 Mounts +1, Common Woods +2
Nidzhman	Kyurdukstan	F	Common Woods -3, Furs- 2, Textiles -2, Common Metals -1 Grain +1, Wine +1, Oil +2, Glassware +3
Nova Svoga	Nova Svoga	E	Grain -3, Meat -2, Furs -2, Rare Furs -1 Salt +1, Beer +2, Spirits +2, Weapons +3, Armor +3
Oldsbury-Upon-Blythe	Bellayne	D	Beer -3, Grain -3, Common Woods -2, Hides -2, Animals -1 Wine +1, Tobacco +2, Precious Metals +3
Port Preto	Vilaverde	B	Fish -3, <i>Cinnabryl</i> -2, <i>Red Steel</i> -2 Weapons +1, Armor +1, Livestock +1, Wood +2, Books +2,

			Grain+2
Prijderel	Antasyn	C	Animals -3, Common Woods -2, Meat -2, Textiles -1 Mounts +1, Wine +2, Spices +3
Puerto Morillos	Narvaez	D	Grain -3, Meat -3, Textiles -2, Weapons -2 Common Metals +1, <i>Cinnabryl</i> +2, Common Woods +3
Raneshwar	Sind	F	Animals -3, Textile -3, Hides -2, Monsters -1, Precious Metals -1 Salt +1, Grain +2, Fish +3
Raska	Zvornik	C	Grain -3, Meat -3, <i>Cinnabryl</i> -2, Fish -1 Weapons +1, <i>Red Steel</i> +2, Spices +3, Oil+3
Sambay	Sind	A	Grain -3, Spices -2, Silk -2, Precious Metals -1 Mounts +1, Dye +2, Common Woods +3, Precious Woods +3
Sandapur	Sind	D	Precious Metals -3, Gems -2, Spices -2, Grain -1 Mounts +1, Porcelain +2, Common Woods +3, Precious Woods +3
Sayr-Ulan	Sind	B	Spices -3, Books -2, Salt -2 Common Woods +2, Fish +2, Tea +3
Seyvan	Hule	C	Grain -3, Spirits -2, Meat -1 Silk +1, Precious Woods +2, Precious Metals +3
Slagovich	Slagovich	C	<i>Cinnabryl</i> -3, Fish -2 Salt +1, Weapons+1, Common Metals +2, Spices +3, <i>Red Steel</i> +3
Smokestone City	Cimarron	C	Beer-3, Weapons-2, Common Metals -2 Silk +2, Common Woods +3, Pottery +2
Smolini	Grouzhina	C	Animals -3, Meat -2, Wine -1, Mounts -1 Textiles +1, Glassware +2, Armor +3, Weapons +3
Tashgoun	Douzbakjian	A	Fish -3, Dye -2, Textiles -2, Salt -1 Meat +1, Common Metals +2, Precious Metals +2, Gems +3, Common Woods +3
Theeds-Upon-Blythe	Bellayne	B	Fish -3, Semiprecious Stones (Coal) -2, Textiles -2, Books -1, Tea -1 Wine+1, Dye +2, Silk +3
Tyjaret	Yavdlom	D	Fish -3, Animals -2, Textile -2, Salt -1 Grain +1, <i>Red Steel</i> +2, Common Woods +2, Mounts +3
Withimer	Eusdria	C	Fish -3, Beer -2, Fur -1, Common Woods -1 Common Metals +1, Glass +2
Yenigaz	Hule	B	Fish -3, Grain -2, Gems -1 Common Metals +1, Silk +2, <i>Red Steel</i> +3
Zagora	Zagora	F	Common Woods -3, Monsters -2, Grain -1

			Weapons +1, Red Steel +2, Armor +2, Mounts+3
Zartakand	Douzbakjian	C	Grain -3, Fish -2, Animals -1, Mounts -1; Common Woods +2, Common Metals +3, Semiprecious Stones +3

Cults of the Immortals

The following sections deal with the various Immortals and their churches found on the world of Mystara. Except for the table giving the major Immortals and their followings, the material below is a preview of the upcoming *The Immortal Scriptures* to be released at a later date by Joshuan Gallidox Publishing. Those with interests in the Immortals should make sure to place this book on their must-read list.

Clerics and Specialty Priests

To most folks, anyone who worship the Immortals or gods and receive spells in return are simply known as priests. The common peasant does not care to note that there is a difference in behavior, devotion, powers, or even duties between various priests within the same religion. The fact is, there are two main types of priests found on Mystara; the cleric and the specialty priest.

Cleric

The cleric is a believer in a cause or higher goal. To him, the concept of the Immortal's portfolio is more important than the Immortal Himself. As such, clerics worship a greater goal first, then a particular Immortal second, if they even bother to worship any Immortal at all. To a cleric, every Immortal has a role to play in relation to their particular belief in the "big picture" of things, therefore rarely does one particular Immortal deserve more worshipping than another.

Clerics tend to travel the land, as they are not locked into a hierarchy or organization. Some join various churches and religions throughout their lives, while others do not. Those that do often do so because the Immortal worshipped in that particular religion is often very close in philosophy to the beliefs of the cleric. For example, clerics of the Norse Pantheon often join the church of Odin, as being the head of the Norse gods, He obviously represents Them best.

Still, clerics can (and do) leave a particular faith without much incident. The above mentioned cleric might decide that the worshipping of Thor is starting to slip and therefore try to fix things. He would likely resign his role in the church of Odin and then join the church of Thor. This is one of the main advantages of being a cleric.

The other comes from the fact that, since you worship almost all the Immortals, a cleric will generally be well treated by most religious organizations and priests. After all, the cleric is a potential recruit into their order.

The powers of a cleric are as detailed in the *Player's Handbook*, although a more updated and balanced version can be found in Player's Option: *Spells and Magic*. As such, they have access to most spells and can turn/command undead. They can wear any armor and only use blunt weapons.

On Mystara, there are two types of clerics: the philosopher, and the pantheist.

The Philosopher

The philosopher is a cleric who believes in a particular ethos, notably Law, Chaos, or Neutrality. To him, the moral definition of good and evil are secondary when compared with the struggles between order and anarchy (Law), stasis and freedom (Chaos), or stability and choice (Neutrality).

Philosophers receive their spells from all the Immortals of Law (or Chaos or Neutrality), and therefore upsetting just one of Them will not cause any problems with the cleric's powers. Only a severe change in ethos (alignment) will affect the philosopher's powers.

The Pantheist

The pantheist is a cleric who believes in a way of life represented by several Immortals as to be the correct way to live. As such, a pantheist worships and entire pantheon in which she believes are the true ideal of perfection. She therefore honors all the Immortals of the pantheon and will only lose her spells if she somehow offends Them

all. The goal of the pantheist is to make sure that all the Immortals in a pantheon are respected, thereby keeping a balance between Them all.

There are several pantheons found on (and within) Mystara. More details will be given in the pantheon chapter later on in this tome [*in The Immortal Scriptures. Ed.*].

Specialty Priest

A specialty priest is a priest who believes and upholds the dogma of ONE specific Immortal. To the specialty priest, her Immortal is more important than anything else in the world. A specialty priest is the champion of the cause of any given Immortal. Specialty priests are the ones that actively preach about their Immortal and do their best to convert others to their philosophies.

The biggest misconception people have about specialty priests is that all priests of a given Immortal are all alike. Nothing could be further from the truth. Most Immortals have several specialty priests of various natures working for Them. Each type of specialty priest has a specific function within the hierarchy of an Immortal.

Think about it. Both the Temple of Vanya in Thyatis and the Heldannic Knights worship Vanya, yet the two religions are different in attitude and behavior. Would it therefore not be logical that the abilities of the specialty priests also vary slightly?

Even a relatively peaceful Immortal, such as Asterius, still needs warriors to defend His temples. If His specialty priests were all merchants and thieves, how would He manage? The answer is simple: by having fighting specialty priests (such as Defenders [*warrior kit from the Savage Coast setting. Ed.*]) act as guards. The difference is that being a less warrior-like Immortal means He will probably have less warrior-type specialty priests than, say, Vanya.

Despite each Immortal having a different portfolio and goal, many share the same type of specialty priests. For example, Ordana, Faunus, and Zirchev have druids among their specialty priests, as do a few others.

The most common specialty priests of Mystara are described below:

Priest

The specialty priests known simply as priests are the most common specialty priests of Mystara. As such, their abilities are identical to the clerics' (that is access to most spheres and turn/control undead) with the addition of one extra power.

For example, a priest of Halav gets a +2 to damage against goblinoids in addition to all abilities listed for the cleric (as per *Player's Handbook* or Player's Option: *Spells and Magic*). On the other hand, the extra power of a priest of Protius is a swimming movement equal to his movement on land. The exact ability a priest of an Immortal gets is described in the Codex of the Immortals from the *Wrath of the Immortals* boxed set.

Priests are the catch-all specialty priest of an Immortal. Their ability to use any armor and blunt weapons along with a decent THAC0 make them capable of holding their own in combat while their access to most spells can be useful in just about any situation. Their versatility often makes priests the adventuring specialty priest of a deity, traveling around the world and spreading the faith. Many also serve as temple guardians, caretakers of the flock of worshipers, and representatives to the average person.

All Immortals commonly use priests in their ranks.

Crusader

The crusaders are considered to be weapons against the enemies of the faith. While defenders are charged with defending the temples and holy grounds, crusaders are the ones that invade the temples and territories of the enemy. They are militaristic and often organize themselves as any army would.

The exact abilities and requirements of a crusader can be found in Player's Option: *Spells and Magic*. Briefly, they require a Wisdom of 9, Strength of 12, and Charisma of 12. The most important power is the fact that a crusader uses the warrior's THAC0 instead of the priest's THAC0. They have major access to the spheres of All, Combat, Guardian, Healing, War, and Wards. They have minor access to Necromantic and Protection spheres. For a more complete description, as well as a list of the rest of their minor abilities, see Player's Option: *Spells and Magic*. (Note: they cannot turn/control undead.)

Crusaders are common among the Immortals of war, guardianship, justice, revenge, rulership, strength, and thunder. Vanya's favorite specialty priest in the crusader.

Defender

Defenders are exactly what the name implies: defenders of the faith. Their role is to protect the temples, priests, and worshipers of an Immortal. Defenders often organize themselves along the line of knights, viewing themselves as the champions of the peasants in the name of their Immortal.

Defenders are actually fighters with the “Defender” kit. They therefore have the THAC0 and hit points of a warrior. They must have a Strength of 12 and a Wisdom of 13 to take the Defender kit. Spells available to a defender vary according to the Immortal they worship; they are not necessarily combat oriented spells (that’s the role of the crusader), although they often have major access to both Combat and Healing. A few have weapon restrictions limiting them to weapons noted as being favored by their Immortal (such as a war hammer for defenders of Thor or a longbow and long sword for defenders of Ilsundal), but most Immortals let them use whatever weapon they want. There is never any restriction on armor. The exact spell progression of the defender, as well as other benefits and disadvantages, can be found in the Savage Coast on-line rulebook, in the warrior kits’ section. (Note: they cannot turn/control undead.)

Defenders can be found worshipping all the Immortals, although peaceful ones will only have a handful of defenders while more war-like Immortals will have complete regiments of defenders. Defenders of nature-oriented religions are often called “druidic knights,” while evil-aligned defenders enjoy the title of “avenger” or “anti-paladin.”

Druid (Balancer)

The druid is a specialty priest of nature and nature-oriented Immortals. They view themselves as the protectors and guardians of all things natural, making sure that mankind does not interfere with the natural way of things. The abilities and requirements of druids are found in the *Player’s Handbook*, although an updated and more balanced version can also be found in Player’s Option: *Spells and Magic*. Of important note is the fact that they cannot turn/control undead.

Contrary to popular beliefs, druids are not simply “forest priests.” Druids are found in any natural setting. There are desert druids, mountain druids, and even underdark (underground) druids. Their abilities can vary slightly according to their favored terrain (for more information, see *Complete Druid’s Handbook*).

Unlike the traditional druid, a Mystaran druid can be true neutral, lawful neutral, or chaotic neutral in alignment. The lawful druids believe in keeping things as they are while the chaotic ones see a more dynamic approach with the advances of man in one area balanced by an advance in nature in another. True neutral druids are somewhere in the middle (for more details, see *Karameikos: Kingdom of Adventure*).

Of special note on druids is the fact that some of them don’t worship any Immortals at all, but instead worship Nature directly. Sages speculate that the Immortal Djaea grants them their spells, but priests of Djaea deny this. Regardless, druids of Nature receive spells even if they don’t worship an Immortal. To the druids of Nature, all other druids are not real druids, so they call them balancers instead (although their powers are identical). Druids of Nature still give praise to many of the Immortals of nature—much as a cleric can honor a particular Immortal—but they do not receive any benefits from it.

Each order of druids has its own hierarchy, as detailed in the *Player’s Handbook*. Despite this, their territories do not overlap; the presence of one druid in an area, regardless of religion, is enough to maintain the balance of nature. The “guardianship” of the land can be transferred from one order to another in the same way as rising in the ranks: through combat. A druid of one religion can challenge a druid of another religion of the same rank [*level. Ed.J.*] The winner becomes the guardian of the land in the name of their particular Immortal (or Nature). The opponent must be of the same rank, because this is not a challenge to rise in levels; there can still only be a specific number of druids of higher levels in any given religion. A druid cannot replace a higher level druid of another religion as this will create one too many for his own religion!

There appears to be one great druid for each region of Mystara. The female half-elf Great Druid Maud of Robrenn (a forest druid) is in charge of the entire Savage Coast region. In the Old World, the human male Kaikhatu who lives in the steppes of Ethengar (a plains/grassland druid) is rumored to be the great druid of the area. The great druids of Norwold and other regions are still a mystery to most people.

Ranger

A ranger is a specialty priest of nature—in particular woodlands—that is more combat-oriented than druids. They are also aligned toward Good rather than Neutrality, making them somewhat biased as to how nature works

(at least according to druids). Rangers tend to follow the same Immortals as druids, but they play a more active part, often hunting down those who would destroy nature.

The abilities and restrictions of rangers are well detailed in the *Player's Handbook* (with extra options found in the *Complete Ranger's Handbook*). Of particular note, although they receive priest spells, the ranger class falls in the warrior category and advances as warriors. Only Immortals who favor woodlands, nature, and goodness use rangers as specialty priests.

Like druids, however, some rangers worship Nature directly instead of any particular Immortal, and they still receive their spells. Once more sages speculate that Djaea grants them their spells in these instances, but again this has yet to be confirmed.

Paladin

A paladin is a specialty priest of law and goodness. They actively roam the land, spreading justice and honor everywhere they go. To Immortals of such concepts, paladins are the ultimate champions of their cause. They are the ideal knight, and exemplify everything the Immortal seeks to achieve.

Like rangers, paladins are considered to be warriors, not priests, and their class abilities are well described in the *Player's Handbook* (again, the *Complete Paladin's Handbook* gives variations on the theme).

The Immortal Tarastia has been known to grant spells to paladins who uphold their ideals but don't worship any particular Immortal of paladins. Her priests claim that as long as they serve justice, Tarastia will continue to grant the Immortal-less paladins their powers, since to Her, the ideal is more important than the religion. Most of these Immortal-less paladins scoff at the claim, yet none have outright challenged it.

Others

Many other specialty priests exist, including the mystic (also known as the monk or fighting-monk as detailed in Player's Option: *Spells and Magic*) found throughout Sind, the shamans of Ethengar (again, see Player's Option: *Spells and Magic* or the accessory *Shamans*) or the very specific priests of the Nithian culture in the Hollow World (see HWR2 *Kingdom of Nithia*). Individual DMs are free to create their own specialty priests. Useful suggestions can be found in the *Complete Priest's Handbook*, while guidelines for keeping everything balanced are available in Player's Option: *Spells and Magic*.

Others examples of specialty priests, created by various members of the *Mystara Mailing List* can be found in the mailing list archives.

Needless to say, the amount and type of specialty priests are endless, and depend greatly on the whims of the Immortals. The advantages of specialty priests come from the fact that they can possibly gain powers far beyond the grasps of most clerics. On the downside, their actions are closely monitored by their deity, and any stray actions or thoughts from the tenets of the religion can cause a loss in spells and powers. Also, it is difficult for a specialty priest to break free of an organized religion to her Immortal; after all, she can't exactly join the church of another Immortal, now can she?

Churches of Mystara

The following is a list of four of the churches described in the upcoming *The Immortal Scriptures*. Note that in the texts below, the term "Priest" (with a capital P) refers to the specialty priests called priest (as described above), and not to the clergy of the given church or religion. The term "priest" (with a lower-case p) refers to either the clergy as a whole, or the title "priest" a clergy-member might have in their particular order.

The Church of Thyatis

Coat of Arms: Thyatian Eagle in the middle of a circle of twelve Thyatian Immortals' holy symbols (starting from the top, clockwise: Vanya, Thor, Tarastia, Odin, Kagyar, Korotiku, Koryis, Protius, Halav, Asterius, Valerias, and Diulanna).

Clergy: Clerics (50%), Priests (25%), Defenders (10%), normal humans (8%), Paladins (5%), other specialty priests (2%).

Clergy's Alignment: Any non-evil alignment.

Worshipers' Alignment: Any.

The Church of Thyatis is a religious organization that encourages the worship and/or respect of all the Immortals of the Thyatian Pantheon. This list includes Alphaks, Asterius, Diulanna, Halav, Kagyar, Korotiku, Koryis, Odin, Protius, Tarastia, Thanatos, Thor, Valerias, and Vanya.

Although Alphaks and Thanatos are included in this list, the Church of Thyatis does not actually encourage their worship. These two Immortals are used as examples of evil and simply serve to show the fate that awaits those of evil alignment upon their death at their hands. In fact, except for mentioning them as the evil to be fought against in the Church of Thyatis, their worship is a crime punishable by death in the Empire of Thyatis and most other nations.

The clergy of the Church of Thyatis is composed mainly of clerics. Most are pantheists, but philosophers of law and neutrality are also common. Only a few chaos philosophers are present among the hierarchy. Priests (and other specialty priests) are often in charge of the ceremonies pertaining to their particular Immortal. Of course, only priests of the Immortals mentioned above, minus Priests of Alphaks and Thanatos, can join the clergy. Even non-priests (that is, normal humans) can join the order and give ceremonies to the masses.

The temples of the Church of Thyatis tend to be grand buildings since they must serve as a place of worship for many Immortals. Most can seat a couple hundred spectators during their ceremonies. They also have several other chambers that serve as shrines for each particular Immortal. Finally, chambers in the back serve as barracks for the clergy, as well as meeting rooms for discussions and planning.

Organization

All clergy of the Church of Thyatis start at the rank of initiate. Their duties include serving as messengers, preparing the temples for the ceremonies, and generally acting as servants for the higher-ranking clergy. It is a life of studying and classes in the temple libraries followed by hard work and menial chores.

An initiate who has served well for three years [*and about 3rd level. Ed.*] attains the rank of priest. It is the priests of the religion who actually give the ceremonies to the people of the Thyatian Empire. Those of priest rank are also sent out on adventures to discover secrets, amass wealth for the order, and convert other cultures to their way.

A priest who performs admirably for at least 5 years [*and around level 7 if possessing a character class. Ed.*] becomes a curate. Curates are in charge of deciding exactly what the topics of each ceremony are to be, as well as plan what enlightenment will be taught to the people. There is a curate in charge of the ceremonies for each Immortal of the pantheon. That is, in each temple, there is one curate for Asterius, another for Diulanna, and so on. This is the highest rank any Priest (or other specialty priest) can attain within the clergy since their point of view is limited to those of their Immortal.

Finally, in charge of the entire temple is a bishop [*they are usually around 9th level. Ed.*]. He runs the place and has final say on what will or will not be accepted within his building. Normal humans who do not posses any divine granted powers cannot proceed above the rank of bishop.

In charge of several temples in entire areas—usually a complete dominion—are the patriarch and matriarch. Only Clerics [*of 13th level or higher. Ed.*] can attain this rank, as only they can remain unbiased when deciding how each Immortal is to be worshipped. These patriarchs advise rulers on matters of the church and can exert a lot of political power in their region.

There is no rank above patriarch in the Church of Thyatis. As such, all the patriarchs of the order gather annually in Thyatis City to discuss and vote on the future of their religion. Traditionally, the patriarch of Thyatis City has the power to veto any vote passed by this assembly, and in case of ties, holds the deciding vote.

Dogma

The philosophies of the Church of Thyatis hold that all acts performed by mortals are recorded by the Immortals above and will be used to judge them when they pass into the afterlife. The spirits of the dead will belong to the Immortal he or she most resembled in life and will wind up serving eternity in the Outer Plane of their Immortal. This is why they describe the temperaments and homes of Alphaks and Thanatos; by seeing what awaits those of evil alignment, they hope they will change their ways. As such, good deeds will be rewarded with good deeds in the afterlife, just as bad deeds will be paid back with bad deeds.

The priests cheerfully describe the purpose, alignment, and desires of all the Thyatian Immortals so that the citizens of Thyatis can make their own choices of which Immortal to hold to heart and where they want to go

when they die. Of course, since Thyatians are militant people, the Immortals Vanya, Thor, and Diulanna often receive more than their fair share of attention.

Initiates spend several hours a day studying everything known on the entire Pantheon. Upon reaching the rank of priests, they are charged with spreading this knowledge to the people of Thyatis and the rest of Mystara. Most prefer to have the people come to them in their daily ceremonies at the temples, but a few adventure out into the world and try to convert other cultures.

Although not specifically stated in their doctrines, the Church of Thyatis also promotes the belief that Thyatians are the best people in the world and that all other cultures should join the empire and become full-fledged Thyatians.

Day-to-Day Activities

The clergy of the Church of Thyatis can often be seen roaming the streets of major Thyatian cities, preaching about making choices for one's afterlife. Those who seem curious about their speeches are often referred to one of the temples of the order.

Every day, at noon, ceremonies are held in the various temples of the religion. Each ceremony starts with a brief talk about all the Immortals, then proceeds onto the main topic of the day that usually deals with one Immortal in particular. The subject for the day is determined by the bishop, usually in conjunction with his curates. Since there are currently 12 Immortals in the pantheon (not including Alphaks or Thanatos), a common theme is to have an "Immortal of the month," thereby teaching the philosophies of one Immortal for a month, then changing to another at the arrival of the new moon. Still, some bishops have other complicated schedules dividing the days evenly throughout the year in a pattern only they can see.

Finally, the Temple of Thyatis often gives special rites when a Thyatian child is born, blessing her and asking the Immortals to look after her as she grows up. The clergy members also take care of marriage ceremonies and divorce throughout the Thyatian Empire.

Holy Days and Important Ceremonies

Up until recently, the Church of Thyatis did not have any major holy days. Now, however, Wrath of the Immortals Day (Nuwmont 15th) is considered to be sacred. This day celebrates the fact that the Thyatian Pantheon proved to the world that Thyatians are the favored people of the Immortals by destroying the continent of Alphatia. The logic goes that since Thyatians are the favored people, then the Church of Thyatis must be the favored religion of the world. Wrath of the Immortals Day started in AC 1010 as a workers' holiday but has since become a full-fledge religious event.

On Flaurmont 1, priests give a special ceremony celebrating the Day of Freedom for those Thyatian youths who have turned 21 and are now "free" from their parents' whims.

Other days are considered important, but only to a particular Immortal, and not the entire pantheon. Because of this, they are not considered religious holy days, but are usually celebrated by the bishops of the temples anyway. These days include the Start of Shipping Season (Va. 23, Protius), The Day of Valerias (Fe. 15, Valerias), Vanya's Day (Sv. 8, Vanya), and Protius's Day (Ei. 22, Protius), as well as several others.

Major Centers of Worship

The Great Thyatian Temple, located in the estates district of Thyatis City, is an immense building which can seat almost 5,000 citizens. This marble building is crafted in the typical Thyatian style, with marble columns and a circular amphitheater-styled ceremony hall. Several other buildings are attached to this hall, including the residence of Dylan Finnson, Patriarch of Thyatis City, as well as sleeping quarters for over 250 clergy members.

Several other temples (although usually much smaller) can be found throughout the city as well as every other major Thyatian city. The temples of the Pearl Islands still have a good following, while a new temple is currently being built in Selenica.

Affiliated Orders

A few blocks down the street from the Great Thyatian Temple, one can find the Knights of the Gold Dragon Enclave. This building houses a military order dedicated to upholding the decisions taken by the patriarchs of the Church of Thyatis. The ranks of the Knights of the Gold Dragon are composed of warriors, rogues, paladins, and crusaders. Members of this order protect the various temples of the religion, lead military expeditions as needed by the patriarchs, and roam the empire seeking to enlighten people about the choices they make in life.

When not on a religious mission, this order acts as a mercenary band willing to perform any mission that doesn't go against their philosophies or the church.

All applicants to the order must have both a Knight of the Gold Dragon and a clergy member of the Church of Thyatis sponsor them. Candidates are then tested, and if their combat skills are adequate [*that is, if their THAC0 is 15 or better. Ed.*], they are accepted into the ranks.

Priestly Vestments

During their everyday lives, clergy of the Church of Thyatis are permitted to wear any clothing that suits their needs.

During ceremonies, however, a more formal dress code is enforced. Their ceremonial dress consists of a full-sleeved, floor-length blue robe. The coat of arms of the church is displayed prominently on the left chest. If also a member of the Knights of the Gold Dragon, their gold dragon symbol is sown unto the upper edge of the right sleeve, much as military rank insignias are often displayed.

Priests of the Church of Thyatis of all ranks except initiate also carry with them a metal scepter while in ceremonial dress. The size and color of the scepter indicates the rank in the clerical hierarchy the owner is.

Current Beliefs

The Church of Thyatis suffered many losses during the past couple of decades. About 40 years ago, when the Grand Duchy of Karameikos separated from the empire, so to did their branch of the church (forming the Church of Karameikos). More recently, with the independence of Ochalea, the Pearl Islands, Helskir, and the Grand Duchy of Westrourke, the patriarchs fear the complete destruction of their religion, along with the empire. Despite their fears, the Church of Thyatis remains strong in the Pearl Islands, Helskir and Westrourke. Only Ochalea has completely abandoned the tenets of the church.

The church has also made grounds recently. For the past 20 years, they have made inroads into the Jungle Coast, converting many of the hinterland barbarians to their beliefs. The Church of Thyatis even went as far as accepting Diulanna, their Immortal, into the Thyatian pantheon; after all, they are Thyatians now, aren't they.

But the church seeks to expand further. At the moment, they are slowly building temples within the nation of Darokin, using the city of Selenica as their main base of operations. Rumors also claim that the church is seeking to reabsorb the Church of Karameikos into their fold.

As another means of regaining worshipers, the Church of Thyatis has seriously started debating about holy days, something that has until very recently never crossed their minds. Wrath of the Immortals Day is one such idea. At the moment, they are also debating on whether or not to make Fyrmont 19 "The Visit" an official holy day. This day would mark the discovery of the "Footprint of the Immortal" found in the Altan Tepes back in AC 1010, showing the world that the Immortals actually visited the Empire of Thyatis. Making the site into official holy ground is also high on its priority list.

The Temple of Rad

Coat of Arms: Three connected hemispheres forming a triangle.

Clergy: Wizards (100%).

Clergy's Alignment: N, LN, and CN.

Worshipers' Alignment: Any.

Although religions and preaching about the Immortals is illegal in the Principalities of Glantri, Glantrians do have a place to go where they can contemplate personal problems. In the Temples of Rad, wizards known as Shepherds of Rad listen to the problems of nobles and commoners alike, giving them counseling on any problem they might have.

Their marble temples scattered in every major town of Glantri promote meditation and contemplation. The shepherds believe by relaxing and thinking things through one can eventually solve any problem and make the vital discovery that was missing. This self-enlightenment just serves to show how Glantrians truly do not need any Immortal guidance in their lives.

Each Temple of Rad has a large crystal ball placed on their main altar. The shepherds claim that it is a receptacle of Rad, the living incarnation of magic itself. Although foreigners assume Rad is an Immortal, the Shepherds of Rad and Glantrians know better than to assume that magic could possibly be an Immortal. After all, He doesn't ask for worship, so He can't possibly be a divine being.

Apparently, they receive dreams and visions through the receptacle, indicating when Rad desires for His shepherds to perform a task or change something. The Shepherds of Rad therefore believe that they wield power both temporal and magical thanks to their direct connection with the incarnation of magic.

[Contrary to what the Glantrians believe, Rad is indeed an Immortal, or at least He used to be. Rad used the mortal incarnation of Etienne d'Ambreville to further His goals in Glantri. At the end of the Wrath of the Immortals events, Rad disappeared into the Nucleus of the Sphere and was not heard or seen again, baring some rumors of Etienne's brief appearance in Château Sylaire back in AC 1012. The Shepherds of Rad have yet to realize this since they still receive dreams and visions through the Radiance receptacles in their temples. In fact, the Brotherhood of the Radiance have always given them their visions, not Rad—except as a member of the Brotherhood Himself. Glantrians therefore continue to believe in Rad—the incarnation of magic—with the slightest hint that He might no longer even exist. Ed.]

Organization

First of all, never call any Shepherd of Rad a “priest.” They will rudely let those who made the mistake know that they are wizards just before throwing them out the door.

There are only two ranks in the Temple of Rad: shepherd and high shepherd. All members of the organization are considered shepherds while the individual in charge of a particular temple is the high shepherd. High shepherds are determined based on magical experience *[most are at least 12th level mages. Ed.]*.

There is no connection between individual temples. All higher goals and common decisions come from sharing the same visions from Rad through their receptacles.

Dogma

While not an actual set of religious beliefs, the doctrine of Rad promotes the use of magic and its superiority over all other powers, including those of the Immortals. By mastering magic, one can learn to master his or her own fate.

Their method of dealing with the personal problems of Glantrians is to encourage them to meditate and think things through. The serenity of their temples usually makes these endeavors successful.

Day-to-Day Activities

Shepherds of Rad usually spend the day in meditation or working on magical studies and experiments. When a Glantrian enters the temple seeking aid, they help the person enter a relaxing trance and attain what comfort they need to feel at ease.

Shepherds also visit the Great School of Magic regularly. Since many are accomplished wizards in their own right, their magical expertise is often sought by other mages, and they often give lectures at the school. Besides trips to the Great School of Magic, many often travel to the numerous wizard towers scattered across the principalities. Shepherds of Rad are therefore well-respected members of society.

Holy Days and Important Ceremonies

Since the Temple of Rad is not a religion, they have no holy days or important religious ceremonies. They simply meditate in their temples and wait for Glantrians to seek their advice when they have a problem.

Major Centers of Worship

There is no temple of Rad more important than another within this organization. The most renowned, however, is the Temple of Rad of Glantri City, due mainly to the fact that the shepherds of this temple are often spotted in the Great School of Magic.

Affiliated Orders

The Temple of Rad has no official affiliated order. Unofficially, many powerful mages appreciate the counsel from the shepherds in both magical and personal affairs. Should the Temple of Rad ever get into trouble, they can probably count on the support of several hundred mages to come to the rescue.

Priestly Vestments

Shepherds of Rad wear simple brown robes with long, flowing sleeves. There is no headpiece for their ceremonial dress, and in fact, it is forbidden for anyone to wear any type of hat while within a Temple of Rad.

Current Beliefs

Since each Temple of Rad is more or less self-sufficient, the order as a whole is not making any type of grand plans or schemes. Still, one event might actually cause a few high shepherds to work together.

High Shepherd Chath Restoun (human, male, M14) is currently still shaken up by an incident in AC 1013. He was charmed by an illithid and performed acts he has yet to forgive himself for *[see the "Temple Takeover" adventure in Glantri: Kingdom of Magic for more information. Ed.]*. His advice since then has been less than effective, and many wizards are beginning to complain about the situation. It has gotten to a point where other high shepherds are deciding whether or not to intervene in the matter.

The Temple Of Vanya

Coat of Arms: Vanya's holy symbol, a lance crossed by two short swords.

Clergy: Priests (30%), Crusaders (25%), Defenders (25%), Clerics (15%), other specialty priests (5%).

Clergy's Alignment: Any non-chaotic.

Worshipers' Alignment: Any.

The Temple of Vanya is a church dedicated to the Grey Lady, the Immortal of war and conquest. The clergy consists mainly of specialty priests of Vanya, with a few philosopher clerics who incorporate battle into their ethos.

This temple is strong within the Empire of Thyatis, with worshipers numbering in the hundreds of thousands. In fact, the Temple of Vanya has almost as many lay members as the Temple of Thyatis. Despite this, there is no rivalry for numbers; the Temple of Thyatis simply view the Temple of Vanya as a sub-branch of their religion which concentrates on only one of their Immortals. There are a few squabbles between the priests, especially when it concerns respecting other Immortals besides Vanya, but in general the two orders get along well.

Organization

The ranking system within the temple hierarchy is very similar to those of the military. Everyone has a rank and must follow the orders of someone of higher rank.

New members to the order start out as novices. As in most other religious orders, this means they have more or less the roles of servants within the temples. Between chores, novices attend various classes on the teachings and doctrines of Vanya.

Once a novice has mastered his knowledge on the philosophies of Vanya, he is promoted to the rank of acolyte *[this usually represents attaining level 1. Ed.]*. At this point, instead of lectures and study classes, the acolyte is taught how to fight and use weapons.

Senior acolytes *[those of 5th level. Ed]* must choose in which branch of the Temple of Vanya they wish to continue their career in. They may either remain in the clergy hierarchy, at which point they earn the title priest, or they may join the militant branch and be known as knight-adepts.

Priests have the role of giving ceremonies and teaching to novice the ways of Vanya. More experienced ones *[9th level. Ed.]* are placed in charge of their own temples, earning them the title of bishop. Archbishops are placed in charge of all bishops within a certain territory. In charge of the entire religion is the Vicar of Vanya; only specialty priests of Vanya may earn this title *[and they usually have to be of at least 15th level. Ed.]*.

Those following the militant branch of the religion enter their own hierarchy. They are the ones in charge of the Brotherhood of the Grey Lady. Knight-adepts who perform well are promoted to knight-warriors *[level 9. Ed.]*. A knight-general *[of at least 13 levels in experience. Ed.]* is in charge of the entire order.

Dogma

The Temple of Vanya concentrates on teaching Vanya's aspect of combat and honor. Priests are given the task of encouraging martial training, making sure that everyone can fight. They also show the value of honor and fair fighting, scorning backstabbing or outright slaughter. Discipline is therefore important to this clergy.

Vanya looks favorably on those who throw themselves recklessly into battle, throwing their entire fate into their battle prowess. Those who fight honorably and tirelessly in battle, slaying all opponents while avoiding destroying homes or the innocent are the epitome of what Vanya represents.

Battles are not to be feared, for eventually all must learn to stand for what they believe in or it will be swept away by the enemy. Because of this, all should learn to improve their martial skills. Also, no enemy should be disrespected as valor can be found in all, regardless of age, gender, or race.

Day-to-Day Activities

Priests of the Temple of Vanya are charged to keep battles a thing of rules and tradition with professional behavior and minimized bloodshed. They are therefore often found as judges or witnesses to the various duels that take place in the streets of Thyatis.

The more martial clergy members can often be seen fighting in the gladiatorial arena. They also regularly sponsor such activities, and having a priest of Vanya trainer is considered a good omen.

Holy Days and Important Ceremonies

One day is considered particularly holy to the Temple of Vanya, Vanya's Day (Sv. 8). This day commemorates the day when the mortal Vanya led Thyatian troops against the Milenians on the southern continent of Davania. It is celebrated with good cheer, heavy feasting, and numerous duels and gladiator combats.

Major Centers of Worship

The High Temple of Vanya is by far the most renowned temple of the entire Old World. Even those who don't worship Vanya have heard of it. Although created over a century ago, the High Temple of Vanya was recently expanded and redesigned. This construction ended in AC 1013. Now, the temple can fully seat over 15,000 spectators during the ceremonies *[magic is used for the priests' voices to carry across the entire crowd. Ed.]*. The arched towers and ceilings are at least ten stories high, while the central spire reaches the amazing height of at least 15 stories. Magnificent colored windows depicting various battles and wars in the name of Vanya are scattered throughout the complex.

It is from here that Claudia Derrogan (human, female, P17 of Vanya), Vicar of Vanya, heads the order of the Temple of Vanya. She has led the order wisely for the past 20 years, and many believe she talks regularly to Vanya Herself, marking her as one who is truly blessed by the Immortals.

Affiliated Orders

The Temple of Vanya has two major affiliated orders. The first is the Brotherhood of the Grey Lady, whose guildhall is just across the street from the High Temple of Vanya. This is an order dedicated to learning and teaching fighting skills while spreading the wisdom of Vanya. Although only members of the clergy can have positions of power within the brotherhood, absolutely anyone can join the common ranks. The Brotherhood of the Grey Lady often pursues military goals for the Temple of Vanya. Although the common member of the order need not participate in such campaigns, most do. *[Further details on the order can be found in the Dawn of the Emperors box set. Ed.]*

The second order call themselves the Wings of Vanya. Their estate is located a few blocks away from the main temple. The Wings of Vanya clerical order is more monastic than the Temple of Vanya. Here, the priests spend time meditating and contemplating rather than actively pursuing combat and preaching to others. The monks of this temple are practiced healers, and many priests of Vanya come here to receive healing after a battle or duel. Rumors also claim that the monks have mastered the unarmed fighting techniques of the mystics of Sind and Ochalea, but so far no one has ever witnessed them use such skills. The Wings of Vanya are actually a separate religion from the Temple of Vanya, but the two work so closely together, most people assume that they are merely two different branches of one philosophy.

Priestly Vestments

For the most part, clergy members can wear any clothing they like. During religious ceremonies or public appearances by the Temple of Vanya, they must wear the traditional dark purple robes and ceremonial armor. The armor will bear the heraldic symbol of either the Temple of Vanya or the Brotherhood of the Grey Lady. A purple

sash above the armor indicates the rank of priest or knight-adept, while a bishop or knight-warrior wears a red sash.

Archbishops and the knight-general have dark red robes instead of purple. They do not have any sash, however. Finally, a dark red robe with a purple sash indicates the Vicar of Vanya, leader of the entire temple.

Current Beliefs

The Temple of Vanya still refuses admittance to anyone who is a member of the Storm Soldiers fighting order. They remember clearly the rift in the clergy that took place almost 70 years ago when numerous Storm Soldiers began pressing for changes to the tenets of the church *[such as forbidding women from fighting and racial-purity ideals. Ed.]*. A civil war almost broke out, but stopped when the Storm-Soldiers-Priests-of-Vanya decided to pack up and go somewhere where they can decide the policies of their religion. They have since founded their own order dedicated to Vanya which is now known world-wide as the Heldannic Knights.

More recently, the Temple of Vanya is still infuriated at the Heldannic Knights for the execution of the Knight-Warrior Lenard Doverson in their outrageous inquisition. The fact that the knights lost their Vanya-granted spells and powers only served to prove that these Heldannic Knights have corrupted the dogma of Vanya. Some speculate that the Temple of Vanya is beginning to plan an outright war against the Heldannic Knights. How the Empire of Thyatis—the seat of power of the Temple of Vanya—will respond to this, if it is true, remains anyone's guess.

The Heldannic Knights

Coat of Arms: A black lion on a white background.

Clergy: Crusaders (40%), Priests (30%), Defenders (25%), other specialty priests (5%).

Clergy's Alignment: Any non-chaotic.

Worshipers' Alignment: Any.

Easily the most renowned religious order of the world, the words “Heldannic Knights” is guaranteed to get a reaction out of anybody. Some claim they are tyrants and slave masters, while others bring up their dedication to order and abolishment of crime as proof of otherwise. The only thing that everyone can say for certain, though, is that they intend to conquer the world for the glory of Vanya.

Unlike most other churches, the Heldannic Knights accept only specialty priests of Vanya into their ranks. Clerics, even if they value Vanya's beliefs, will not be accepted. Even specialty priests of Vanya must be able to wield swords and lances, as well as wear any armor if they desire to become a Heldannic Knight.

Organization

The ranking system of the Heldannic Knights is semi-complicated because it actually combines two hierarchies in one: military and government. First, the knights are militaristic and everyone has a military rank. New recruits are squires assigned to a specific knight. They act as servants for the knights, who in return teach them the values and lessons of Vanya as well as combat.

When deemed worthy by his master, a squire is promoted to the rank of knight *[by then, he has attained 2nd level. Ed.]*. Knights who perform admirably *[and reached level 5. Ed.]* earn the rank of sergeant—although they are still called knights except during military operations. Further promotions up the rank are captain *[at least level 9. Ed.]* and warlord *[who is in charge of an entire division. He must also be at least a 12th level priest of Vanya. Ed.]*. Finally, the leaders of the armies are the generals.

The Heldannic Knights also combine these ranks with the titles of government and nobility. The Heldannic Knights have many minor nobility titles, such as baron and count, which are usually titles kept by nobles of other nations who joined their ranks *[such as the minor nobles of Norwold. Ed.]*. In this case, they keep the title, placing it before their military rank. For example, you could have a baron-general, or a count-sergeant. When it comes to policy of an area, deciding the law, giving punishment, and such, the higher government rank is in charge. With the above examples, it would be the count-sergeant who decides the interpretation of the law in a town. When it comes to military matters, it's the highest military rank who leads. This time, the baron-general would be in charge of the count-sergeant.

Above these minor nobility ranks, the Heldannic Knights have two other imposed by their own nation: chancellor and governor. Both of these ranks are higher than any other minor noble rank. Chancellors are placed in charge of major cities and the land surrounding them, while governors are in charge of an entire territory. Governor-general is the highest rank one can attain without being the *oberherr*.

Finally, the *oberherr* is the head of the entire order of the Heldannic Knights, deciding on their day-to-day policies and on the entire direction of their military campaigns.

Dogma

The Heldannic Knights believe in glory and conquest. Vanya will guide their blades in battle, and never shall they lose a war. Battles are not to be feared, for eventually all must learn to stand for what they believe in or watch it be swept away by the enemy. Because of this, all should learn to improve their martial skills.

One must strike at the enemy first, before the enemy can attack your home. Better that they suffer than the people of Heldann. No enemy should be disrespected, however, as valor can be found in all, regardless of age, gender, or race.

Vanya looks favorably on those who fight honorably and tirelessly in battle, slaying all opponents in their way. Vanya will one day conquer all of Mystara, and it is the Heldannic and Hattian people who are Her chosen champions. All other races are inferior and will be conquered.

Day-to-Day Activities

The priests of Vanya spend most of their time as members of the armies of Heldann. Only a few [*about 10%.* Ed.] are permitted to leave the ranks and adventure elsewhere, and usually only if it will somehow benefit the order as a whole. These priest-soldiers make up the elite heavy cavalry of each division of the Glory of Vanya.

Those who are out adventuring are given the task to always act honorably and courageously. They are to serve as shining examples of what it means to be a Heldannic Knight to the rest of the world. The leaders of the Heldannic Knights therefore only allow those who are charismatic and of good alignment to adventure; this helps make sure they only get a good reputation from their wandering adventurer-priests.

Holy Days and Important Ceremonies

The Heldannic Knights celebrate two holy days. The first is Vanya's Dance, on Felmont 6th. At sunset, the Heldannic Knights don full armor and perform an ancient dance around a bonfire in Vanya's honor. Even squires participate, and it is the only day when squires are actually permitted to wear a full suit of armor. In Freiburg, the largest bonfire is prepared in the center of Freiburg Square, just in front of the Temple of Stars. Afterwards, the Heldannic Knights feast and drink into the late hours of the night.

On Sviftmont 8th is Vanya's Day. It is a day celebrated by parades, duels, and heavy feasting. Vanya's Day serves to remind the knights of the day when the mortal woman Vanya led an army against the Milenians on the continent of Davania, saving her people. It shows how anyone can be a hero and receive glory and honor.

The Heldannic Knights have a ceremony known as the Receiving of the Sword. This ceremony marks the day a squire has earned the right to be called a knight. The squire spends the entire day, starting at sunrise, fasting and praying to Vanya. Should the sun not be visible, the aspiring knight must wait another day to receive his title and ceremony. At sunset, the squire bathes then proceeds to the temple after donning a white robe. There, priests of Vanya perform the Receiving of the Sword ceremony, whereas they give the squire his first long sword, armor, as well as black lion shield. By the end of the ceremony, the squire has earned the title Heldannic Knight.

Major Centers of Worship

The infamous Star Chamber is the heart of the Heldannic Knight's order. From here, *Oberherr* Wulf von Klagendorf (human, male, P19 of Vanya) dictates the tenets and laws of the order. The Star Chamber is a large building built with defense in mind. Siege weapons dot the upper parapets, and squads of defenders wait just beyond the main doors.

The building receives its name from a large, central chamber in the shape of a star. Here, 8,000 knights can gather in the five wings to listen to a speaker standing in the center. A glass ceiling in the shape of Vanya's lion lets sunlight shine upon the speaker, giving the impression of a divine glow enhancing his words.

Affiliated Orders

The Heldannic Knights are an order which constitute religion, military, and government all into one. As such, there was never any need for affiliated orders. Recently, however, a group known as the Champions of Vanya has been formed. They seem to be the “knights” of the Heldannic Knights. What their role and duties will turn out to be in the future remains to be seen.

Priestly Vestments

During religious ceremonies, the Heldannic Knights wear a full suit of ceremonial armor [*true plate mails can be a bit heavy and cumbersome for simple ceremonies and prayers. Ed.*] with a white tabard depicted with the black lion of Vanya.

In the field, the dress code is identical, except that you can expect the armor to be actual full plate.

Current Beliefs

The Heldannic Knights were once part of the Temple of Vanya in Thyatis, but difference in the interpretation of Vanya’s tenets caused a rift in the church. The Hattian members of the Temple of Vanya left Thyatis and conquered the Heldann Freeholds where they started their own religion to Vanya. To encourage the locals to join the order, they named themselves the Heldannic Knights, after the people they subjugated. The Hattians have kept their racial-purity ideals, but incorporated the Heldanners into the supreme race as well [*probably just to get them to join their ranks. Ed.*]. Their belief that women should not fight disappeared slowly over the years, however.

The faith of the Heldannic Knights has suffered a tremendous blow during the past couple of years. The knights started an inquisition and wound up losing all their spells granted to them by Vanya, later regaining them after a successful quest on the southern continent. This has led Wulf von Klagendorf to re-examine the values and doctrines of the knights. The *oberherr* is currently trying to make changes into the order and their beliefs. The first was the removal of force-worshipping of Vanya in the Heldannic Territories. Many knights have also been stripped of the rank and privileges. Other changes are still being discussed with the elder priests of the religion.

Besides this reorganization, the *oberherr* is busy planning the invasion of Norwold and conquest of new, unexplored lands in Davania. Changes in the order aside, the true glory of Vanya comes from conquest, and that’s exactly what he plans on doing.

Geology of the Old World

The Old World as it appears now, started out as a series of independent islands that collided together.

The Wendarian Range is the oldest of the mountain ranges. It is the result of a smaller island colliding into the mainland. Recent expeditions out to the Wendarian Range shows that they are actually composed of gneiss, not basalt as has been previously reported. The gneiss is a result of previous rocks being changed during the collision. Offshore, coral reefs grew in abundance.

Further to today’s south, the Ierendi and Minrothad islands were forming through the calm eruption of lava onto the ocean floor. As time went on, these islands grew with the eruption of more lava, forming islands made of basalt.

Long ago these islands started to move towards the Wendarian Range. When the “northern”-most island collided with the coral reefs, the reefs and ocean floor rose up the side of the island forming the Cruth Mountains. As more islands collided the Black Peak Mountains grew. The northern foothills of the Cruth Mountains are limestone in composition, and then switch into gabbro with layers of diabase. As the Cruth Mountains change into the Black Peak Mountains, the rock type changes from gabbro to basalt. The gabbro contains large hornblende crystals. Previous explorers have noted the presence of hornblende in the Cruth Mountains. It is believed that collision did not continue for very long, as the Cruth and Black Peak Mountains are relatively low (4,000’ to 4,500’).

As time went on, coral reefs continued to grow in the shallow ocean between the Wendarian Range, the Cruth and Black Peak Mountains, the Ierendi and Minrothad islands.

During this time, it is believed that a large island to the “east,” with a large mountain range composed of gneiss, was shedding sediment into the surrounding water forming sandstone. This mountain range is the present day Makkres Range. Further away from the shore of the island, coral reefs grew in clear warm water. The ocean between the Makkres Range island and the Black Peak Mountains began to close. This was accomplished by a

crack forming in the ocean floor to the east of the Black Peak Mountains. The ocean floor to the west of this crack was then swallowed up and melted. The resulting molten rock then rose and formed the Altan Tepes through explosive volcanism. As the Altan Tepes continued to grow, the Makkres Range moved closer and the ocean shrank further. Finally the Makkres Range collided with the Altan Tepes, crushing the sandstone and coral reefs (limestone) in between, forming the Sardal and Hardanger Ranges.

All was quiet for the numerous unknown years. Sediment was eroded from the Altan Tepes, Sardal, Hardanger Ranges, and Makkres Massif, filling the space between the Altan Tepes and Hardanger Range, allowing it to rise above water level.

Years later, the “southern” mountain ranges started moving “northward” and the sediment (sandstone) and coral reefs (limestone) started to get crushed and pushed above water level. Volcanism was also associated with this “collision.” During this collision, the Kurish Massifs, Glantrian Alps, and Colossus Mountains were formed. The Silver Sierra Hills also formed at this time. The ocean that existed between the Wendarian Range and the “southern” mountain ranges dried up.

The whole continent then shifted northward being covered by glaciers, and the water level dropped, exposing the southern volcanoes (the tips of which are the present day Ierendi and Minrothad islands).

At BC 3000, the planet shifted, placing the continent in warmer climates and the glaciers started to melt. All remained quiet until BC 1700. At this time a great explosion occurred. This event cracked the surrounding land and built up the Silver Sierra Hills into the Silver Sierra Mountains. The Broken Land Mountains were also formed at this time.

To the southwest, the Hardanger Mountains appeared to grow higher. What was actually happening is the land to the north and south was falling. The Ierendi and Minrothad islands were formed by the cracking of the earth and submergence of the land, leaving only the highest peaks above water.

Mountain Range Descriptions

Altan Tepes

Average Altitude: 8,950'.

Rock Type: Granite and andesite.

Age of Formation: Unknown.

Formation: Result of ocean closure and resulting volcanism.

Appearance: Peaks have been described as jagged, and the range itself is broad. Areas composed of andesite appear blackish-brown to greenish in color, while the granite areas appear pink or white/gray in color.

Passes/Traveling Conditions: Passes are infrequent. Where present they are the result of glacial erosion of former river valleys. These passes are wide U-shaped valleys that follow anything but a straight line, usually branching outwards as the center of the mountain range is approached. The length of passes are hard to determine, and they can end rapidly by climbing upward, ending with steep sides all around. This results in the travelers usually being forced to backtrack. Passes that remain broad with little change in elevation, such as the two located near Selenica (notably the King's Road to Karameikos and the valley pass to Ylaruam), offer the best chances of crossing the range. Rumors claim that the Darokin Tunnel of Rockhome is also such a pass and not a tunnel as its name implies.

Cliff faces are smooth and steep. Landslides are relatively uncommon, except in areas where the rocks appear to have numerous fractures crisscrossing the surface, and occur more often in andesite than in granite.

Minerals and Mining: Gold, silver and iron ore is present in the southern regions. It is also believed that the Altan Tepes may contain significant copper deposits, although none have been found to date.

Volcanism: Only one active volcano is present in Northern Rockhome, near the ruins of Jhyrrad. This is an explosive volcano often spewing ash into the air. Every so often it explodes, sending huge chunks of hot rocks into the air, and hot landslide roar down the side of the mountain wiping out anything in its way.

Black Mountains

Average Altitude: 15,000'.

Rock Type: Reported as gneiss by previous expeditions.

Age of Formation: Unknown.

Formation: Unknown.

Appearance: Is known to contain lots of glaciers.

Passes/Traveling Conditions: Avalanches and earthquakes have been known to affect the area.

Minerals and Mining: Unknown.

Volcanism: Unknown.

Black Peak Mountains

Average Altitude: 4,500'.

Rock Type: Basalt.

Age of Formation: Unknown.

Formation: Collision of the "southern" region with the coral reefs surrounding the Wendarian Range.

Appearance: Peaks are ebony in color and often jagged. Pillow-like shapes are often visible in cliffs, as well as numerous tube-like caves. The rocks are sharp, with lots of black glass around.

Passes/Traveling Conditions: Passes are usually in the form of narrow chasms, with steep sided walls that may extend hundreds of feet into the air. These passes usually form long lines that gradually become shallower, with their extent being related to the height of the surrounding walls. High pass walls indicate that the pass will continue for quite a distance. Pass walls are solid, but rocks may be knocked loose on rare occasions.

Travelers should be wary of steep slopes, as they are usually composed of loose rocks. Avalanches are easily caused by travelers knocking down rocks as they scramble along steep slopes. Falling is not suggested, for the effect would be the same as falling down a hill of broken glass.

Caves are tube-like in form and wind randomly. Elevation changes within caves are generally gradual. Walls are smooth, with the roof showing small stalactites. Cave floors are often littered with broken rocks, but other than that, are quite passable. The caves form a branching pattern, combining with other branches and becoming larger, as one travels inward.

One final warning to travelers... Although the ground may appear solid, thin crusts of rock can easily give way, depending on the traveler's weight. The poor victim may fall into a chasm or into a cave, either way they will be cut by the sharp edges of the crust.

Minerals and Mining: Unknown.

Volcanism: None.

Broken Lands

Average Altitude: 10,000'.

Rock Type: Sandstone.

Age of Formation: BC 1700.

Formation: The Broken Lands are the result of a great explosion that cracked the land.

Appearance: The Broken Lands are high, rocky, and treacherous hills. The area is brownish in color.

Passes/Traveling Conditions: Passes in the area should be frequent due to all the fractures. These passes are usually straight, with steep-sided walls that are very prone to rockslides. Two main passes/trails lead through the area following the Strel and Vesubia Rivers.

The Broken Lands are full of caves and tunnels. The caves are usually the result of wind erosion. The walls are smooth and rounded. Tunnels were probably formed by rivers at one time, through most are dry now, and are gently sloping with rounded ceilings. Travelers should beware of abrupt breaks-in tunnels. Many tunnels are also blocked off due to collapsed roofs. It is believed that these tunnels existed before the formation of the Broken Lands.

Climbing should be relatively easy in the Broken Lands. Although there are lots of cliff faces, many contain abundant ledges that can be followed. It is also easy to travel from one ledge to another. The traveler should be watchful for unstable ledges that can give way.

The landscape is littered with rock pillars standing on wider bases and smooth curving arches. There are many places to hide. Paths, where they exist, usually follow wide, deep cracks in the land, making it difficult to get off a path in a hurry. Land between paths is difficult to move through, and will require climbing, lots of jumping, effort and time.

Minerals and Mining: Copper, gold, tin and jade are mined in the area. Most of the copper, gold and jade are found near old river valleys.

Volcanism: The area is still volcanically active, as lava has been noted beneath the surface. Minor non-explosive volcanoes are present, occasionally erupting small lava flows composed of basalt.

Colossus Mountains

Average Altitude: 18,500'.

Rock Type: Schist and marble.

Age of Formation: Unknown.

Formation: Collision of southern mountain ranges and the coral reefs and sediments to the south of the Wendarian Mountains.

Appearance: The Colossus Mountains resemble a series of sheets that have been folded and then thrust into the air, forming steep, smooth cliff faces. The mountain range is dark gray to whitish in color, appears silver in some areas when the sunlight hits it.

Passes/Traveling Conditions: There is one known pass which crosses these mountains: Skullhorn Pass. There are also two main river valleys that extend a good distance into the range. Travel is extremely difficult, unless one is following a river valley or pass. There are numerous small streams in the area, as well as many waterfalls, all leading into the larger rivers.

Rocks are smooth, and make climbing very difficult. The treat of landslides is very high, as huge slabs can break off and slide down steep cliff faces with little warning. The exception to this is where marble is located. In these areas the rocks are more rounded, often light in color, and more stable.

The landscape is beautiful and bands can be seen in the cliffs, where the rocks change from marble to schist and back.

Minerals and Mining: Quarrying of marble, and mining for minerals such as garnet, siliminite, and jadeite occur in this region.

Volcanism: There is one known active volcano in this range. It is explosive in nature and lately has only erupted ash clouds into the air. It is believed the treat of an all-out eruption is nearing and that travelers along Skullhorn Pass should be on alert. A major eruption of this volcano would result in lots of molten rocks being thrown into the air, and an extremely hot rock and gas "landslide" would roar down the side of the volcano, at incredible speeds. This "landslide" would follow the valleys. It may even end up extending as far as the settlements of Skullhorn in Bramyra.

Cruth Mountains

Average Altitude: 4,000'.

Rock Type: Ultramafic and mafic rocks such as: peridotite, hornblendite, gabbro, and diabase.

Age of Formation: Unknown.

Formation: Collision of “southern” islands with the reefs and ocean floor to the “south” of the Wendarian Range, resulted in the ocean floor rising up the side of the islands forming the Cruth Mountains.

Appearance: The range is black in color with a distinctive greenish tinge. Mountaintops are rounded in appearance. Landslides are very common in regions where the rocks are soft, and very green, due to weathering.

Passes/Traveling Conditions: There is one main known pass that crosses the range (the road from Darokin to Shireton). The rocks are soft in many areas and passes are not uncommon. Traveling along the smaller passes is often dangerous, due to the frequency of landslides. Smaller passes can often be blocked by these same landslides.

Caves are extremely infrequent. Where present they are often irregular in shape, and have jagged entrances that are well hidden. The cave floors are littered with broken rocks. Individual caves can on occasion be linked to other caves by tunnels.

Travel is fairly easy if one stays to the beaten path. Climbing for the inexperienced is not recommended, and proves very difficult and time consuming even for the experts. If you must climb it is suggested that you try to find an area where two river valleys meet. The slope between the two rivers will be the best method of reaching a ridge. Once one is on a ridge they are broad and easy to follow. The only disadvantage is that they are at a higher altitude, meaning colder weather with higher winds.

Minerals and Mining: Unknown.

Volcanism: None known.

Diamond Spurs

Average Altitude: 4,500'.

Rock Type: Basalt.

Age of Formation: Unknown.

Formation: Old volcanoes that formed underwater, were exposed and then recently flooded.

Appearance: The mountains are made up of a series of cone-shaped volcanoes. The rocks are dark gray to black in color with large pink feldspar crystals.

Passes/Traveling Conditions: Traveling is relatively easy if one stays off the cone-shaped volcanoes. Volcano slopes are not that steep, but the surface is made up of broken pieces of rock that are easily displaced to start landslides. These rocks contain a lot of glass and will cut deeply if someone falls on them.

Minerals and Mining: Unknown, although metals should be present.

Volcanism: The volcanoes are active and explosive in nature. Presently only erupting ash, they can erupt hot chunks of rocks, and glowing ash clouds that can roar down the mountain at incredible speed destroying anything in their path.

Glantrian Alps

Average Altitude: 20,250'.

Rock Type: Schist and marble.

Age of Formation: Unknown.

Formation: Collision of southern mountain ranges and sediments to the south of the Wendarian Mountains.

Appearance: The Glantrian Alps are very similar in appearance to the Colossus Mountains. They resemble a series of sheets that have been folded and then thrust into the air, forming steep, smooth cliff faces. The mountain range is dark gray to whitish in color.

Passes/Traveling Conditions: There are no commonly known passes through this range, although it is possible that some may exist. The traveler should assume that passes are scarce to non-existent and that passing through the range will be extremely difficult.

Rocks are smooth, and make climbing very difficult. The threat of landslides is very high, as huge slabs can break off and slide down steep cliff faces with little warning. The exception to this is where marble is located. In these areas the rocks are more rounded, often light in color, and more stable.

The landscape is beautiful and bands can be seen in the cliffs, where the rocks change from marble to schist and back.

Minerals and Mining: Marble building stone is quarried in the mountains. Gold and precious gems are mined.

Volcanism: The Glantrian Alps contain one active explosive volcano, which occasionally spews ash clouds into the air. No other activity has been noted recently.

Hardanger Range

Average Altitude: 10,000'.

Rock Type: Limestone and sandstone.

Age of Formation: Unknown.

Formation: The collision of the Makkres Range with the Altan Tepes crushed the sandstone and coral reefs (limestone) in between, forming the Hardanger Range.

Appearance: The range is gray and yellow/brown in color. Peaks are sharp and appear as though a series of sheets were thrust into the air. The region is riddled with huge caverns.

Passes/Traveling Conditions: The main pass through these mountains is the road from Cinsa-Men-Noo to Castellan. There are no other widely known passes, although following streams may offer travelers another method of crossing the range, but with the effect that they will have to travel at higher altitudes.

Caverns riddle the range, mainly in the limestone sections of the range. These caverns are huge, and are connected through extensive tunnel systems. The roofs often display stalactites, and stalagmites are present on the floor. Size changes between caverns and tunnels can be abrupt and drastic. Travelers should keep in mind that even though a tunnel starts out large it can rapidly narrow and become impassable.

Minerals and Mining: Flint is present throughout the range. Limestone is also quarried for building stone.

Volcanism: No known volcanoes exist within this range.

Icereach Range

Average Altitude: 14,000'.

Rock Type: Gneiss.

Age of Formation: Unknown.

Formation: Unknown.

Appearance: The mountains have been described as tall and hard-edged.

Passes/Traveling Conditions: Unknown.

Minerals and Mining: Iron.

Volcanism: Unknown.

Ierendi Uplands

Average Altitude: 9,000'.

Rock Type: Trachyte and alkaline basalt.

Age of Formation: Unknown.

Formation: Old volcanoes that formed underwater, were exposed and then recently flooded.

Appearance: The mountains are made up of a series of cone-shaped volcanoes. The rocks are light gray to greenish (trachyte) and dark gray to black (alkaline basalt) in color.

Passes/Traveling Conditions: Passes are very abundant in the area. Travelers just have to go around the volcanoes or between them. Those attempting this should read the section on volcanism below though.

Climbing up volcanoes is tricky due to all the loose rocks on the surface. Falling is not recommended as the rocks contain lots of glass.

Minerals and Mining: Unknown.

Volcanism: Numerous active volcanoes exist in the uplands. These volcanoes are usually explosive and therefore very dangerous. Explosive eruptions seem to be preceded by huge clouds of ash, spewed into the air. Less explosive lava flows also occur and are usually black in color. Travelers are warned to stay away from active volcanoes as they can erupt with little warning.

Kurish Massif

Average Altitude: 12,500'.

Rock Type: Andesite, sediments, granite, and marlstone.

Age of Formation: Unknown.

Formation: Collision of southern mountain ranges and sediments to the south of the Wendarian Mountains.

Appearance: The range appears worn down, with lots of passes. Rocks are black, gray, pink, and white in color.

Passes/Traveling Conditions: Travel is easier than in some of the adjacent ranges, since the Kurish Massif has been worn down for a longer period of time. Passes are frequent and have been widened by glaciers, in broad U-shaped valleys that change little in elevation.

Caves are not very common, except in the marlstone. These caves are not extremely stable and commonly have the roofs collapse inward.

Valley walls are steep and difficult to climb. Rockslides are common along valley walls soon after and during the spring meltdown.

Minerals and Mining: Unknown, although the mountains should contain numerous ore deposits.

Volcanism: One active ash volcano exists. At present the only activity has been ash erupted into the air. Travelers should stay away from the volcano, as it is explosive in nature and can erupt anytime, killing everything in its way.

Makkres Range

Average Altitude: 13,800'.

Rock Type: Gneiss.

Age of Formation: Unknown.

Formation: Unknown.

Appearance: These mountains have been described as inhospitable and resembling teeth, with no known passes. The mountains are gray, white, black, and light pink in color.

Passes/Traveling Conditions: A few important words: INHOSPITABLE, NO KNOWN PASSES, and TEETH, need anyone say more.

The peaks are steep and treacherous. Climbing is nearly impossible. The area is also prone to landslides. If you must travel, stick to the valleys and get a dwarf as a guide. The valleys and the existing roads are the best way of getting through the mountains.

The area is also known to contain numerous tunnels. Once again ask the dwarves.

Minerals and Mining: Mining of precious metals, and iron ore is common.

Volcanism: Two active volcanoes are present within the range. Both are explosive in nature. It is assumed that if they were to erupt they could cause significant damage through “landslides” of hot rocks and hot clouds of ash flowing down the mountainside. Recently they have only erupted clouds of ash into the air, nothing more.

Silver Sierras

Average Altitude: 17,000'.

Rock Type: Phyllite.

Age of Formation: Unknown.

Formation: Collision of southern mountain ranges and the sediments to the south of the Wendarian Mountains.

Appearance: The range is red to purple and brownish-gray in color. The peaks are jagged, as though a series of sheets were thrust up into the air.

Passes/Traveling Conditions: Passes are infrequent and traveling is difficult. Cliffs are steep and smooth offering few handholds. Deep valleys are U-shaped and probably had rivers flowing through them before the glaciers moved in. Shallower V-shaped valleys also exist, but do not make good passes, since they rise quickly.

Caves are present, but not very large in extent.

Travelers should be aware that huge slabs are commonly knocked loose by earthquakes, and slide down the steep cliff faces. Mudslides are also common in the area, especially after spring runoff.

Minerals and Mining: Precious gemstones, silver, coal, sulfur, are rare ores are mined from the region.

Volcanism: No known active volcanoes are present within this range.

Wendarian Range

Average Altitude: 11,300'.

Rock Type: Gneiss.

Age of Formation: Unknown.

Formation: Unknown.

Appearance: The range is worn down with valleys and passes frequent. The rocks are pink, gray, white, and black in color. Veins cross-cut most areas within the range.

Passes/Traveling Conditions: Passes and valleys are frequent, making travel easy. The valleys are broad U-shaped due to erosion by glaciers.

Travelers should stay away from valley walls soon after the snow melts, since the cliffs may be unstable and landslides are frequent.

Minerals and Mining: Unknown. Although numerous veins cross-cut the area, it is not known whether they contain any mineralization. Gold and precious metals should be present within the area.

Volcanism: One active ash volcano is present, but not much is known about it. It is assumed to be explosive in nature, and travelers should beware.

EVENTS: NUWMONT

First Week

Nuwmont 1, AC 1016: Artifact Drain.

Location: Throughout the Alphatian Sea. AS

Description: All Alphatian Artifacts owners discover today that they are somehow more closely attuned to their single powerful magical item. Though they cannot hear the voices like the previous day anymore, they feel semi-empathic sensations when wielding the artifacts and feel more confident in their powers. Spellcasters also quickly discover that their spells are no more erased from their memory, though other magic items are still drained. Most also feel drained both physically and mentally, and some are worried that their artifact tried to take over their mind.

King Juliast of Underocean, who barely warded off the artifact's attempt, decides to not use it anymore unless absolutely necessary. (See *Nu.* 2, *Th.* 8.)

What This Means: The voices the artifact owners heard on the Day of Dread were those of unfortunate Alphatians whose life-forces were drawn into nearby magic items when the *Doomsday Device* was activated at the end of the Great War. Those Alphatians, often the makers of the items they were trapped in, could not be resurrected in the Hollow World by the Immortals. On the Day of Dread, a special link is created between those receptacles and the *Radiance*-powered Sundsvall Maelstrom, that allows the trapped life-forces to communicate with their vessels' owners. Some particularly powerful trapped individual can even try to take over the mind of a weak owner. At any rate, the life-forces are able to tighten the link they have with the owners, at the cost of the draining of one full level of experience from the owners.

What the PCs Can Do: If a PC is in possession of an Alphatian Artifact, he or she may have to try to resist the artifact's takeover of her mind. If the life-force is successful, the PC will suffer from a radical change in personality, possibly becoming a NPC controlled by the DM. Otherwise, the PC loses one level and becomes attuned with his or her artifact.

Nuwmont 1, AC 1016: Chitlacan in Quetzal-Color.

Location: City of Chitlacan, Azcan Empire. HW

Description: As the Moving Sun turns blue on the new year, riots spread out into the Azcan capital. Though they are able to cast spells again, Atzanteotl's clergy are overwhelmed by the numerous commoners that have begun to overtly worship Quetzalcoatl since His sacrifice on the altar on the Day of Dread. Many are lynched, some hide, and others flee the city and head for Huitlaktima.

Followers of the New Way in the city are galvanized to action, revealing their positions high in Azcan society (government, priesthood and merchant classes). (See *Nu.* 6, *Nu.* 23.)

What This Means: The Moving Sun, which was created by the ascending Quetzalcoatl as the symbol of the final *chalchiuatl*, will shift in color throughout the year as the seasons pass by, going through all the colors of a rainbow. During the winter it will be blue, then green for spring, yellow-orange in summer, and red in the winter, and turn white on the Day of Dread before starting a new cycle—with each color corresponding to a slightly different clime in Azcan lands.

More followers of the New Way will reveal themselves during the following weeks, as news of the prophecy come true spread over the whole empire like wildfire. Almost overnight Chitlacan has been turned to the worship of Quetzalcoatl (a.k.a. Atruatzin/Papalotl) thanks to the reality of the sacrifice. The stories will take a while to become accepted elsewhere though—they can be denied or disbelieved—, not so in Chitlacan. This is ironic considering how Atzanteotl “stole” Chitlacan from Atruatzin almost overnight too, long ago.

Nuwmont 1, AC 1016: Reactions to a New Sun.

Location: All over the Hollow World. HW

Description: Various nations and peoples of the Hollow World react to the sudden apparition of a second sun on the Day of Dread, which orbits the Red Sun, and has shifted in color upon the new year.

Sages puzzle the new sun's role and significance, while priests view it as a sign of their Immortal. Commoners' reaction range from awe to amazement, and many flock to the temples. There is a sudden increase in worship to the Immortals Ixion and Rathanos; some worship also actually goes to Quetzalcoatl, though the new Immortal does not gain ample following outside the Azcan Empire.

Both factions at war in Nithia interpret this as a favorable sign from Rathanos. The Oltecs definitely see the sun as a sign from their patron Immortal, but the priests are dumbfounded as to the event's actual significance. On the other hand, both the desert-dwelling Krugel orcs and the underground Schattenalfen see this new sun as a bad omen, or an angry Immortal's curse.

Among Alphatians, various Neathar tribes, Shahjapuri, Milenians, Traldar, Merry Pirates, Jennites, Tanagoro, Brute-Men, Antalians and Beastmen, the reaction is mixed, with the most pious or easily impressed reacting vigorously to the sight, while others do not care at all.

The Blacklore, Gentle Folk and Icevale elves, Kogolor dwarves, Kubitts, Hutaakans, Oostdokians, and Malpheggi show little interest in the new sun, and there is little display of emotion about it.

Nuwmont 1, AC 1016: Night Meeting.

Location: Keep of Drax Tallen, Forest of Geffron, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: While sleeping in her room, Coolhands is suddenly awakened by somebody caressing her. Under the light of a candle, she sees her husband, Beasthunter, sitting on her bed. He explains that he has been cured of his mental disease by the Day of Dread and has now come back to help the elves fight the Shadow Lord. The two embrace and spend the night together. At the break of dawn, when Coolhands awakens, she finds no trace of her husband and sadly concludes she must have dreamt. (*See Nu. 3.*)

What This Means: The Shadow Lord, knowing well that the Day of Dread would have severed the magical link with Coolhands, *teleported* to her chambers to put her under his spell once again. In order to accomplish this without risks, he used an illusion spell to pose as Beasthunter, thus making Coolhands open her mind to her and lower her mental resistance. Once he was sure his spell was once again effective, he *teleported* back to his hideout.

Nuwmont 1, AC 1016: Escape from Star City.

Location: City of the Stars, Shadow Elves' Territories. OW

Description: The Shadow War [*The war of Schattenalfen against Shadow Elves that ravaged the Great Cavern late last year. Ed.*] is over. The shadow elves have won. The panicked Schattenalfen survivors flee from the Great Cavern in random directions, while shadowelf troops follow in pursuit. Schattenalfen shamans manage to lead the main group toward the City of Aengmor, where the pursuers are driven back by forces loyal to Atzanteotl.

Many smaller platoons of Schattenalfen surrender to enemy troops or scatter amid the shadow elves' caverns, where they are ambushed by those vengeful araneas that were chased away before the final attack on the City of the Stars. (*See Nu. 2.*)

What This Means: On Kaldmont 28, thanks to the completion of the *Chamber of the Spheres*, shadowelf shamans managed to cast deadly spells on the Day of Dread, thus defeating the shocked Schattenalfen troops when they were already tasting victory.

The Schattenalfen expedition has been an utter failure. Atzanteotl suffered a major stroke, though He managed to destroy the shadow elves' intelligence network and to reinforce His garrison in the City of Aengmor with loyal troops. It has yet to be seen, however, how these Hollow Worlders will react to being moved to the surface world.

The Schattenalfen who have been captured are proposed to integrate the shadowelf society; most of them refuse and are executed. The others, including those who helped against the Schattenalfen, are viewed with suspicion but allowed to settle in the Enclave according to the Verse of the Other People.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs from both sides can take part to the last battles of this war.

Nuwmont 1, AC 1016: Coronation in Vestland.

Location: Ruthin Monastery, Kingdom of Vestland. OW

Description: King Harald Gudmundson passes on his royal title to his eldest son, Bergthor, on this day. The Patriarch of Ruthin, in Vestland tradition, performs the coronation ceremony before the eyes of Vestland nobles and clerics of Forsetta and other northmen cults. With the Sorona, the ancient Vestlandic crown, upon his brow, the new king announces a new era of prosperity for his realm. (*See Nu. 2, Th. 5.*)

What This Means: King Harald announced his intent to retire from his post back in Ambrymont of last year, citing his failing health as the primary reason. His son and the new king, Bergthor, has been educated in the ways of outland nations, and shares his father's desire to bring Vestland into the modern world.

Nuwmont 1, AC 1016: Emissary.

Location: Sea of Grass, Ethengar Khanates. OW

Description: A horseman arrives in the winter encampment of the Yugatai tribe, bearing greetings from Batu *Khan*, the "True Great *Khan* of Ethengar." He remains for a few days, attempting to cajole Temur *Khan* with promises of rewards for allying with Batu *Khan*, and the glories of a return to "true Ethengar" ways. Temur *Khan* humors the emissary, but makes no promises of alliance. The emissary eventually returns to his *khan*. (*See Th. 8, Fl. 11.*)

What This Means: Following their defeat in Glantri last year, the hordes of Ethengar returned to the Sea of Grass, bereft of a Great *Khan*. Manghai, Moglai *Khan*'s son, attempted to maintain the unity of the clans, but he was unsuccessful. Batu, *Khan* of the Bortaks and husband to Moglai's eldest daughter, claimed the right of succession was his, and a civil war broke out. Many Murkits (Manghai's tribe) sided with Batu, while the remainder stayed with Manghai and the Kiyats (allied to Manghai through his marriage to Kadan *Khan*'s daughter). The remaining tribes allowed the two groups to feud amongst themselves, while they returned to their own ways. Most began to prepare for a harsh winter, though others, such as the Taijits and Yakkas, turned on one another in ancient rivalries.

Things quieted down once winter set in, and the tribes went their separate ways, but the search for allies has begun again in earnest. This emissary is the third to reach Temur *Khan* in as many months, from various factions hoping to win his support. Such activities are taking place across the breadth of the Sea of Grass.



Taijits Versus Yakkas

Nuwmont 1, AC 1016: Senate Passes New Taxes.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Under prodding from the emperor, the Imperial Senate announces a series of new taxes and revisions of some old ones. The income tax is lowered from 25% to 20% except on the nobility and aristocracy (where it remains 25%). Sales taxes and tariffs are raised to 10% except on food, clothing, and fixed assets (like buildings). This new rate will have a quirk, though: it will be levied on imports, but rebated on exports, with the intention of discouraging the former and encouraging the latter, promoting native commerce. This new tax (the *commercia*) will be levied throughout the empire, collected by imperial tax agents for the central government. Finally, the senate increases excise taxes on luxuries and slaves. The disastrous chimney and printing taxes introduced in AC 1013 are repealed. (*See Va. 1, Va. 12.*)

What This Means: This is part of Eusebius's continuing program to revive the empire. He has recently received some advice from Nikephorus Logotharion, a scholar at the Imperial University of Thyatis, a former treasury official knowledgeable in commercial and financial matters. The repeal of the chimney and printing taxes shows Eusebius is not afraid to learn from his mistakes. Lowering the income tax on commoners makes up for the increase in sales taxes, increases his popularity among the common folk, and does not cost the treasury much. The new sales tax is targeted to increase revenue for the government, but also promote export-based trade that will enrich the empire over the long run. This also demonstrates how successful Eusebius was in gaining influence over the senate.

Eusebius is a mercantilist, and sees how trade has strengthened Darokin and Minrothad without causing the sort of diplomatic problems that plague Thyatis's relations with its neighbors. In some ways, though, the emperor and the senate have overreached themselves: the new taxes, while popular among the commoners, are disliked by the wealthy.

Nuwmont 1, AC 1016: Eusebius Re-organizes His Army.

Location: Throughout the Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: After years of reverses and losses, Emperor Eusebius realizes that it is time to upgrade the quality of his army. Following a plan submitted by the Zendrolium for his approval, the Thyatian army will be restructured. It will be a smaller, leaner, more efficient force. However, the process of military modernization will not occur overnight. Throughout the rest of the year Thyatian troops will be trained and equipped to his new standards. A new Retebius Air Fleet force will be organized as well, replacing the one that was decimated in the war with Alphatia. The Knights of the Air will be rededicated as a military order in the service of the empire rather than a society of hobbyists, because of severe need. (*See Th. 3, Th. 21.*)

What This Means: The Thyatian army has not performed well in recent years, as evidenced by the wars with Alphatia and Thothia. Eusebius plans to rectify this. The Thyatian standing army will be smaller (reflecting the empire's reduced resources), but in the end it should be stronger. Flying mount enthusiasts will still exist, and eventually they will organize a new social club, but right now the empire needs to rebuild its aerial forces.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs could become a driving force in the training of this new army, helping to organize it over the course of the year, and receiving commissions as officers. They could also be commissioned to capture and train new flying mounts (negotiation will probably be needed where powerful creatures like dragons and sphinxes are concerned).

Nuwmont 1, AC 1016: Loose Ends.

Location: City of Glantri, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: The Council of Princes meets to take care of a number of issues that have arisen since the war with Ethengar last year.

First, Lan-Syn Virayana is confirmed as head of the Principality of Krondahar. The former prince, Jherek Virayana, was slain last year while combating an Ethengar *hakomon* (wizard).

The charge of supreme judge, formerly held by the late Prince Virayana, is officially declared open for any prospective candidates. Most of the princes decline to compete, either content with their current charges or having no interest in the position. Both Malachie du Marais—supreme judge pro tem—and Dolores Hillsbury announce their intent to seek the position (Dolores will relinquish her title as treasurer if she wins). The council decides that voting on the issue will take place in three months' time (giving the candidates a chance to engage in politicking).

Thirdly, the question of Prince Brannart McGregor's current status is raised. He was noticeably absent during the war, even when his principality was beset by intruders. Added to that, there are numerous rumors that the prince is deceased. The council votes to investigate the matter further.

With that, the council breaks for the day, allowing further business to wait until tomorrow's session. (*See Nu. 2, Nu. 13.*)

What This Means: These issues had been set aside during the war with Ethengar, as Glantri's resources were needed elsewhere. Now that things are beginning to settle down once more, the council has finally taken action with things.

Tensions are heating up between Synn and her opposition, du Marais and von Drachenfels. If Synn gains the position of supreme judge, her influence will be greatly increased in Glantri. The same goes for her enemies, who will be much strengthened with the new charge, and will be able to attack Synn more directly than they can now. Politicking for the position will be intense.

Nuwmont 1, AC 1016: Artifact Found in Aquas.

Location: Sea-Kingdom of Aquas, NACE. AS

Description: A party of what appear to be triton from the settlements surrounding Aquas arrive in the city and present Queen Zynnia with a magical staff. They give a detailed description of its powers, but leave before they can be rewarded or questioned. (*See Nu. 2, Nu. 12.*)

What This Means: The staff is King Juliast's Alphatian Artifact. Prompted by his worries over it he decided that giving it to the Alphatians was the best way to be rid of it while keeping it from threatening Underocean.

The staff's powers are:

A *mirror image* (2 images) of all friendly combatants.

Enemies must make a morale check or suffer from the effects of a *fear* spell (check made at +2 if the artifact is working at half effectiveness).

+2 bonus to weapons and armor of all friendly combatants.

It works at half effectiveness more than 1,000 miles from the Sundsvall Maelstrom, and not at all more than 2,000.

Nuwmont 1, AC 1016: But This Should Not Work.

Location: City of Andaire, Kingdom of Jafilia, Floating Continent of Alphatia. HW

Description: During a heated discussion in the halls of the Grand Council, a senior wizard, Aspalinth, *summons* a pack of dire wolves in his anger. After they are dismissed by other councilors, the experienced witnesses realize that this should not have happened in the Hollow World. After checking that Alphatia had not been returned to the outer world, and after a lot of theories have been formulated, many wizards decide to meditate for some spells they thought were not working. (*See Nu. 2, Nu. 3.*)

What This Means: The absent-minded Aspalinth simply meditated for that spell he likes a lot on this first post-Day of Dread morning, as he did on the outer world, forgetting that it did not work in the Hollow World. There is no foul play involved, though the Alphatians have no idea why it worked, or whether this is reproducible with other spells or casters.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs may discover on their own that magic is working at full strength—and gain an edge against their foes. But will the PCs' magic really work?



Nuwmont 2, AC 1016: Bensarian Awakens.

Location: Village of Kevar, Kingdom of Wendar. OW

Description: Bensarian finally awakens from his coma today, much to the relief of his assistants and friends who were fearing the worst for their mentor. After some pressing questions, Bensarian briefly explains that his catalepsy was probably due to the elven blood in his veins, but refuses to give any further clarifications. He then dismisses his worrying friends assigning them various duties, including spying on some troublemakers around Wendar. (*See Th. 12, Ka. 28.*)

What This Means: It took a bit more than expected for the wizard impersonating Bensarian to repossess the sage's body. In fact, after the Day of Dread, Bensarian's soul attempted to regain control of his body and the two souls fought bitterly 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. He doesn't want to attract any further attention nor questions from his companions and so has let them loose on some false tracks to keep them busy and away.

Nuwmont 2, AC 1016: The Rebuilding.

Location: City of the Stars, Shadow Elves' Territories. OW

Description: After mourning their many deaths, the shadow elves in the City of the Stars start rebuilding the city. King Telemon appoints a new radiant general and starts pondering the reconstruction of the spy network, which disastrously collapsed during the war, after the mysterious disappearance of its leader Xatapechtl.

The corpses of those fallen defending the Temple of Rafiel, including General Garafaele and some Schattenalfen defectors, are taken to the fourth level of the temple, where a conclave of one life, one death and one colorless shaman will decide their fate. (*See Nu. 1; Nu. 3.*)

What This Means: The shadow elves suffered heavy casualties during the Shadow War, and the City of the Stars too suffered heavily from the attack.

In this war King Telemon has lost two of his most trusted advisors, the Radiant General Garafaele, fallen while defending the Temple of Rafiel, and the spymaster Xatapechtl, who now secretly leads Atzanteotl's forces in the City of Aengmor. The Second Shadow, the old shadow elves' intelligence, is also gone, so the king starts thinking about building a new spy network, more suited to the new threats that they've to face now that Alfheim is no more and the goblinoids have been chased from the Broken Lands.

What the PCs Can Do: It's time to rebuild and reorganize. Powerful shadowelf PCs, who performed heroically during the war, may find an important place in the shadowelf military or in the royal court. But be careful: politics is often even more dangerous than the battlefield!

Nuwmont 2, AC 1016: Roads Improved.

Location: City of Glantri, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: A proposal introduced by Isidore d'Ambreville to increase funding for the construction of new roads and improvement of existing ones is put forth before the Council of Princes. Though heavily opposed by some—notably the council treasurer, Dolores Hillsbury—the measure passes. Funding for such activities will be increased by almost 1/3, and a project to pave the trail between the fortress of Ylourgne and the city of Glantri will be the first major undertaking (proposed to take the better part of a year to complete).

Additionally, a measure proposed by Jaggar von Drachenfels to increase the military budget passes (narrowly, yet again). Prince von Drachenfels points to the losses suffered last year against Ethengar and the potential goblinoid threat from the south (causing Prince Kol's fur to bristle) as his rationale for the expenditures. (*See Nu. 1; Th. 7.*)

What This Means: The new measures are necessary, in light of the war with the Ethengar *Khanates* last year. The army needs the money to replace its losses, and the improvements to the roads in Glantri will be a boon in future wars on Glantrian soil.

Moreover, these proposals are direct attacks against Synn and her supporters. Princes von Drachenfels and du Marais actually conceived the proposals together, with du Marais managing to win the agreement of Princess d'Ambreville—the chamberlain of the land—in the measure of the civic improvements. The necessity of the measures, combined with the ire many princes feel towards Synn, helped them pass.

Synn, who used her position as treasurer to stifle many of Jaggar's military plans last year, sees that she will have to come up with new plans. Von Drachenfels, ever the strategist, has shown himself capable of countering her moves.

Nuwmont 2, AC 1016: More Accolades in Vestland.

Location: City of Norrvik, Kingdom of Vestland. OW

Description: King Haraldson's first royal act is to announce the joining of Vestland to the Western Defense League. Representatives from Darokin, Karameikos, and the Five Shires are all present to welcome the northern nation into their organization. King Bergthor's promises of new prosperity seem to be coming true.

Additionally, over the course of the next few weeks, King Bergthor will be officially bestowing new titles on prospective nobles who responded to the Trollheim Homesteading Acts. All told, the new king is making quite an early impact. (*See Nu 1; Th. 5, Ya. 6.*)

What This Means: The proposition to join Vestland to the league was made in Klarmont of 1015. Though accepted early last winter, it was agreed to withhold any official announcement until the coronation of the new king of Vestland—all involved felt that it would be more symbolic to have the merger occur under the new reign. Vestland's position in the chaotic northlands (territorial Heldanners and Ostlanders, warring Ethengar *khans* and Rockhome dwarves, and dubious Soderfjorders all around), has now become more secure. The favored nation trading status afforded by the move will also bolster the economy.

The Homesteading Acts were also reinstated last year, and several hopeful rulers have been attempting to carve out territories in the months since then. The most successful are being officially recognized by the new king.

Nuwmont 2, AC 1016: Alphatian Artifact Agency.

Location: Confederate Capital of Ionace, NACE. AS

Description: The NACE Council votes the creation of a new agency, whose purpose is to seek out lost Alphatian magical items, research their history and that of their owners, and return them to their rightful owners. This agency has its office in Ionace. (*See Nu. 1; Th. 8, Fl. 17.*)

What This Means: The Alphatian Artifact Agency's main goal is actually not so much to retrieve lost magical items but rather the powerful and still somewhat mysterious so-called Alphatian Artifacts. The agency is under the direct control of Commander Broderick and is really a military affair. Its three branches are: the Seekers, who actively seek out Alphatian Artifacts on the sunken continent; the Power Researchers who try to figure out both the power of individual artifacts and of the artifacts as a whole; and the History Researchers who research the history of the artifacts and their owners so as to understand how and why they became artifacts and maybe gain clues regarding their possible powers. The agency also does retrieve classic magical items as well, thus covering the agency's true motives. The history researchers can be found in the same building as the agency's front cover, while the two other branches use a more discreet base of operations.

The agency entrusts Commander Broderick with King Juliast's artifact, which they name *Frightcorps*.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs may become agents, especially if they previously involved in the Alphatian Artifacts discovery in any way. They should understand that their involvement should remain secret for reasons of national security, maybe even from some of the other PCs (if not all of them are hired as agents).

Nuwmont 2, AC 1016: Yes It Works.

Location: City of Andaire, Kingdom of Jafilia, Floating Continent of Alphatia. HW

Description: Many council members, at the capital or in their private mansions and towers, try to meditate for spells of divination, summoning or instant travel, then cast them—and they do not work. Some clerics similarly pray for such spells, to the same result. However, all such spells cast by Aspalinth do work. Spells cast from scrolls or magical items do work too. The news that one wizard can cast more spells spreads like wildfire among the council, and soon among lesser spellcasters as well. The news also reaches the empress's ears. (*See Nu. 1; Nu. 3, Nu. 4.*)

What This Means: First experiments indicate no restriction to Aspalinth's magic anymore, though further trials are needed to validate them. Why is Aspalinth's magic different from others', none can explain yet.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs may want—or be asked—to study the phenomenon.

Nuwmont 2, AC 1016: The Stalemate Continues.

Location: Village of Inun, Kingdom of Nithia. HW

Description: The military forces under the command of Senkha have been trying, since Felmont 1015, to dislodge the strange invaders from their positions in the Inun region (see Fe. 20, AC 1015). Several sorties have been attempted—all to no avail. Many scouts have also failed to return from their patrols, and morale is falling rapidly. (*See Nu. 21, Va. 2.*)

What This Means: Since late last year, Senkha's armies have been pushing back the unknown invasion force that conquered a large portion of the Delta Kingdom. The force has been pushed back to the region of their initial landing point, Inun, but they have not been defeated.

Nuwmont 3, AC 1016: Prince No More?

Location: City of Glantri, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: Dolores Hillsbury brings charges against Prince Jaggar von Drachenfels, demanding that he be stripped of his titles. She points to his lack of one arm—an injury sustained in battle with Moglai Khan—as evidence that he is no longer able to perform as a wizard, and therefore cannot be considered a noble in Glantri.

Despite his demonstrations that he can still cast spells (those not requiring somatic gestures), a council vote to consider the charges almost passes. In the end, it is the words of Prince Harald—himself crippled with a debilitating arm injury—that convinces the council to drop the measure.

Though her charges came to naught, it is evident that Dolores is pleased by the closeness of the decision. She still retains a measure of influence with the rest of Glantri's nobility. (*See Nu. 1, Nu. 2; Va. 4, Ya. 23.*)

What This Means: Rivalries burn high, as Synn comes very close to removing one of her key detractors. Though he has won this round, Jaggar still smolders at the thought of how close Synn came to winning.

Nuwmont 3, AC 1016: Beasthunter Is Back.

Location: Keep of Drax Tallen, Forest of Geffron, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: Beasthunter arrives to Drax Tallen via *teleport*. He is in full health and rejoins his brethren with renewed fervor and happiness for the victory over the Shadow Lord. The troops' morale improves and the whole day is spent celebrating the new year as well as new hope for the future. Coolhands is not so surprised by her husband's comeback and thinks her dream must have been an omen from the Immortals. (*See Nu. 1.*)

What This Means: Beasthunter has been cured more by the Day of Dread (which *dispelled* his magical diseases) than by the elven clerics. The result is that he is now back in Denagoth and ready to make the Shadow Lord pay for what he did. He also brought with him some elven clerics (junior treekeepers and Genalleth elves) and other elven mages in order to counter the Shadow Lord's deadly magics. He would like to act at once, launching his soldiers against the Shadow Army, but he knows he must wait for the right opportunity to come.

Nuwmont 3, AC 1016: Corpses Moved Down (or Was It Up?).

Location: City of the Stars, Shadow Elves' Territories. OW

Description: Radiant Shaman Porphyriel orders her white shamans to bring the corpses of General Garafael and the others brave elves who lost their lives defending the Temple of Rafiel down (or up) to the *Chamber of the Spheres*. (*See Nu. 1, Nu. 2; Nu. 15, Va. 8.*)

What This Means: Porphyriel has been instructed by Rafiel Himself to move those corpses in special niches inside the recently completed *Chamber of the Spheres*, so that "I, Rafiel, will guide them."

Nuwmont 3, AC 1016: Loose Islands Claimed.

Location: Confederate Capital of Ionace, NACE. AS

Description: In an effort to secure its internal borders, the NACE lays claim to all islands left in the Alphatian Sea after the main continent sinking. Immediately following this proclamation, troops disembark on every small chunk of land that surrounds Ionace and easily take possession of them, as those isles are not so rife with monsters as is Ionace itself. In the following weeks, imperial marines will be sent to reclaim and secure all other such islands farther from the capital. (*See Nu. 16, Nu. 28.*)

What This Means: Most such isles are of little value as far as settling is concerned, but convey a great strategic value, surrounding the Sundsvall Maelstrom and standing in the way of an assault on the capital.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are officers or simple soldiers in Broderick's army, or if they are mercenaries who occasionally supplement the NACE on operations in and around Ionace, they might get a first glimpse at the power of Broderick's artifact, *Frightcorps*. Besides, high-ranking officer PCs may be entrusted with leading an assault on one or more isles, while mercenary PCs will be sent as scouts to infiltrate pirate nests or kill dangerous monsters.

Nuwmont 3, AC 1016: Another Ship Lost.

Location: South of Hattias, Sea of Dread. OW

Description: A Thyatian ship, loaded with goods and hopeful colonists heading south for Raven Scarp, is attacked by a band of Twaelar, and is sunk with all hands on board. (*See Nu. 18, Nu. 21.*)

What This Means: This is another attack by the Twaelar against the Thyatians, in an effort to keep them from sailing above their territories. The sinking is but the latest in a growing number of losses against the merrow of the deep. News of this loss will affect the public greatly, as word spreads of an enemy the Thyatian Empire cannot fight on its own terms.

Nuwmont 3, AC 1016: But Why Does It Work?

Location: City of Andaire, Kingdom of Jafilia, Floating Continent of Alphatia. HW

Description: Empress Eriadna orders an investigation on the way magic works in Alphatia, the second one since the empire was relocated to the Hollow World. (*See Nu. 1, Nu. 2; Nu. 4, Nu. 28.*)

What This Means: The first investigation was conducted after Alphatia awoke in the Hollow World, as the most skillful spellcasters discovered that some of their spells would not work anymore. Since the laws of magic seem to have changed, at least for one wizard, a thorough investigation is required. If more magic can be wielded that is something the Alphatians definitely want to know, and if only some mages can obtain more power, then it is dangerous to the others.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs may be hired to investigate the matter.

Nuwmont 4, AC 1016: So That Is Why It Works Then.

Location: City of Andaire, Kingdom of Jafilia, Floating Continent of Alphatia. HW

Description: The wizard Aspalinth mentions to some fellow council members that he experimented last year with *mnemonic mineral potions* sent by the outer world council after they neutralized Zandor with those. When others point out to him that it may be related, he remembers that actually he was ill from the poison until the Day of Dread—and since then he was able to cast more spells. Casting a newly rediscovered *contact other planes*, he is confirmed that there is a link but cannot discover more. Aspalinth decides to petition the empress, who is the only one to have immediate access to a few more samples, to start experiments with the *mnemonic mineral potions*. The empress agrees to his request. (*See Nu. 2, Nu. 3; Nu. 28, Va. 16.*)

Nuwmont 5, AC 1016: *Tree of Life* Invested.

Location: Barony of Celedyl, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: In the Barony of Celedyl, the ceremony to invest a *Tree of Life* is performed, symbolic of the commitment the Erewan elves have made to nurture this new elven settlement. The ceremony is performed by Lady Bethys, who is to be the treekeeper of the new tree. Lady Eleesea, the ailing treekeeper of the Erewan mother tree, oversees the event. Princess Carlotina is present for the ceremony, as is the new Baron Qenildor Erewan. There are few non-elves who attend the ceremony. (*See Th. 7.*)

What This Means: This will be a crucial period for the new elven barony, as the *Tree of Life* will not gain any of its powers for another 5 years. It is a step forward for the Erewan elves, however; their trials and tribulations of recent years are starting to turn around.

Nuwmont 5, AC 1016: It's a Bird! It's a...?

Location: Outside the Village of Perdisis, *Provincia Septentriona*, Thyatian Empire, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: Woodsmen laboring in the forests to the east of Perdis have been reporting strange sightings over the past few months. Many claim to have seen flying objects in the sky above the Great Escarpment, and strange clearings appearing suddenly in the woods. One man even claims to have been abducted by a group of goggle-eyed gnome-like beings with bald heads and drooping ears. He says they took him on a mysterious flying ship and performed unspeakable things on him. The foreman of the camp passes it off, as there are often strange things that find their way north from Furenglave, and the "kidnap" victim is known to drink heavily. (See Kl. 13.)

What This Means: The strange sightings are in fact gnomish *skyships* that have been scouting the area. The survivors of the takeover of Serraine in Ambrymont of last year came to ground on the Great Escarpment just above the Giant Skull River, to the east of Perdis. They have formed a small settlement at the juncture of the two main river flows, and have been struggling to survive for the past few months.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are curious enough to chase down rumors, they will be very surprised to find a large group of gnomes, pegataurs, humans, and more inhabiting the Great Escarpment!

Nuwmont 6, AC 1016: Dreams of Faith.

Location: Azcan Empire. HW

Description: The news of Papalotl's ultimate sacrifice is quickly reaching the various Azcan cities and the countryside. Besides, Papalotl appears to his followers and key individuals throughout the empire in visions and dreams, encouraging them to abandon all faith in Atzanteotl and his now unnecessary sacrifices and persuade others to do the same. The sacrifices are now blasphemous since their primary reason (i.e. excuse) for happening disappeared with Quetzalcoatl's sacrifice. These visitations cause additional unrest, lending considerable power and credibility to the amazing stories emanating from Chitlacan. The dreams sent by Atruatzin throughout Kaldmont of AC 1015 also give the story credibility, as a number of Azcans realize they had already witnessed part of the story in their dreams—before it actually happened.

Accompanying the news of the return of Quetzalcoatl, and as further proof of its veracity, is the return of numerous feathered serpents that attack and chase the flying vipers.

Soon the empire is thrown into uproar and civil war. (See Nu. 1; Nu. 23, Va. 12.)

What This Means: The return of the feathered serpents is the consequence of the discovery of the serpent-mint plant in Colima, which Papalotl brought to the four corners of the empire. In addition to the actual feathered serpents, priests of the New Way make symbolic use of the spell *stick to feathered serpent* brought by Papalotl from the ruins of Axateotl, which as an Immortal He now grants to His new clerics. The return of the feathered serpents, more than an ecological reversal, is a symbol of mythological significance.

What the PCs Can Do: With a civil war raging, the PCs have many opportunities to become involved in the events going on in the Azcan Empire. They can be followers of the New Way themselves, witnesses of Papalotl's ascension to immortality or maybe even companions of his during his last tribulations on the Path of the Polymath, trying to reform their country. Or they may be busy saving their own lives—especially if they are foreigners.

Nuwmont 6, AC 1016: Trip to the Septahenge.

Location: Keep of Drax Tallen, Forest of Geffron, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: After over one month of magically studying and scrying the place where the Septahenge lies, the elven wizards are finally able to *teleport* there the volunteers for the secret mission. A party of twenty elite elves is chosen to go to the Septahenge and retrieve the Black Staff, the fabled weapon that is said to be hidden in a secluded Outer Plane, guarded by a race of beings called the Carnifex. After studying all the information at their disposal, the group is teleported to the Septahenge: they are armed to their teeth and ready to die. (See Nu. 20, Nu. 24.)

What This Means: The elven generals discovered the existence of this "secret weapon" when they conquered Drax Tallen in Eirmont AC 1015. According to the information they deciphered, it can be used to defeat Idris and Her

minions, so they now want it more than anything else. They do not know that the Shadow Lord is using them to recover the Black Staff for his personal use.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are elves and are with the army occupying Drax Tallen, they may be chosen to go to the Septahenge to recover the mysterious weapon. However, it is highly unlikely they will be able to accomplish the mission, so they may be among those who return to Drax Tallen to organize a second expedition. In case they are so powerful to actually bring back the fabled staff, simply proceed to the events described in Eirmont 10, assuming that many months passed while they were in the Outer Planes.

The adventure that is about to take place is detailed in M3, *Twilight Calling*. However, those familiar with it will notice that the hook for the PCs has been totally changed. Indeed in our case Alphaks has nothing to do with this event: simply play the module with the background given here, thus making the PCs believe that in the Pits of Banishment lies a great weapon that could destroy the Immortal Idris and Her minions. Give them the list of clues found in M3: these are the only information the elves have been able to decipher.

Time passes differently in these Outer Planes in comparison to the Prime Plane. For every day spent in the Seven Realms, one month passes in the Prime (with the exception of the Green Realm, where time does not flow at all); and for every hour spent in the Pits of Banishment, one week passes in the Prime.

Nuwmont 7, AC 1016: May He Rest in Peace.

Location: Forest of the Curse, Kingdom of Wendar. OW

Description: Some elven soldiers coming back from the siege of Drax Tallen arrive in the Forest of the Curse bringing to Doriath, exiled King of Alfheim, the corpse of the late General Gilfronden, beheaded and impaled by the Shadow Lord on Eirmont 5, AC 1015.

King Doriath, crying at the sight of his old friend, immediately sends an envoy to Rafielton to ask the shadow elves for permission to bury Gilfronden in Canolbarth. Princess Tanadaleyo of the shadow elves unexpectedly agrees. (*See Va. 14.*)

What This Means: General Gilfronden was actually a shadowelf spy, the most important one at Doriath's court both in Alfheim before the invasion and in Wendar after the war. Though Tanadaleyo is disappointed to learn that her most trusted agent (and distant relative) is dead, she is more than happy to have him buried in Canolbarth. Maybe, she thinks, the shamans will be able to raise him or, at least, Kanafasti will find a way to "talk" with him, allowing her to learn about Doriath's most private secrets.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs from both races may be selected as member of the honor guard that will transport the late Gilfronden from Wendar to Aengmor.

Nuwmont 7, AC 1016: Asteriela Has a Plan.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: With the increasing success of the NACE, Asteriela and Zaar have begun to reconsider having their kingdom so dependent upon Thyatis. Zaar believes that Eusebius would take revenge on him for his betrayal during the Great War if he could, and Asteriela has become more comfortable with Alphantian customs, and envisions herself as a bridge between the two powers. She has had some communications with the Alphantian leadership, and they seem warm to her idea. Asteriela travels to Thyatis City today to propose a unique arrangement to her brother Eusebius: she proposes that Helskir join the NACE while also remaining a province of the Thyatian Empire. Eusebius sits coldly while Asteriela states her plan, and says only that he will take the matter under advisement. (*See Nu. 19, Va. 6.*)

What This Means: Both Asteriela and Eusebius are taking a big gamble. Asteriela wants closer ties to the NACE, but does not want her kingdom to become the target of Thyatian-inspired raiders again, and knows that the NACE would be unlikely to take a strong stand on behalf of Helskir if push came to shove and she rebelled against Thyatis. Plus, she still has some affection for her homeland, and does not want to break with it. For Eusebius, this is an

opportunity to warm relations with the NACE, as Thyatis cannot afford another major war on that front. However, he feels his position on the Isle of Dawn could collapse completely: Westrourke is barely loyal, and the Ostlanders are coveting imperial territories as well. If he agrees to this, will Thyatian control of the western Isle of Dawn crumble? He resents his sister for forcing him to make this decision now, while Thyatis is still weak.

Nuwmont 7, AC 1016: A Traveling Nut Case.

Location: City of Errolyn, Kingdom of Theranderol, Floating Continent of Alphatia. HW

Description: Citizens report the presence of a stranger, walking about the city rambling incoherently about “something not being right.” Though several locals seem to vaguely recognize him, few converse with him. Those that do speak with him report that the fellow is “a bit touched in the head.” He speaks of an Alphatia somewhat similar to this one, yet strangely different. Before nightfall, his apparent ranting draws much attention. This leads to his death by a mage, who defends his actions by stating that “he had merely put the insane creature out of its misery.” Though many found his tales interesting, the slaying is seen as the best thing for him. (*See Th. 17, Ya. 12.*)

What This Means: The insane individual is not insane. Instead, he is the unwilling pawn of the Immortal Alphaks, whose motive is to cause trouble in Alphatia. He used His powers to transport this individual from the surface world to the floating continent. Native of Alphatia and stranded in Karameikos after the sinking, his mysterious arrival in Alphatia offers a degree of culture shock. Alphaks has the impression that the Spell of Preservation has been severely weakened since the Great War. He concludes that it may be possible to circumvent the implanted memories of the Alphatians. He is certain that such a remembrance will cause unprecedented chaos.

Second Week

Nuwmont 9, AC 1016: Kardal Under Siege.

Location: Town of Kardal, Kingdom of Rockhome. OW

Description: Goblinoid forces led by the orc-king Thar attack the prison town of Kardal this afternoon. Though still damaged from goblinoid raids on it in Sviftmont of last year, the dwarven garrison is more than capable of mounting a strong defense. The two forces prepare themselves for a long siege. (*See Va. 4, Va. 17.*)

What This Means: Kardal is one of the few large settlements in the Klintest Lowlands. If Thar can capture the fortified prison town, he will have a strong base from which to launch his attacks against the rest of the valley.

Nuwmont 9, AC 1016: A New Goblin Leader.

Location: Flat Noses Camp, Badlands. SC

Description: After last year’s defeat of the Flat Noses goblins, a new leader, Garok Flint-Ax, emerges from the veteran warriors of the last Cimarron ride into the Badlands. He is resolute to unite the goblin tribes into a great horde and overrun the human baronies, and their gnollish allies. Garok sends emissaries to the various goblin clans. (*See Va. 17, Th. 21.*)

Nuwmont 10, AC 1016: Civil Unrest in Aaslin.

Location: City of Aaslin, Kingdom of Notrion, NACE, Bellissaria. AS

Description: In Aaslin, citizens assemble outside of one of the kingdom’s granaries to protest the lackluster prices of their grain harvests and the high costs of imported goods. The mob turns nasty and assaults the granary, setting it alight until the city guard intervenes and disperses the crowd. Despite its best efforts, the guard is unable to put the fire out and the granary is a total loss. (*See Nu. 25, Va. 7.*)

What This Means: Since Alphatia sank, Notrion has lost its primary source of income: grain sales with the mainland. With its primary market gone, Notrion has found itself in the dilemma of having a massive grain surplus. The subsequent loss of King Lodrig II, the ascension of King Lodrig III, his murder, and then the resulting play for control of the kingdom have left the populace and government with little opportunity to improve the economy by securing new markets. As such, the price of grain has dropped significantly; conversely, imported goods must be shipped in from afar so that these goods are priced at well above the fair market value.

The citizens have assembled to protest these low prices in grain and the excessive prices of imports. Several more radical protesters encouraged the mob to burn the granary in the hopes of lowering some of the surplus and raising demand for grain. The burning has little affect on the surplus, but it does draw added attention to the situation.

Since Corydon was given the throne of Notrion, he has sought the means to turn the economy around, but unfortunately Corydon is a soldier and not an economist. It has taken him awhile to familiarize himself economics; now, more comfortable with the subject, he sees the pressing need to seek changes.

What the PCs Can Do: Enterprising PCs have an opportunity to make some serious currency by purchasing Notrion grain at ridiculously low prices and transport them elsewhere; an ideal market would be Esterhold. Or PCs can do the reverse and purchase items elsewhere and transport them to Aaslin for sale. In either scenario, the PCs will have to display a good business sense to make a profit or even avoid losing money. Of course there are the customary dangers of a seafarer, such as pirates, sea creatures, and horrible weather.

Nuwmont 10, AC 1016: Spies in the South.

Location: Dominion of Polakatsikes, Heldannic Territories, Meghala Kimata Plains. DV

Description: Mivosian spies are sent to the newly-conquered city-state of Polakatsikes to assess the situation, and to send word back as to how much of a threat the Heldannic Knights pose to Mivosian interests in the eastern Meghala Kimata Plains. They pass through the main gates, showing their forged documents to the Heldannic guards, and pass through unhindered. (*See Nu. 27, Va. 15.*)

What This Means: Mivosia is a militaristic city-state, which considers the region to be its own sphere of influence. As a result, news of the conquest of Polakatsikes last year caused a stir among the ruling triumvirate, and they wish to examine the knights' defenses and military structure, in order to assess the situation.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are working for Mivosia, they will have their work cut out for them in trying to make it into Polakatsikes itself, and conducting their mission without being caught. If they are with the knights, they could earn the thanks of high-ranking members if they manage to uncover the infiltrators.

Nuwmont 12, AC 1016: Restructuring in Underocean.

Location: Town of New Smaar, Sea-Kingdom of Underocean. AS

Description: King Juliast announces that the Council of Advisors, as it has existed in the past, has been disbanded. However, he states that those members who remained loyal during the civil war have formed a less formal advisory body, which will have no power other than to advise the monarch. He also bans any private armies. (*See Nu. 1; Nu. 20, Va. 16.*)

What This Means: The experiment with a limited monarchy is over. Juliast is taking steps to prevent another Maed from coming to power. However, some tritons feel that these steps are uncalled-for, and may cause trouble in the future.

Nuwmont 12, AC 1016: Worst Kept Secret in Aquas.

Location: City of Seashield, Sea-Kingdom of Aquas, NACE. AS

Description: A representative of Queen Zynnia announces a call for mages to assist in a series of construction projects. Though the project is initially draped in secrecy, leaks from insiders tell of plans to construct a domed settlement upon the sunken Alphatian continent.

The number of mages answering the summons is very good. This is a great surprise as Queen Zynnia makes it clear that the NACE cannot pay the mages. It is noted that several prominent mages are not present to answer the call. (*See Nu. 20, Va. 7.*)

What This Means: Since the sinking of the Alphatian continent, there have been several foreign attempts to salvage the ruins. Alphatian sentiment has been that such salvage ventures are an insult to their homeland and a desecration to those that perished. Opinion is strong that if any people are to benefit from the treasures beneath the waves, it should be the Alphatians.

The NACE Council has finally agreed to do something about this: they have decided to construct a domed settlement on the continent. This settlement will act as a military outpost as well as a way station for those retrieving the lost wealth. Such a venture is financially straining to the NACE so they choose a site that offers the opportunity to produce a large bounty, quickly: near Bluenose in the former kingdom of Arogansa.

The call for mages is answered so enthusiastically because most of Aquas's mages are bored and frustrated by the overcrowded nature of the domes, so the project is exciting as compared to constant boredom or the routine repairs. Plus, there is a great deal of curiosity about the sunken mainland.

Nuwmont 13, AC 1016: Prince McGregor?

Location: Principality of Klantyre, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: A diplomatic envoy and his guards sent by the Council of Princes to ascertain the whereabouts of Brannart McGregor reaches the keep of Crownguard. At first, there is no answer to their inquiries—it appears as if the tower has been abandoned. Just when they resign themselves to leave, the gates creak open and allow them ingress to the courtyard. There, a lone and haggard servant greets them and takes them to meet the master. The servant refuses to answer any of their questions.

The envoy and his men are fed then led into an antechamber to await their mysterious host. At long last, the unnerved diplomats are greeted by the new master of the castle—a young boy.

The boy identifies himself as Angus McGregor, the grandson of Prince Brannart. He claims that both his grandfather and father were killed during the war with Ethengar, and that he is the sole heir and claimant to the title of Prince of Klantyre. The envoy and his entourage make haste to leave this haunted keep, and return with the news. (*See Nu. 1.*)

What This Means: Angus McGregor will shortly be confirmed as the new Prince of Klantyre by the rest of the council. He managed to slay both his father and grandfather (using the power of the *Radiance*) sometime last year. Since then, he has been consolidating his power over his principality, and attempting to repair the damages wrought on it by the undead and Ethengar invasions of 1015.

Once his identity becomes known, he will quickly find himself being approached by diplomatic envoys of the various nobles, all seeking to ingratiate themselves with him, or failing that, to discover his motives.

Nuwmont 13, AC 1016: Denagoth Raids Northern Wendar.

Location: Kingdom of Wendar. OW

Description: Humanoids bearing the Denagothian colors come down the snowcapped Mengul Mountains and raze a few human and elven settlements in northern Wendar. When the Wendarian troops arrive on the place, they find all the inhabitants dead and many writings with blood traced on the charred ruins of the houses that reads: "Die for the sins of the Alfheimers!" When the news spread, the situation becomes tense once again between humans and Alfheimers. (*See Va. 3.*)

What This Means: The humanoid attacks have clearly been ordered by the Church of Idris to spread once again the hatred against the Alfheim elves in Wendar. This is part of the racism campaign that started back in AC 1009 (when the refugees from Alfheim arrived) but that has deep roots in Wendar's past as well. The Church of Idris also hopes to make the Wendarians cease to support the elven crusade in Denagoth, which would drop the Alfheimers' prestige considerably.

Nuwmont 13, AC 1016: Unrest in Dunadale.

Location: Kingdom of Dunadale, Thyatian Empire, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: Edmondo Tiberia, though appointed Duke of Dunadale, has increasingly seen himself not as the governor of a province in the Thyatian Empire, but rather as a conqueror ruling over a subject population. The oppressive nature of his rule and the corruption of his regime have angered not only the people of Dunadale but increasingly the recent Thyatian settlers as well. The Dunadalers, almost uniquely within the Alphatian civilization, have long prided themselves on the decentralized, confederate nature of their society and the relative freedom of its inhabitants, and the Thyatians view themselves as citizens, not as subjects. Today this boiling resentment is finally unleashed, with protest demonstrations both in the Thyatian-dominated city of Dunadale and the heavily Alphatian city of Deirdren. The duke's men react harshly, dispersing the demonstrators with force. By nightfall, there are riots and even armed skirmishes between the duke's men and the demonstrators. (*See Nu. 19, Va. 6.*)

What This Means: The duke receives word from Deirdren, via magical communication, and knows the demonstrations began almost simultaneously. He suspects a coordinated effort to undermine his rule, and is right. He also views the riots and skirmishes as an organized rebellion, but is wrong. The protests were intended to be peaceful, but their harsh suppression by his men caused some of the more excitable protesters to fight back. As night falls, the criminal elements of both cities try to take advantage of the chaos to riot and loot, further adding to the confusion. By dawn most of this has died down, and the duke's men patrol the streets in force.

Nuwmont 13, AC 1016: Peace Stressed.

Location: City of Haldemar, Kingdom of Alphatian Neatharum. HW

Description: A fight erupts outside of one of the city's taverns. By the time the authorities intervene, two Neathar visitors lay dead and three others badly wounded. A trio of Alphatians is taken into custody for the deed. The signs of battle, witnesses, and their own admissions proclaim their participation in the fight. (*See Nu. 14, Fl. 28.*)

Nuwmont 14, AC 1016: Interest in Kastelios.

Location: City-State of Kastelios, Serpent Coast. DV

Description: With the hiring of local trader Marina Takanitas last year, and official coverage of the city-state in the 1015 *Mystaran Almanac*, awareness of and interest in the nations of Brun have grown in Kastelios over the past weeks. A whole new world has been revealed beyond the Sea of Dread, and Kastelios's City Council has determined that the time has come to investigate these nations, and to see if ties can be forged. The city-state already has relations with Yavdlom and Sind, and Minrothad and Thyatis to a lesser degree, but the other nations of Darokin, Karameikos, Ierendi, and others, capture public imagination. The council meets in a quickly-convened session, and approves the motion to furnish a delegation to send north. (*See Va. 5, Va. 17.*)

What This Means: After centuries of a relatively solitary existence on the northern coast of Davania, word of great nations has arrived. The people are naturally curious, and want to exchange knowledge, and trade, with these mysterious people in the north. Kastelios sees this as a great opportunity to expand its diplomatic network, as well as find new markets for its goods.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are in Kastelios, and from the Old World, then the PCs will become sought-after "experts" on the affairs of these nations. They could find themselves advising would-be diplomats on how to deal with Darokinians, Karameikans, and other folk, as well as bringing them up to speed on events on Brun. This would

be a good opportunity for PCs to forge friendships with people who could very well become influential diplomats someday.

Nuwmont 14, AC 1016: A Surprisingly Quick Verdict.

Location: City of Haldemar, Kingdom of Alphatian Neatharum. HW

Description: Governess Ezreilla shocks the populace of Neatharum by ordering that the three Alphatians, held for the deaths of the Neathar, be executed. Public protest, from Alphatian and Neathar alike, is highly evident. Most are furious that they were sentenced without a trial or even being interrogated. Under this pressure, Ezreilla decrees that the condemned be given a brief reprieve. If persons can present her with evidence that the condemned were not involved, then she will reopen the investigation. (*See Nu. 13; Fl. 28, Ya. 1.*)

What This Means: Not wishing to appear biased, Ezreilla reacts too swiftly to the attack on the Neathar. There is little doubt that the Alphatians held in custody are involved, but she has not taken into account what caused the melee. Following the decree, she realizes the folly. However, she is fearful of appearing too favorable to Alphatians and will only grant a temporary reprieve. The public outcry is genuine, though it varies from sect to sect. Hard-line Alphatians see it as being a matter of “right of might;” others see no justice in the proclaimed verdicts. Even some Neathar openly object to the verdict. Some fear repercussions for it by angered Alphatians. Others feel the accused at least deserve a trial.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs may find themselves hired by friends and family of the condemned, to free them or investigate the matter.

Third Week

Nuwmont 15, AC 1016: Karameikos, Shires Outraged.

Location: City of Glantri, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: The Karameikan ambassador to Glantri issues a formal protest on behalf of his government and that of the Five Shires. Both nations object to the presence of Ludwig “Black Eagle” von Hendriks, a notorious villain. They demand he be extradited to the shires so that proceedings begun against him in AC 1011 can be carried out in full. The council politely refuses the request. (*See Fl. 12, Fe. 9.*)

What This Means: The Black Eagle was sentenced to execution in the Five Shires back in AC 1011, but was rescued by humanoid forces. He resurfaced in Glantri, working for Prince Kol, but his location was largely unknown. Ever since last year, and his famed “slaying of Moglai Khan,” he has attained a great degree of public notoriety.

The shires have no official diplomatic contact with Glantri, but they are close allies with Darokin and Karameikos, both nations who do share diplomatic ties to the magocracy. As a result, they are putting pressure on their allies to pressure the Glantrians. Left to his own devices, King Stephan Karameikos would like nothing better than to forget his cousin ever existed.

The Council of Princes will not relinquish a national hero to the clutches of a nation they do not even have ties to. Ludwig stays in Glantri.

Nuwmont 15, AC 1016: Alive Again.

Location: City of the Stars, Shadow Elves’ Territories. OW

Description: General Garafaele and those soldiers, whose corpses were laid in a special niches of the *Chamber of the Spheres* a few days ago now raise as radiant protectors, a special force of guards loyal to Rafiel, whose only task is to defend His temple. (*See Nu. 3.*)

Among those guards there are a few Schattenalfen, led by Captain Thyrfynn, who worship Rafiel.

What This Means: Rafiel knew that, after activating the *Chamber of the Spheres*, he would need to increase the security level of the temple, so with the help of His new artifact He managed to create a group of loyal guards by magically imbuing with *Radiance* the bodies of those soldiers fallen defending the temple. The radiant protectors live inside the lower temple's levels and their existence is unknown to anyone, but the most powerful shamans.

There are two kind of radiant protectors: greater ones (like Garafael) and lesser ones.

Radiant protectors look exactly like the shadow elves they once were in life, except that they glow, radiating a dim white light, bright enough to be seen in normal light.

Radiant protectors are Rafiel's last line of defense. They are created by shamans in the *Chamber of the Spheres* imbuing the corpses of dead shadow elves with the magical force of the *Radiance*. They live inside the *Chamber of the Spheres* and their only task is to defend the chamber itself. Radiant protectors can not voluntarily leave the *Chamber of the Spheres* and will refuse to do so if ordered to. If taken outside the chamber, a radiant protector quickly "dies," losing one HD for each hour spent outside the chamber.

Radiant protectors organize themselves in a military structure. The radiant protector at the top of a chain of command and is known as greater radiant protector, while the others are lesser radiant protectors.

They have the same special abilities of shadow elves (e.g. 90' infravision). They are very similar to undead, but they are not undead and thus they cannot be *turned* or controlled by a priest.

In combat radiant protectors use glowing swords, equivalent to magical *swords +3*. On a natural 20 on the "to hit" roll, their glowing swords can cut through enemies' armors or weapons. These swords glow of a dim blue or green light (but never red).

When a dead body is placed in the chamber, it awakens as a radiant protector of the same HD as it had levels in life.

They have AC 0 (or -3 if they wear a *radiant armor*, a special armor magically enhanced by the powers of the *Chamber of the Spheres*)

Radiant protectors can cast spells as a shaman of the same level, though they do not need to have a *soul crystal*.

Radiant protectors can regain their hp just resting in contact with the reactor or holding *soul crystal* in their hands at the rate of 1 hp for each soul inside the crystal. They can use one crystal per round and after that the crystal is no more magical, just simple rock. Moreover they can be healed by shamans with standard healing spells.

The *Chamber of the Spheres* absorbs any spells of 1st to 3rd level cast inside the chamber itself, causing them to be ineffectual. Only the radiant protectors can cast those spells successfully within the chamber (since they are naturally attuned to the chamber). Moreover radiant protectors are naturally immune to *sleep*, *charm*, and *hold* spells, as well as death magic, poison and *Radiance* attacks.

This is the second feature of the *Chamber of the Spheres* that the shamans have discovered in just two weeks, what will come next?

Nuwmont 15, AC 1016: Arkans.

Location: City of Skyreach, Kingdom of Floating Ar, NACE. AS

Description: King Qissling of Floating Ar announces that his kingdom will from now on be officially known as the Kingdom of Arkan, and its inhabitants as Arkans. The floating islands are referred to as Floating Arkan (or sometimes Upper Arkan), while the Yanniveys are called Lower Arkan.

What This Means: *Ark* is an archaic spelling of *ar*, the Alphatian word for air. Floating is actually the Thyatian translation of the word *palart*. In Alphatian the flying islands are thus named *Palart Arkan*, like the Immortal who as a mortal enchanted them. Officially, the name change is to reflect the addition of the Yanniveys to Floating Ar, as one unique kingdom. The real reason is obvious to anyone who has talked with any aristocrat from the floating isles: as the only Alphatians spared from the destruction of the mainland by the Immortal Palartarkan, they view themselves as the true keepers of the old Alphatian ways on the outer world.

Nuwmont 16, AC 1016: Aasla Isles Secured.

Location: Aasla Isles. AS

Description: Commander Broderick leads a small force to take over the fog-bound Aasla Isles. They encounter no difficulty with the four first isles, but are surprised when they stumble upon a well-defended pirate lair on the last island. Fighting is fierce, but *Frightcorps*-powered troops finally breach the pirates' defenses and storm the lair. Some pirates escape, including the Monster of the Low NACE, but most are killed or imprisoned. Among the captured hoard is the famous *Pouch of Winds*, apparently left behind by the Monster during his hasty retreat. (*See Nu. 3; Nu. 28, Va. 12.*)

What This Means: Commander Broderick suspected that the pirates that have been plaguing the sea lanes for years were sheltering in some of those numerous, uninhabited islands. One of the goals of this campaign was to destroy such pirate nests, and defeating the most infamous of them is a great victory. The fortuitous discovery of the *Pouch of Winds* is an unexpected bonus.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are mercenaries accompanying Broderick in his campaign, then they will be sent ahead to infiltrate the lair and make them as weak as possible before the military launch their assault. During their assignment the PCs should have an opportunity to find the *Pouch of Winds*, which in turn might lead to a greater involvement with the Alphatian Artifact Agency.

Nuwmont 18, AC 1016: Uproar in Thyatis.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: A heated discussion takes place in the Thyatian Senate today. Many senators are alarmed at the growing number of casualties in the war against the Twaelar, both military and civilian. They are afraid news of these losses will affect their standings in their own constituencies. Soon, a resolution is proposed to find an alternative means to reach the Hinterlands, and thus re-establish a link to that colony so that colonization can continue. (*See Nu. 3; Nu. 21, Th. 2.*)

What This Means: Thyatis is becoming worried that its hostilities with the Twaelar will cost it too much. Already it has lost many ships in the Sea of Dread, and it is clear a direct route to the Hinterlands is not possible at this time. An alternative route must be found in order to keep the Hinterlands secure.

Nuwmont 19, AC 1016: Curfew and Pass Laws in Dunadale.

Location: Kingdom of Dunadale, Thyatian Empire, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: Duke Edmondo Tiberia proclaims several new laws in reaction to the recent protests. He initiates a dusk-till-dawn curfew, clearing the streets by night, and he greatly curtails personal liberties by initiating "Pass Laws." All subjects of the duke will be required to have a pass, issued and stamped by the ducal government, listing the location of their residence and place of business. Travel outside a confined region is restricted, requiring permission from the duke's agents. Visitors to Dunadale are given temporary passes, allowing them to conduct business for a set duration. A "guide" appointed by the government acts as a spy.

At the same time this occurs, two small deputations consisting of dissident Thyatians and Alphatians make journeys. One goes to Helskir to tell Asteriela of the hardships in Dunadale, while the other travels to the interior of Dunadale to meet with the commander of the Thyatian pacification force there, Demetius Vannopolus. Vannopolus has earned the high of the Dunadalers by showing respect for the Alphatian residents and restraint in using force. He built his reputation and undermined support for "rebels" by showing impartial justice and no tolerance for corruption. Both Asteriela and Vannopolus listen to the delegations with increasing shock and horror. Neither want to depose the legitimate duke of Dunadale, but their consciences will not permit them to ignore the oppression. (*See Nu. 7, Nu. 13; Va. 6, Va. 13.*)

What This Means: Dunadale is well on its way to becoming the most oppressive police state in the Thyatian Empire. Eusebius will soon learn of these events, but how he reacts will depend on how they are presented to him.

What the PCs Can Do: Characters acting on behalf of the Dunadalers could sway Eusebius by making a persuasive case, but should know that Eusebius is not likely to be moved by appeals to emotion. Pointing out the high cost of maintaining such an extensive, expensive government apparatus and the increasing resentment it is breeding in a domain that is all too close to the NACE would stand a better chance of convincing him that Tiberia should be removed.

Nuwmont 20, AC 1016: Mission Failed.

Location: Keep of Drax Tallen, Forest of Geffron, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: The survivors of the elven squadron sent to the Septahenge *teleport* to Drax Tallen in bad shape. Half of them have been killed by formidable opponents guarding two of the Seven Keys needed to open the gate to the Pits of Banishment (where the weapon lies). They only managed to recover one key, and considering they were the best individuals among the crusaders, the elves start losing their hope to retrieve the Black Staff. (*See Nu. 6; Nu. 24, Va. 9.*)

What This Means: The elves were unfortunately not skilled enough to win against the guardians of the Seven Realms. They are now realizing that they had underestimated the difficulty of the mission and are thinking about other possible solutions before the Shadow Army shows up again.

What the PCs Can Do: Hopefully be among those who return from the Septahenge alive.

Nuwmont 20, AC 1016: A Rebuff by Renowned Mages.

Location: City of Seashield, Sea-Kingdom of Aquas, NACE. AS

Description: Queen Zynnia personally contacts the mages Xerathis, Tredrigon, and Dlanor to inquire as to their lack of participation with the effort to build the new domed city. They respond that they are busy with their own project, *The Torpin*, using the opportunity to stress their own need of assistance and funding for their project that “is surely to be beneficial to the NACE.” Zynnia inquires as to the possibility of the construction crews using Tredrigon’s *submersible*, *The Shark*, to ferry supplies, but Xerathis responds that that would be impossible as Dlanor is off in it and will not be back for some time. (*See Nu. 12; Va. 7, Va. 18.*)

What This Means: The domed city project has a more than ample workforce. However, the participation of the three mages would prove invaluable as each are greatly familiar with the procedures of such construction. Plus, the three were all apprentices of the renowned mage, Bordicar, who was instrumental in building the existing domes, as well as being a pioneer in submersible designs.

The Torpin is a massive *submersible* designed and begun by the magist Bordicar. Since he disappeared during the Great War, his former pupils have taken it upon themselves to finish the *submersible* but their progress has been pitifully slow because of a limited budget. Their most recent effort to supplement their funds entails a bit of smuggling: Dlanor is off delivering arms to the Twaelar in their fight against the Thyatians. [*The Shark can be found in the Dawn of the Emperor boxed set. Ed.*]

What the PCs Can Do: Alphatian PCs may find themselves being sent to the three mages to assist them in their own project. The three wizards can use all the help they can get for the *submersible*’s enchantments. As with the dome construction project, PCs assisting with *The Torpin* will find little in the way of pay.

Nuwmont 20, AC 1016: The Devilfish Pursuit.

Location: North of Sea-Kingdom of Aquas. AS

Description: The devilfish that survived last year's campaign continue to flee south from Underocean, harried by triton forces. Some of the officers feel that the army is getting too close to Aquas, with which contact has been forbidden, but they are overruled by their superiors. (*See Nu. 1, Nu. 12; Va. 16, Th. 8.*)

What This Means: The officers are right, they are too close to Aquas. Already, some rumors of the running battle have reached the city. The senior officers, however, are partially blinded by their desire of revenge for the destruction of Underocean.

What the PCs Can Do: Triton PCs can be part of the army. Alphatian PCs can attempt to determine the truth in the rumors.

Nuwmont 21, AC 1016: A Lifeline to the Hinterlands?

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: A group of scholars, senators, and adventurers has been conferring privately for the past three days in an effort to find a safer route to the Thyatian Hinterlands. After drawing on the experience of both scholars and adventurers, the senators have uncovered what they believe is a safe alternative to the southern route across the Sea of Dread. Thyatis has apparently had contact with a city-state on the northern coast of Davania, near Yavdlom, called Kastelios. Although interaction with Kastelios has been sporadic for the last twenty years, news does reach Thyatis through its network of spies. Thyatian spies have reported that the Kastelians are said to be the most accomplished sailors in the region, being able to sail around the treacherous northern coast of Davania with ease. After consulting their maps, the group decides that a diplomatic mission should be sent to Kastelios, to see if the city-state would be willing to help. They agree that, although the proposed route would be much longer, it could save many lives. (*See Nu. 3, Nu. 18; Th. 2, Th. 3.*)

What This Means: The losses in the war against the Twaelar have become so serious that Emperor Eusebius has commissioned some senators to find a solution to the problem. These senators enlisted the aid of adventurers and scholars with knowledge of the region. Drawing on their knowledge, a southwesterly route to Kastelios, and then east along the coast to Raven Scarp, has been identified as a possible solution. This route would go west of the current zone of conflict, but would add several weeks to the voyage. The Thyatians are also counting on their size relative to Kastelios as a bargaining chip; many anticipate a quick resolution, and bending Kastelios to their will.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are present, the PCs can provide advice, especially if they have sailed the Sea of Dread extensively, or if they have been to Kastelios. Should this be the case, the PCs could very well find themselves part of the diplomatic mission to Kastelios.

Nuwmont 21, AC 1016: A Nasty Surprise.

Location: City of Inun, Kingdom of Nithia. HW

Description: In the Senkhites' camp, the day's peace is broken by the sounds of battle. Hurriedly, the soldiers arm themselves and rush towards the fray, only to see a disheartening sight: Lake Menkor, whose shores lay only a few hundred feet from the Senkhites' positions, is dotted with large ships, each of which is filled with soldiers, the sun glinting off of their armors. Cries of dismay arise as fresh enemy troops begin to make beachheads, and as hundreds of soldiers rush towards the Nithian lines.

With a deep cheer, the beleaguered defenders of Inun join their newly-arrived companions, and within minutes the Senkhites begin to lose ground. Surveying the scene, one Nithian general orders several runners to take a message to Senkha herself. Steeling them with his gaze, he tells them, "Inform Her Imperial Majesty that we must retreat; Selhomarr is invading Nithia." (*See Nu. 2; Va. 2, Va. 7.*)

What This Means: Senkha's forces have finally identified the strange troops who invaded the Delta Kingdom last year, though they still do not know the reason for the invasion.

What the PCs Can Do: Selhomarian PCs have the opportunity to do a little bit of wargaming here, or they could perform covert operations against the Senkhites.

Fourth Week

Nuwmont 23, AC 1016: A New Enclave.

Location: City of Rafielton, Colony of Aengmor, Shadow Elves' Territories. OW

Description: An Enclave-like district is created in Rafielton to house the Alfheim exiles that recently got back from Wendar (mostly diplomats or mages involved in healing Canolbarth). Since this district is built on the ruins of the former elven quarter in east Alfheim Town, the place is quickly renamed East-Rafielton.

Princess Tanadaleyo sets strict regulations on the exiles: Alfheim elves are allowed to freely wander inside Rafielton during the day, but they must get back to East-Rafielton at night. Only those elves involved in healing Canolbarth can leave Rafielton, but they must be escorted by shadow elves. (*See Th. 11.*)

What This Means: This is yet another step toward the cohabitation of both elven races in Canolbarth. Unfortunately the strict regulations imposed on Alfheim elves, while consistent with Rafeil's verses, are likely to increase the tension between the two groups.

Nuwmont 23, AC 1016: Provisional Government.

Location: City of Titlapoca, Azcan Empire. HW

Description: The first organized resistance to the collapsing government comes from the north—Titlapoca. Otziltipac, governor of Titlapoca and highest placed adherent of the New Way, and his wife Malinalxoch who is the *ometochtzin* (head of all cults save Atzanteotl), who incidentally renounces the bloodthirsty ways of Atzanteotl and her family, including her brother, the late *Tlatoani* Azcotica, declare a new age, heralded by Quetzalcoatl's sacrifice. The sacrifices stop in Titlapoca. (*See Nu. 1, Nu. 6; Va. 12, Th. 10.*)

What the PCs Can Do: If they are advisors to Otziltipac, they may be asked to investigate on the reality of sacrifice before any declaration is made. Also, they may be in charge of investigating the power of the clergy of Atzanteotl, for Otziltipac is not willing to expose himself if the risk is too high.

Nuwmont 24, AC 1016: Heroes Wanted!

Location: Keep of Drax Tallen, Forest of Geffron, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: Coolhands finally comes up with an interesting idea that is immediately accepted by the highest officers of the elven army: she proposes to recruit new volunteers to go to the Septahenge among the most famous human and demihuman adventurers of the world. They magically send a message to Wendar City with the instructions to contact all the friendly governments of the Old World, searching for honorable and trusted heroes to accomplish a most difficult mission for Wendar. Those interested will have to come to Wendar City in a matter of weeks to be examined before revealing them the true goal of their quest. Great wealth and treasures await those brave enough to answer this call. (*See Nu. 6, Nu. 20; Va. 9, Sv. 8.*)

What This Means: This idea has been inspired to Coolhands by the Shadow Lord. Upset by the failure of the elves, he is growing ever more impatient to put his hands on the Black Staff and has decided to involve others in his project. For this reason he is now proposing the elves to call upon the "forces of goodness" of the Old World to accomplish their quest: a last desperate effort to achieve his ultimate goal.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are human or demihuman heroes, they will hear of the news and may offer their invaluable help to Wendar. High-level PCs are required for the difficulty of the adventure.

Nuwmont 25, AC 1016: Idris's Will.

Location: Idris Tower, Forest of Lothenar, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: The Shadow Lord is summoned to Idris Tower by the high priestess. She informs him that Idris is tired of his inaction and wants to see the elves' blood stain Drax Tallen's walls. For this reason, he must awaken his special troops and lay siege to Drax Tallen, and conquer it before spring comes. The Shadow Lord leaves for Aeleris Pits burning with rage. (*See Va. 7, Va. 15.*)

What This Means: Idris has sensed that something is not in order with the Shadow Lord and wants to annihilate the elves before anything could undo Her plans. The Shadow Lord obviously resents being constantly controlled by Idris this way and fears that She could possibly discover his secret plan and spoil it. For this reason he has decided to obey the orders, albeit slowing a bit the operations.

Nuwmont 25, AC 1016: Economic Reform.

Location: City of Aaslin, Kingdom of Notrion, NACE, Bellissaria. AS

Description: After discussing Notrion's economic troubles with his advisors and the NACE Council, Corydon has drawn up a plan of action and decrees that the kingdom must become more reliant upon itself. Gone are the days of the old empire; now, Notrion must adapt. With the demand for grain gone, Notrion must diversify its way of life. He suggests that farmers begin farming other types of crops such as fruits, vegetables, and even cotton, and also recommends the implementation of herding animals such as cattle, pigs, and sheep. (*See Nu. 10; Va. 7.*)

What This Means: After lengthy discussions with the council it has become apparent to Corydon that the NACE can provide little relief. The council lacks the authority to order acceptance of grain in other Bellissarian kingdoms, and it lacks the funds to subsidize the Notrion farmers. Corydon sees this as a travesty as Bellissaria has long held a reputation of being an agricultural giant, reputation that has come back to haunt Notrion.

The Notrion king has to take charge of the situation himself. With grain in such abundance, meals in Notrion consist mostly of grain derivatives. Corydon himself loathes the monotonous dinners that are put before him, so he can appreciate even minor additions such as fresh fruits. Corydon and his advisors feel that other crops will warrant other kingdoms to want them.

Nuwmont 25, AC 1016: Missing in Action.

Location: City of Shraek, Kingdom of Blackheart, Floating Continent of Alphatia. HW

Description: This day sees the arrival of the renowned hardball player, Risha, and her entourage. They are in town but a few hours before they begin inquiring about a group of adventurer types that may have been through the area within the last few months.

What This Means: Risha is in Shraek looking for her brother, Brodee. He and several adventurer buddies had traveled to Blackheart to make their fortunes and establish their names. However, Risha has not heard from her brother. Suspecting foul play, she has traveled to the dark kingdom to seek out her brother.

What the PCs Can Do: Risha may be a master on the hardball field, but she is out of her element in her search for Brodee in Blackheart. She may hire PCs to aid her in her search.

What has happened to Brodee is up to the individual DM. Given Blackheart's reputation, this could be linked to just about anything. Risha's profession as a champion hardball player could also come into play as her brother could be used to influence the outcome of an important game.

Nuwmont 26, AC 1016: A Gentleman's Wager.

Location: City of Blueside, Kingdom of Lagrius, NACE, Bellissaria. AS

Description: Amid the pomp of a socialite ball, several partygoers engage in a heated debate as to whose sailing yacht is the ablest vessel. Before spells are exchanged, onlookers intervene and offer a means to settle the matter: the

men will race their yachts to prove who has the best ship. To seal the deal, they settle on a wager of 20,000 crowns to be pooled together to go to the winner; with seven vessels committed to the race, whoever wins will receive a hefty sum. Two participants, Dreximar and Zeraxim, make an added wager with each other: each places their favorite concubine slave as an added prize. News of this side bet draws even further attention from the local social scene. (See Va. 9, Va. 19.)

What This Means: This is a fairly typical display of Alphatian gambling and pride. From the numerous side bets, the crowd favorite is the magist Dreximar and his sporty yacht, The Sundowner. Another owner, Zeraxim, is nonetheless confident in his own vessel The Mayko and has a fare share of supporters. The other participants have little chance of a win, it is merely the excitement of the whole race that gets them involved.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs adept at sailing may find employment with the crews of any of the participants. PCs may also find themselves hired to spy upon other participants to evaluate the performance of their ships and crews, or even to sabotage other sailing vessels.

Nuwmont 27, AC 1016: Meditor Attacked.

Location: City of Minrothad, Minrothad Guilds. OW

Description: During a public appearance in the city of Minrothad, ruling guild master Oran Meditor and his entourage are suddenly attacked by a swarming horde of giant insects. Though a panic erupts among the crowd, the creatures do not attack anyone except Meditor and his guard. Attempts to *dispel* the creatures are unsuccessful, and though they are easily destroyed, they greatly outnumber the guild master and his bodyguards. As if that was not enough, the very city itself seems to come to life to attack Meditor, as stone arms and spikes jut out of the ground to join the assault.

The guild master's life is just barely saved by the timely intervention of a group of adventurers who come to his aid. After they help him dispatch the insect-like creatures, they present him with the struggling form of a human wizard, Murl of Vlaardoen, who they claim is the man responsible for the assassination attempt. Meditor thanks the adventurers profusely, and rewards them. Meanwhile, he orders an immediate investigation into the latest attempt on his life. (See Ya. 18, Ya. 25.)

What This Means: Murl of Vlaardoen is an earth elementalist from Glantri, who has tried to kill Meditor in the past. This latest attempt found him *summoning* a horde from the Elemental Plane of Earth (see *Rules Cyclopedia* or *Mystara Monstrous Compendium*) while at the same time using his powers over earth and stone to assist the attempt. Unfortunately, a group of adventurers had infiltrated Guild Corser (which employed Murl) weeks prior to the assassination attempt, in order to find out the identity of the assassin. After a few days with Meditor's investigators, Murl will readily admit his culpability in the matter, as well as that of Hildric Vendor, head of Guild Corser. Vendor will deny his part, but the evidence against him is substantial, and he will be tried and executed according to Minrothaddan law.

What the PCs Can Do: This event corresponds to the adventure *In The Ruling Guild Master's Service* from Gazetteer 9: *The Minrothad Guilds*. If you have already run that adventure or otherwise exposed/removed Murl of Vlaardoen in your campaign, feel free to substitute another equally evil wizard assassin in his place.

Nuwmont 27, AC 1016: Caught!

Location: Dominion of Polakatsikes, Heldannic Territories, Meghala Kimata Plains. DV

Description: One of Mivosia's spies, while in a tavern, makes reference by accident to the names of several prominent Mivosian citizens in a conversation. This, and his poorly-concealed Mivosian dialect, tip off his fellow patrons that he is not all that he seems to be. He is grabbed by several patrons, while another goes out to summon a group of patrolling Heldannic Knights. Within minutes, the man is dragged to the offices of Wolfgang Stummel, Governor of Polakatsikes. After a brief interrogation session, the man is executed, and his body is disposed of quietly. *Herr* Stummel orders an investigation of the incident, and places his top soldiers on alert for other spies. (See Nu. 10; Va. 15, Va. 21.)

What This Means: The Mivosian spy in question was not careful enough about maintaining his cover, and he gave enough away that some men who were loyal to the new rulers of the city-state were able to catch him. The authorities in Polakatsikes will now be more alert for spies, and they now know of the city-state of Mivosia, as well as its location. More spies will be caught during the next few weeks.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are with the knights, they might be able to interrogate the prisoner, in which case they will learn what the knights did - that the man in question was a spy from Mivosia, which lies hundreds of miles to the northwest, along the Meghalo Fithi River.

Nuwmont 27, AC 1016: Don Claudio Disappears.

Location: Bosque de la Sombras, *Baronia de Saragón*. SC

Description: Don Claudio de Tolón, baronet of Montejo in Saragón, goes missing with his hunting party on the outskirts of Bosque de la Sombras. His retainers at Montejo immediately send out a search party. It does not return either.

What This Means: Bosque de la Sombras is quickly developing a deadly reputation. It has long held to be haunted, but no one really took its reputation seriously—it was just used as a tale to scare naughty children. But now, with the disappearance of Kalil, the Archdruid of the Savage Baronies, last month, and now Don Claudio, people are taking the old tales much more seriously. *Barón* Balthazar doubles his patrols along the forest's border and personally takes over the administrative responsibilities of the baronet of Montejo.

Nuwmont 28, AC 1016: Vertiloc Islands Secured.

Location: Vertiloc Islands. AS

Description: North Vertiloc and South Vertiloc are both secured by the NACE. Some dangerous animals and a few monsters are encountered in the hills, but they don't pose any serious threat to the trained troops. A military fort is to be built on each of them, but the council is also considering the possibility of allowing settlers in. (*See Nu. 3, Nu. 16; Va. 12, Va. 20.*)

Nuwmont 28, AC 1016: New Magical Precepts.

Location: City of Andaire, Kingdom of Jafilia, Floating Continent of Alphatia. HW

Description: With the advancement of Aspalinth's experiments, and the numerous reports on how magic works in the Hollow World and in Alphatia that were submitted to the council, Empress Eriadna decides to open the files to all aristocrats within Alphatia. She also announces a reform of the magic teaching system, with promising students spending one academic year in the outer world and becoming dependent on the *mnemonic minerals*. A first group of students is scheduled to begin this new training this very year. (*See Nu. 3, Nu. 4; Va. 16, Va. 25.*)

What This Means: This experimental training technique is designed to bypass the limitations imposed on spellcasting in the Hollow World, thus preventing the gradual utter destruction of the magic-based empire. A diplomat is immediately sent to the outer world by way of the Sundsvall Maelstrom to arrange for the availability of a school and of enough *mnemonic mineral potions* in extremely short notice—Empress Eriadna requests that the students begin their year at the usual date of Thaumont 15.

Topic of the Month: To Call an Alphatian by His/Her Name or How to Avoid Feeblemind When Addressing an Alphatian

Officially, their two-part empire is named Alphatian Empire and New Alphatian Confederate Empire, and the people of both are called Alphatians. But how are they REALLY called?

In the Hollow World, things are quite easy actually. The floating continent rests alone in the sky, and its inhabitants maintain the old traditions they were used to since coming to Mystara—and before. It is therefore generally simply referred to as “Alphatia” by both its inhabitants and the other peoples, though it is not uncommon to call the land “Floating Alphatia” or “Floating Continent of Alphatia,” too. The expression “Floating Alphatia” is particularly liked by the “Floating” Arians, who have lost their own floating epithet in the sinking, though many commoners fail to catch the irony. At the imperial court and at the council, all those terms are commonly used in addition to the standard “Alphatian Empire,” though opponents to Empress Eriadna’s policy of cooperation with the other nations of the Hollow World have been known to stress on the word “empire” indeed.

The inhabitants of the floating continent are universally known as “Alphatians,” and proudly announce themselves as such to anyone. Among themselves, however, the Alphatians tend to rather specify their place of origin, either a kingdom, or a city, or even a small town or estate. Aristocrats especially are known to add their family or personal estate to their name, in the same manner as the famous Haldemar of Haaken, while commoners, except for the rare very rich landowner, prefer a city or town name. Slaves of course do not use such pompous and artificial titles, and will introduce themselves as servitors of someone, if asked. A few sages of Alphatia claim that their empire should not be called “Alphatia,” but “Deltia,” and its inhabitants “Deltians,” as this is the fourth incarnation of the empire (pure Alphatians, Alphatians/Cypri, Mystaran Alphatians, Hollow World Alphatians); this theory is popular among some pure Alphatian aristocrats, who call themselves “Alphatians of Deltia” (“First Ones of the Fourth Empire”).

In the outer world, the situation is considerably more complex. The empire has lost its main continent, and with it a part of its soul. At any rate, those who remained continued to be called by outsiders “Alphatians”—except for Thothians—, and they like the word even more so now because it has taken a new dimension. As if they were the perpetuators of an ancient, evolved civilization that disappeared millennia ago, yet it was only years. Within the NACE, however, they generally refer to their nation or city of origin instead—but never to continents. The fashion of adding family or personal estate to one’s name, like in Alphatia, is also in good use among the aristocracy, especially in the oldest noble families of spellcasters who can trace their ancestry to the continent of Alphatia. Some aristocrats of Floating Ar, who learned about “Deltia,” proudly call themselves the last “Gammians.”

A new name also recently has made its apparition: “NACErs.” Actually, this is the spelling used by the military, who first introduced the acronym to refer indistinctly to any inhabitant of the confederate empire. However, Alphatian commoners, especially in Ionace, have turned this into something more to their taste, “Nacers.” This word, while not widely accepted, has spread throughout the Old World with yet another spelling, “Naycers,” thanks to Minrothaddan merchants who added this modified version to their patois.

Even more numerous are the ways to call the NACE itself. Non-Alphatians generally either call it “Alphatia” or “the Alphatian Empire;” people who are more knowledgeable about recent events in the region since the sinking may use either of these or “Alphatian Confederacy,” or “NACE,” including its spelling as “Nayce.” Only official documents, council members and a few rare individuals go with the long name, “New Alphatian Confederate Empire,” however grand it may sound. Military officers and some bureaucrats use “NACE,” with some commoners, especially in Ionace, going with the spelling “Nace.” Within the aristocracy, and even at the council, there are two main streams, one going with “Alphatian Confederacy” to highlight the political changes in the outer world Alphatia, while others stick with the old name of “Alphatian Empire,” maybe out of nostalgia. The Floating Arians are especially virulent in their defense of the empire, as are many nations of Bellissaria and the Isle of Dawn, while other nations who traditionally—Norwold—or recently—Esterhold—have had secessionist desires favor the notion of a confederacy. Never will an outer world Alphatian call the NACE “Alphatia,” though, as this is reserved for both the floating continent in the Hollow World and the sunken continent, and anyone misusing the word will be frowned upon—and possibly fried.

So now, how will YOU call them?

EVENTS: VATERMONT

First Week

Vatermont 1, AC 1016: Domain Borders Extended.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: With the approval of the senate, the emperor expands the size of many of the mainland domains. To provide land and income for a new Retebius Air Fleet, the size of the Duchy of Retebius is increased to cover the hill area of the imperial dominions to the west as far as the Trevanian River. Administration over the town of Hillfork is transferred to the Duchy of Thyatis. The remaining hill areas along the Trevanian River become part of the Duchy of Kerendas, while the borders of the County of Vyalia are extended north along the Kerenda River. Biazzan is elevated from the status of barony to that of county, and its size increased to cover the remaining northwestern imperial territories. Buhrohur is also elevated to the status of county, and has its border extended east along the Altan Tepes Mountains to the borders of Halathius. (*See Nu. 1; Va. 17, Th. 9.*)

What This Means: Eusebius knows that some of his recent policies are unpopular among the nobility. This is intended to mollify them, and keep them from uniting against him by favoring a few with new lands. Furthermore, the empire cannot afford to leave large stretches of its mainland underused. Along with the land grants, a new property tax is instituted throughout the empire in order to encourage people to make productive use of the land (the tax is levied on all land regardless of the income derived from it, prodding people to make efficient use of resources). This reorganization makes an additional change: from now on, there are no baronies or barons on the Thyatian mainland; baronies become exclusively colonial, overseas dominions.

What the PCs Can Do: Some of these areas are still dangerous wilderness in need of scouting and surveying. Also, there will be disputes over property lines that need mediation.

Vatermont 1, AC 1016: Elections Date Set.

Location: City of Skyfyr, Province of Blackrock, Republic of Esterhold, NACE. AS

Description: President Favian Vern of the Republic of Esterhold announces that the long-awaited elections, delayed by the rebel movement in Verdan, will finally be held on Flaumont 1, the first day of spring. (*See Fl. 1, Fl. 3.*)

What This Means: Favian Vern is convinced that the elections will undoubtedly solve all problems in Esterhold, by allowing everyone to voice their opinion instead of having a minority spread terror. Whether the rebel Jennite movement has no real popular support, as he believes, remains to be seen. Some of his advisors advise him against rushing things out but Vern is confident in the righteousness of democracy.

Vatermont 2, AC 1016: Menkara Surrounded.

Location: City of Menkara, Kingdom of Nithia. HW

Description: Selhomarian forces arrive just outside the Nithian city of Menkara. Swiftly, the advancing force encircles the city, dispatching those Nithian soldiers opposing it. As the main host settles in for a siege, residents of Menkara notice that other columns of Selhomarian troops head south and further west, chasing the remaining Senkhites out of the region.

A few hours later, an emissary from the Selhomarian camp approaches the city, under a flag of truce. He asks, in accented Nithian, to speak with the highest-ranking military officer. A few moments later, a middle-aged man pokes his head over the walls, and asks the emissary to state his business. The emissary requests, on behalf of the Selhomarian Army, the peaceful surrender of the garrison defending Menkara. He points out that the city is

completely surrounded, and that no ill-treatment will befall the city's inhabitants if the Selhomarrians are allowed to occupy the area. He also says that his empire is "serving the will of Xeron, by purging the fair empire of Nithia of the elements of chaos poisoning its being. It is in the service of the Light that we strive to restore the *pharaoh*, Ramose, to the throne of Nithia."

The emissary then says the city's defenders will have until the next sleep to comply. The Nithian officer says bluntly that his loyalty to Senkha will not permit him to submit to infidels. (*See Nu. 2, Nu. 21; Va. 7, Va. 23.*)

What This Means: Late last year, after Senkha usurped the Nithian throne, Selhomarrian spies sent a message back home, informing the emperor of local events, and warning of dire regional consequences if Senkha's chaotic influence were allowed to continue. After several weeks of discussion, the imperial court decided to send military forces to Nithia, in order to locate Ramose, and put him back on the throne, as well as defeat Senkha's military forces, as they would pose a threat to Ramose.

The initial expeditionary force, while highly motivated, lacked the manpower to do either of these tasks. Therefore, Emperor Tamaris ordered a second, larger force to sail for Nithia in late Eirmont of last year. That force arrived on Nuwmont 21, and has been responsible for the abrupt reversal of Senkha's military fortunes.

What the PCs Can Do: Again, this presents the PCs with opportunities to scout the city of Menkara, and possibly find a means of breaking through its defenses, which may cause the city to fall quickly.

Vatermont 2: The Heathfield Massacre.

Location: Hamlet of Heathfield, 15 miles north of Village of Wickerton, Kingdom of Bellayne. SC.

Description: A group of nomadic rakasta warriors enter the small northern village of Heathfield to barter for food and supplies. However, when the villagers refuse to trade with them and accuse them of stealing some of the village's livestock things turn nasty. The villagers and nomads attack each other with fury. The nomads are better armed and are better warriors however, and after the fray 17 villagers lie dead. The remaining villagers flee while the nomads loot the hamlet for the food and supplies they came for. The nomads then melt back into the forests north of Wyndham. (*See Fl. 17, Fl. 22.*)

What This Means: The expanding civilized areas of Bellayne have been impinging on the hunting grounds of the nomads who are slowly being pushed into the more inhospitable north. This is the most violent manifestation of the increasing nomadic frustration. It is not likely to be the last however.

Vatermont 3, AC 1016: Succession Debate.

Location: City of Glantri, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: Ralindi and Rejladan Virayana, in separate presentations, protest the appointment of Lan-Syn Virayana as Princess of Krondahar. Both claim the right to the throne, as the sons of the late Prince Jherek.

Despite protests by Princess Lan-Syn and her brother, Prince Urmahid Krinagar, the council votes in favor of reopening the issue. A formal vote is scheduled for three months hence, allowing all three sides an opportunity to gather supporters. In the interim, Lan-Syn will continue to rule as princess. (*See Nu. 1; Va. 16, Kl. 3.*)

What This Means: The issue of succession to the Krondahar throne has long been in question. With Jherek dead, and having confirmed no particular heir, his wives are pushing their sons to press their various claims to the throne.

Eager to break up the power monopoly long held by the union of the houses of Singhabad and Bramyra, the princes have voted in favor of reopening the succession. Over the next two months, all three factions will be approached by many nobles, eager to ingratiate themselves with the potential rulers, so that they may extend their own influence.

Vatermont 3, AC 1016: Human Rights.

Location: Town of Woodgate, Kingdom of Wendar. OW

Description: Representatives of the Human Rights Movement (a secret society in Wendar) meet to discuss their near future strategy. They want to force the Alfheimers out of Wendar and start planning an intimidation campaign to achieve this goal. (*See Nu. 13; Va. 21, Th. 27.*)

What This Means: The recent humanoid attacks from Denagoth have had many humans think that the Alfheimers have brought to Wendar far too many troubles: first the plague, then the magical fruits' disease, then the Alfheim Avengers' terrorism and now Denagoth's attacks. It is time to kick them out before they ruin the kingdom, and the movement is taking steps to insure it, whether the Alfheimers want it or not. Not surprisingly, many of its members are in fact Idris cultists who have been leading the others to these extreme measures.

Vatermont 3, AC 1016: Pflarr's Chosen Peoples.

Location: Royaume de Renardie. SC

Description: The not-yet-expelled Pflarr-worshipping lupins of Renardie learn that the gnolls of El Grande Carrascal also worship the Immortal Pflarr. This rumor is received with both suspicion and excitement, hope and disbelief. Nevertheless, the official clergy uses the opportunity to definitively ban Pflarr from the Renardois pantheon, and deport the few worshippers left to Nouvelle Renardie. (*See Ya. 16, Am. 17.*)

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs may be the ones who report the news to the Renardois. Either clergy may hire the PCs to find more about this disturbing rumor. Alternatively they may be hired by the authorities to track the last worshipers of Pflarr, and escort them out to Nouvelle Renardie.

Vatermont 4, AC 1016: A Handful of Problems.

Location: Town of Leenz, Principality of Aalban, Principalities of Glantri. OW.

Description: At home, Jaggar and his close advisors ponder over a means to replace his lost arm. Though his position as prince is secure, the lost limb still seriously curtails his spellcasting abilities. A military man, Jaggar cannot abide such a weakness in himself—especially since Dolores Hillsbury has revealed that she has no reluctance to use the weakness against him.

His friend Rolf von Graustein proposes that he create a magical new body for Jaggar and transfer his mind into it, using a procedure he perfected years ago. Jaggar declines, preferring to keep the body he was born with. He also refuses a suggestion of clerical aid put to him by another counselor, on the grounds of heresy. Try as they might, neither Jaggar nor his companions can come up with a viable option. (*See Nu. 3, Ya. 23.*)

Vatermont 4, AC 1016: Skarrad Clan Captured.

Location: City of Smaggeft, Kingdom of Rockhome. OW

Description: After months of siege warfare with the goblinoid army, the Skarrad clan stronghold is finally breached. Following a short battle between the two forces, the surviving members of the Skarrad clan are taken hostage. The city of Smaggeft is now completely under the control of the Rockhome invaders.

Skarrad Clan Lord Thrais Nordenshield is brought before the exiled Duric and Bifia, who demand she offer her allegiance to them. All the dwarven clans will be allowed to either join the new kingdom of Hurwarf or be enslaved by it. Their ally, the kobold Psa'gh, silently takes exception to the dwarves' claims of rulership.

Thrais mocks them, refusing to offer her allegiance, and claiming that no dwarf will join these two exiles in their insanity. Even their own clan of Hurwarf has distanced itself from their actions.

Angered by the clan lord's words, Bifia orders her to be executed in front of the rest of the Skarrad prisoners, to serve as an example to them; sentence to be carried out with the dawn. (*See Nu. 9; Va. 17, Th. 5.*)

What This Means: Thrais is absolutely correct : no Rockhome dwarf (save for the Kurald convicts) would possibly join with Duric and Bifia and their goblinoid forces. The two exiles, long having dreamed of a dwarven kingdom under

their rule, are too blinded by their anger and madness to realize this fact. They are also too deeply involved in their invasion to pull out now.

What the PCs Can Do: Word spreads of Thrais's scheduled execution quickly, but unless the PCs are present in or near Smaggeft, there won't be time to plan a rescue attempt. If present, however, PCs may undertake a daring rescue of the clan lord, and try to smuggle her out of the city and back to Rockhome lines.

Vatermont 4, AC 1016: A Ruined Relic Remodeled.

Location: City of Rardish, Kingdom of Randel, Floating Continent of Alphatia. HW

Description: Queen Junna announces that the "Old *Skyship* Works" are to be scrapped. Work crews are to dismantle the ruined scaffolding and transport rails that lead out to the continent's edge, to the Void. No one has decided what is to be built upon the site. (*See Va. 26, Fe. 13.*)

What This Means: This facility used to be used to build the domes that rest on the sea floor in Aquas. The facilities were grievously damaged by the sinking and had not been repaired when the Immortals rebuilt Alphatia. Without a real need, the facility's disrepair was not fixed. Even more so, the facility is an anachronism and confounds those citizens that are not aware of Alphatia's true history. Officially, the facilities have been explained as being *skyship* construction berths.

What the PCs Can Do: It is feasible that all manner of nasty creatures could be living amid the ruins. Though work ceased after the last dome was built, a few magical trinkets might be found. Curious PCs may just want to explore the ruins before they come down.

Vatermont 5, AC 1016: Hule Moves on Nagpuri.

Location: *Mumlyket* of Nagpuri, Kingdom of Sind. OW

Description: The Master's forces, having built up and suppressed most rebellions elsewhere, move on Nagpuri. Their aim is to put down the rebel forces that have amassed against them over the past few years, and to reestablish total Hulean control of Sind. (*See Va. 19, Th. 2.*)

What This Means: The Freedom Warriors of Sind, closely allied with the followers of Gareth, managed to score a few victories against Hulean oppressors last year. Notably, the *mumlyket* of Nagpuri was liberated, and has become their central base of operations. The Master's forces recognize this, and have gathered their forces to battle the resistance.

Vatermont 5, AC 1016: Kastelios Sends its Emissaries.

Location: City-State of Kastelios, Serpent Coast. DV

Description: After almost three weeks of frenzied preparation, four ships are prepared for the diplomatic mission to Brun. Supplies, trading goods, and gifts are loaded onboard, and the hopeful emissaries, plus an honor guard for each one, board this morning for what everyone present hopes will be a fruitful voyage. After an emotional speech by Xenthos Sarantakos, leader of the City Council, the ships leave with much fanfare, heading north. (*See Nu. 14; Va. 17, Th. 1.*)

What This Means: This is the culmination of three weeks of strenuous efforts to send out delegations as soon as possible. Maps obtained from Minrothaddan traders, and the *Mystaran Almanac*, were consulted to determine the best routes to these nations, but it is still a gamble. The Kastelians have never sailed far into the Sea of Dread before, and no one is sure if the large cargo vessels are sturdy enough to handle the voyage. This will be both an adventure and a trial at the same time.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are from the Old World, they could very well be asked to accompany the ships in order to assist in navigation, as well as helping the Kastelians pass through the perils of the Sea of Dread. They

could also find themselves giving the prospective diplomats a crash course in the languages of the Old World, too, since not all of them can speak them very well.

Vatermont 6, AC 1016: Dunadale Unrest Reaches Imperial Ears.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Asteriela Torion travels to Thyatis City for another meeting with Eusebius, to press her arguments for joining Helskir to the NACE. While she is there she makes an impassioned plea on behalf of the people of Dunadale and the hardships they are enduring. Eusebius dismisses this at first, believing that his sister is trying to manipulate him into accepting the NACE's proposal for both Helskir and Dunadale. He tells her he will think about it, and hopes she will go home. Asteriela Torion's stubbornness asserts itself, and she insists on staying until he makes up his mind. Eusebius promises a decision within a week. (*See Nu. 13, Nu. 19; Va. 13, Th. 11.*)

What This Means: Two strong-willed people, both determined to get their own way, are at odds here. It doesn't help that they are brother and sister: while they have affection for each other, their goals are at odds and each believes the other is acting blindly.

Vatermont 7, AC 1016: The Shadow Lord's Aide.

Location: Aeleris Pits, Forest of Geffron, Kingdom of Denagoth. OW

Description: After ten days of working in the Pits to raise an incredible army of undead using the corpses in that area, the Shadow Lord is finally ready to retaliate against the elves. However, during the last stages of the preparation, he is suddenly assaulted by a small group of lesser undead and a few vampires. After dispatching all of them using his magics and undead servants, the Shadow Lord tracks down the fleeing vampires arriving at their cave. Much to his surprise, he encounters a vampire elf, apparently the leader of the party who was sent against him. The two stare at each other for seemingly endless moments, each one trying to force down the other's will, then the vampire falls to his knees lowering his head. Surprisingly enough, the Shadow Lord does not kill him, rather he proposes the old undead to become his right hand and lead the undead troops that will retake Drax Tallen. The vampire elf, Sylarion, accepts the proposal. (*See Nu. 25; Va. 15, Th. 2.*)

What This Means: The Shadow Lord would gladly have killed Sylarion, who is responsible for many disorders in the area, but once he had subjugated him to his will, he thought about a different choice. He has more pressing matters elsewhere (the Black Staff's retrieval) and doesn't want to be blamed for the possible defeats his troops may meet at the hands of the elves. So he has chosen a perfect scapegoat, another undead who will obey his orders and lead the army in his absence, a victim who can be sacrificed should things start to go bad.

Obviously Sylarion has no intentions of playing the part of the loyal henchman, and as soon as the Shadow Lord loosens his grip on him, he will take advantage of the situation to use the army for his own schemes.

Vatermont 7, AC 1016: The Biggest Dungeon.

Location: Confederate Capital of Ionace, NACE. AS

Description: An entrepreneur from Ierendi, Chakal, proposes to turn the underworld of Ionace into a tourist and adventurer resort. Reasoning that Safari Island on Ierendi is a popular attraction, but lacks in the thrill and challenge to real adventurers, he has the idea to transform the place so that adventurers can bash monsters in the biggest dungeon of the world, for real. Quite surprisingly, the NACE Council agrees. Chakal and his men first have to clear and secure a perimeter around the capital in order to gain their franchise. (*See Fl. 17.*)

What This Means: The council is getting more and more annoyed by the monster raids on Sanctity, Ionace, the mnemonic mineral mines and other facilities and people. Despite Commander Broderick's best efforts, his troops have been unable to end the threat as they are ill-suited to pursuing dangerous monsters underground. Broderick hopes that Chakal's party, and later the adventurers that the dungeon will attract, will do a fine job at it, at no expense to the confederacy.

What the PCs Can Do: Chakal is looking for adventurers to help him clean, secure, and hold the first levels situated below the capital.

When the dungeon is open for life-size adventure, PCs can of course apply for some monster bashing. It is possible to get clerical healing or raising if the PC gets out of the dungeon; it is also possible to have magical items identified, and maybe sold or bought. Everything found while in the dungeon belongs to the PCs, and is tax-free, though a few items must be sold to an Alphatian official for a set amount (only *mnemonic minerals* currently fall into that category).

Vatermont 7, AC 1016: Construction Plans Established.

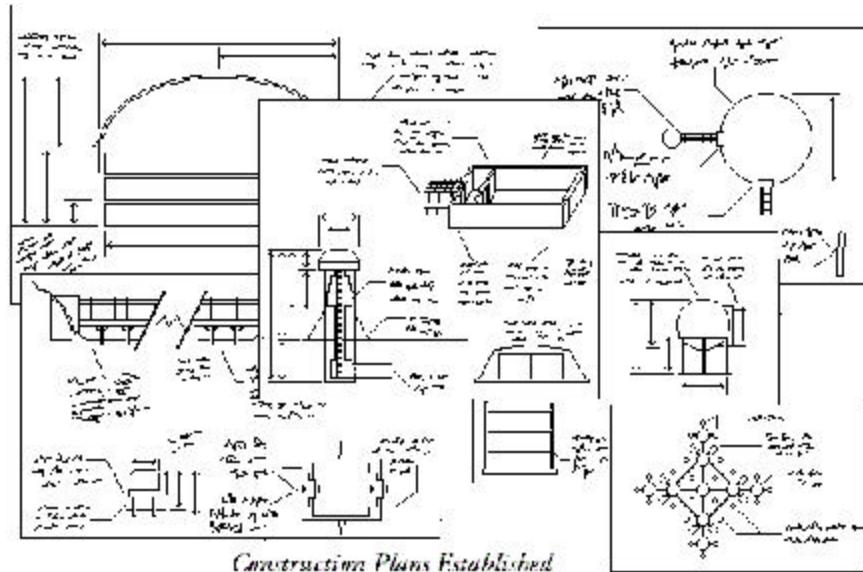
Location: Aquas Dome, Sea-Kingdom of Aquas, NACE. AS

Description: After several meetings, Aquas's mages finalize their plans for the new undersea settlement. Unlike the domes of Aquas, this new settlement will be composed of numerous smaller domes, connected via enclosed walkways. The first of these domes are to be constructed in Aaslin, Notrion, as a means to boost that kingdom's struggling economy. While these domes are being worked upon, another construction crew will begin preparing the seabed. The domes will then be ferried out to the site and lowered to the seabed. (*See Nu. 20, Nu. 25; Va. 18, Ya. 17.*)

What This Means: Not since before the sinking has an undersea dome been constructed. Though many of the Aquas mages are familiar with the principles of dome construction, they have run into problems that require addressing. Pre-war domes had been enchanted in Rardish, Randel. Obviously a new site is needed; they choose Notrion due to its economic problems.

The planners have also opted for several small domes instead of one large dome. This is due to the costs of a large dome (notably high enchantment failure, and the logistics involved) and the military role of the settlement: smaller domes would be cheaper to manufacture and easier to transport to the site. The configuration of the domes would allow a great deal of compartmentalization, as well as allowing for future expansions.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs may find themselves hired by mages to act as armed escort, while spellcasting PCs may become involved in the actual construction. Non-Alphatian PCs may be hired by their respective governments to spy upon what the NACE is up to, or even to hamper the construction effort.



Vatermont 7, AC 1016: Menkara Falls.

Location: City of Menkara, Kingdom of Nithia. HW

Description: After more than four days of heavy fighting along Menkara's walls, the Selhomarrian invaders manage to clear one section of the outer wall of its defenders, allowing others to scale the walls and take up defensive positions. With this achieved, the remaining troops pour into the city. As the minutes pass, the Selhomarrians manage to fight their way down to the street level, and from there they fan out into the city, quickly securing important buildings and towers. Although the Senkhites fight savagely, they cannot hold off the invaders; their strategic position has been lost.

Within hours, the last of the uninjured Senkhites surrenders to the Selhomarrians, and a provisional government, composed of Selhomarrian officers and Nithian priests of Horon, Pflarr, and Rathanos, is established. (*See Nu. 21, Va. 2; Va. 23, Th. 1.*)

What This Means: Menkara is now occupied by the Selhomarrians. With its fall, the advancing Selhomarrian army now has a strategic port city which they can use, as well as a place that they could use defensively, should the need arise. Also, Menkara's loss will affect the morale of many Nithian soldiers currently serving Senkha. The Selhomarrians are hoping that news of this victory will lead to desertions, and otherwise make their mission of finding Ramose and liberating Nithia all that much easier.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are marching with the Selhomarrians, the PCs could be involved in hunting down the last pockets of resistance, both within and outside Menkara. They could also help out in locating priests of Pflarr, Horon, and Rathanos, so that a provisional government can be formed.

Second Week

Vatermont 8, AC 1016: A Dream.

Location: City of the Stars, Shadow Elves' Territories. OW

Description: Radiant Shaman Porphyriel dreams again of her patron Immortal Rafiel. In the dream Rafiel instructs the shaman to build a special niche inside the *Chamber of the Spheres* and put there the most powerful *soul crystal* she has at hand. (*See Nu. 3; Fl. 28.*)

What This Means: This is yet a new feature of the *Chamber of the Spheres*, unknown to anybody but Rafiel.

Vatermont 9, AC 1016: Take Two.

Location: City of Wendar, Kingdom of Wendar. OW

Description: After one week of auditions and tests to determine the worthiness and power of the adventurers who answered to the elves' call, a selected group of mixed human and demihuman heroes is finally assigned the quest to enter the Seven Realms and bring back the Black Staff, the ultimate weapon to destroy the Shadow Lord and his minions. Among the heroes are the survivors of the first expedition, who explain them everything needed for the task. The group is immediately *teleported* to the Septahenge to begin their mission. (*See Nu. 20, Nu. 24; Sv. 8.*)

What This Means: This is the last hope left to the elven crusaders and everybody knows it. The heroes have been chosen for their bravery, resourcefulness and trustworthiness, and they know that the fate of an entire country lies in their hands. If they fail the consequences for the crusaders and even for Wendar could be disastrous.

What they do not know is that a wolf in sheep's clothes hides among them. The Shadow Lord has in fact killed one of the chosen candidates, a loner wizard named Levan Tormaq, and disguised himself to look like him. He has one of the keys needed to open the gate of the Pits and hopes to get the other six as well by manipulating the party. He will be very careful, especially taking precautions not to be magically uncovered.

What the PCs Can Do: Join the battle against the Shadow Lord, fighting at his side without knowing it!

This mission begins where the last expedition left, so there are now six realms to explore, chosen at random by the DM from those described in M3. Remember that the heroes do not know the Shadow Lord has acquired one of the keys, so they should be looking for all six missing ones.

Vatermont 9, AC 1016: Wreckage Amid the Waves.

Location: Lake Lagrius, NACE, Bellissaria. AS

Description: The private racing yacht, The Sundowner, comes across the wreckage of a watercraft. As the crew ponders the matter, the lookout offers the cry that he has spotted something ahead. Moving in, they discover a battered skiff holding two battered and exhausted people.

The crew brings the two fellows aboard and tends to their wounds. Weak and suffering from exposure, the two survivors mumble about being apprentices of the mage Tarkoman. The stating of the infamous mage's name gives cause for the yacht's skipper to summon the ship's owner, Dreximar, from his private chambers. When asked about their master, they report that he is dead. As they begin to explain what had transpired, each survivor is overcome by intense pain, so intense that the ship echoes with the screams of the two men. On orders from Dreximar, the yacht's skipper sets a course for their home port of Blueside. (*See Nu. 26; Va. 19, Va. 21.*)

What This Means: Tarkoman is a mage of ill repute. Native of Arogansa, his attitude did not suit the clime of his adopted home of Blueside, Lagrius. Though he has long been suspected of being involved in all manners of criminal acts, no one had ever managed to prove it. That he has met his end is in itself big news. Dreximar assumes that one of the old mage's enemies finally caught up with him. However, the disreputable mage owes him a substantial amount of money thanks to a recent loan; with him dead, Dreximar will have to claim the collateral the mage put up. Even with this, he will lose money and pride, unless Tarkoman's estate holds a number of profitable enchanted items.

The pain the survivors are experiencing is a mystery for the yacht owner. What is causing them such pain is not a priority to him, anyway, his greatest concern is to make a hasty return to Blueside and lay claim to Tarkoman's holdings. As far as he knows Tarkoman has no relatives, but he is not willing to take the chance of one surfacing—and then there is always the chance that some adventurers will hear of the mage's death and pillage the estate before he can lay claim to it.

Vatermont 10, AC 1016: Warbird over Polakatsikes.

Location: Dominion of Polakatsikes, Heldannic Territories, Meghala Kimata Plains. DV

Description: Today's calm is shattered today when many locals notice a large, shadowy form flying high in the sky. Fearing it may be a great monster, many flee for the safety of their homes, leaving only the bravest citizens, and the patrolling Heldannic Knights, out on the streets. The shape slowly grows larger as it approaches, and then it slowly loses altitude, but it does so vertically, and not in the graceful arcs of a hawk. It appears to be a great bird, and many Polakatsikans still in the streets marvel at what they think is a fabled roc. Minutes pass, and the shape soon resolves itself into a flying ship, made to look like a bird! Their eyes fixed on the craft in awe, the townspeople watch the Heldannic *warbird* slowly float over the city-state, and then settle down gently in the now-vacated market square. Wolfgang Stummel, governor of Polakatsikes, approaches the *warbird* and waits patiently for the crew to disembark, with Trimos Sortiropolis, leader of the town council, not far behind.

The gangplank lowers, and 50 smartly-dressed Heldannic Knights disembark, each giving Wolfgang a salute before forming up next to the *warbird*. Once the knights have assembled, and the *warbird* takes off, Wolfgang gives a brief speech, welcoming the knights to Polakatsikes, and telling them what is expected of them for their tour of duty. He also introduces them to Trimos, who, he tells them, is to be their chief liaison for matters relating to the citizenry. Once his speech is over, Wolfgang dismisses the newcomers to their barracks. (*See Th. 4, Ya. 3.*)

What This Means: Heinz Kronenburg, Castellan of Vanya's Rest, has decided to bolster the knights' presence in Polakatsikes, bringing the total troop strength to 175. Almost half of the 200 knights who set out in AC 1015 to conquer this town died during the crusade. The appearance of the *warbird* was also calculated as a show of strength to the townspeople, which, in addition to the reinforcements, Kronenburg hopes will dissuade the Polakatsikans from

thinking about overthrowing their new masters. He also hopes that this display of power might encourage some of the locals to convert to Heldannic ways.

What the PCs Can Do: This event could be used as a way of getting the PCs involved in the Davanian exploits of the knights, by having them be present on the *warbird* as it lands in Polakatsikes.

Vatermont 12, AC 1016: Mesonian Millworks Opens.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: The “Mesonian Millworks” are a series of water mills that power textile looms. They were built over the last year along the Mesonian River inside the walls of Thyatis City. These millworks are unusual in that their textile looms use a series of punched “cards” to partially automate the process, decreasing the amount of hand labor required. (*See Nu. 1; Th. 21, Kl. 1.*)

What This Means: The Thyatian economy is beginning to recover from the devastating effects of recent disasters. Ironically, the loss of a large number of people has led to some beneficial side effects: unemployment is at an all time low, while innovation (due to labor shortages and the raised cost of slaves) is at an all time high. These new millworks are one example of the Thyatian efficiency expressing itself. The millworks are able to produce a large quantity of decent quality textiles at a lower cost. Much of this will be processed into cloth, dyed, and sold to inhabitants of the city and throughout the Thyatian mainland, but some will be exported to Thyatian colonies and beyond. The Thyatian recovery efforts are a further spur to the economy, boosting incomes of workers as competition for scarcer and more expensive labor increases.

Vatermont 12, AC 1016: Grey Islands Secured.

Location: Grey Islands. AS

Description: The NACE takes control of the cluster of islands known as the Grey Islands. One of them holds a small pirate base that is quickly overrun, while another one seems to have been recently abandoned, possibly by yet more pirates who spotted the Alphantian ships’ approach. (*See Nu. 26, Nu. 28; Va. 20, Th. 1.*)

Vatermont 12, AC 1016: Monster Surge.

Location: Azcan Empire. HW

Description: Throughout the land, new monsters pop up and attack Azcans, especially the Follower of the New Way. Many of those monsters are extraplanar beasts and demons never seen before, though the flying serpents also regain in viciousness.

At the same time, Papalotl appears to many followers of Quetzalcoatl in one of his powerful mortal form of his previous (mortal) identity, prompting them to fight off the followers of the evil twin and his demonic minions, and spread the word of the Return of Quetzalcoatl. Fortunately, the dangerous flying serpents are becoming rarer thanks to the advances of the feathered serpents that kill them, and the other planar beasts, mercilessly. (*See Nu. 6, Nu. 23; Th. 10, Ya. 19.*)

What This Means: Atzanteotl, infuriated, opened gates and unleashing extraplanar monsters and other demons to attack members and leaders of the New Way, as “punishment” for not appeasing Him with human sacrifice [*as alluded to on page 55 of HWR1. Ed.J.*] Atruatzin retaliates to defend His followers.

What the PCs Can Do: It is very dangerous to travel the Azcan lands for followers of the New Way trying to spread the news of Quetzalcoatl’s return. PCs can be attacked by unusual monsters on their conversion or courier missions, though if they are in real difficulty a feathered serpent may come to their rescue when they seem doomed.

Vatermont 13, 1016: Eusebius’s New Imperial Policy.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Demetius Vannopolus arrives several days after Asteriela, and relates much of the same story to Eusebius, but using more analytical language. Eusebius also respects the word of a soldier more than that of his “emotional” sister. He quickly reaches a monumental decision: he will accept his sister’s proposal. Furthermore, he will give her even more than she is asking for, and makes a counter-proposal to her.

Helskir and Dunadale are to be joined into one realm, a confederacy ruled by Asteriela and Zaar as part of the Thyatian Empire. Furthermore, he announces that if the NACE will permit a Thyatian-ruled domain to join the Alphatian confederacy, he will permit it. However, he pushes for a new formal relationship: Heldun will pay some imperial taxes (notably trade tariffs and other cash taxes), all citizens of Heldun will be citizens of Thyatis, and except for a limited defense and policing force Heldun will have no army of its own. Instead the Heldun army will be integrated into the Thyatian army. Heldun will follow Thyatian foreign policy unless it conflicts directly with the NACE’s policy, in which case Heldun will be a neutral site and common meeting ground.

Furthermore, he gains Asteriela’s acceptance to another proposal: Ostlanders will be free to settle within the Confederacy of Heldun, and retain local village autonomy, similar to the decentralized traditions already common to Dunadale.

After Asteriela has accepted the principle of it, he sends her and an accomplished Thyatian diplomatic envoy, Vivianna Romanones, to Ionace to work out the details of a treaty. A small but skilled force is sent back to Dunadale under the command of Vannopolus with instructions to deal with Tiberia. (*See Nu. 19, Va. 6; Th. 11, Th. 14.*)

What This Means: Eusebius realized that if he didn’t start solving these problems they could quickly get out of hand, and the very thing he wanted so much to avoid—the collapse of Thyatian power on the Isle of Dawn—could just occur. Once he reached that conclusion, he acted decisively and creatively.

This represents a new beginning not only for Helskir and Dunadale, but also initiates a new kind of relationship between Thyatis and its colonies. Eusebius is trying to strike a balance between imperial control and local autonomy, hoping that it will be attractive not only in Dunadale but other parts of the empire’s far-flung possessions as well. He also hopes to pressure Westrourke into a similar arrangement—though without membership with the NACE. Furthermore, this will give the Ostlanders much of what they are demanding at little or no cost to the empire. Ostlanders will also be allowed to settle in other Thyatian colonies on the Isle of Dawn, but only within Heldun will their settlements actually have the status of a “distinct society.”

For Asteriela, this is somewhat more than she expected, and she is surprised but happy as well. She gets an expanded realm, and feels she will be able to mold it internally as she likes. She’s not too upset over the provisions Eusebius asked for in return, and believes that Ostlander settlers will only strengthen her kingdom, which is underpopulated as it is.

Vatermont 13, AC 1016: Night Howls.

Location: Village of Les Hiboux, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: In the light of the full moon, a vicious pack of wolves comes howling out of the hills near Les Hiboux. The local militia is roused to fight them off, but vainly, as many of the raiders turn out to be werewolves, and are unharmed by the normal weapons of the village guard. By the time reinforcements and silvered weapons can be brought to bear, the pack has left, and left the village in terrible condition.

Instances such as this will continue to rise over the next few weeks, and much finger pointing is put towards the northwestern region, and particularly the Principality of Morlay-Malinbois. (*See Nu. 1; Th. 17, Fl. 20.*)

What This Means: This is a response by Synn to recent political attacks on her. She has acquired the services of members of *Les Loups de la Guerre* (War Wolves)—werewolf fanatics who believe lycanthropes should replace everyone else as the dominant species. This group is conducting guerrilla raids on small, poorly defended farming communities in the free territories of Glantri. Synn is using this easily manipulated group of militants to rouse anti-werewolf sentiments against Malachie du Marais.

It is working, too. Though the existence of lycanthropes in the northern hills of Glantri has been long established, rumors of a community of the creatures living in Morlay-Malinbois weren't regarded too seriously. Looking for someone to blame, the rumors will begin to resurface, and it may not be long before superstitious mobs begin roaming in that principality searching for werewolves to attack.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs, if human, can either aid angry mobs in their attacks on innocent werewolves in Morlay-Malinbois, or attempt to search for the real killers. If were-creatures themselves, the PCs can attempt to find the culprits and bring them to justice before du Marais and the Council of Princes. Alternatively, Les Loups de la Guerre may enlist the PCs themselves, to hunt down these militant rogues who threaten to draw attention to their plans of world domination.

Vatermont 14, AC 1016: Corpse Stolen.

Location: City of Rafielton, Colony of Aengmor, Shadow Elves' Territories. OW

Description: During the night a special team of shadowelf troops crawls out of one of the many caves that link Aengmor with the City of the Stars, quietly disinters the corpse of the late General Gilfronden, and heads back underground.

Nobody in Rafielton notices the odd theft. (*See Nu. 7; Fe. 10.*)

What This Means: King Telemon has chosen Gilfronden to be the new spymaster of the soon-to-be-rebuilt Second Shadow. Hence he ordered a trusted group of experienced soldiers to secretly retrieve Gilfronden's corpse from Aengmor, without even letting his daughter Tanadaleyo, Princess of Aengmor, know about it.

The body of Gilfronden is to be brought to the City of the Stars, where it will be raised by the shamans.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs may be that group of soldiers charged with retrieving the body.

Vatermont 14, AC 1016: Elven Destiny.

Location: Barony of Ironwood, Final Range. NW

Description: After years of studying elven lore and legends at the Tree of Magic Elarianthas Blackblade reaches the conclusion that the elves are destined to be united again someday, under the protection of a new forest spirit and under the benevolent eyes of the elven pantheon. His researches do not tell when this will happen, but the elven baron hopes his own efforts in Ironwood prove to be a step in the fulfillment of the elves' destiny. (*See Th. 22, Fe. 26.*)

Third Week

Vatermont 15, AC 1016: Deadly Encounters.

Location: Keep of Drax Tallen, Forest of Geffron, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: The crusaders stationed around Drax Tallen report more frequent sightings of—and skirmishes with—packs of lesser undead. Most of the animated corpses are elves (mostly Geffronell elves) and they attack the crusaders randomly, without a planned strategy or during a specific period of the day. The crusaders, albeit a bit shaken, are able to repel these wandering monsters without problem. The generals do not consider them a major threat and do not order any significant countermeasure be taken. (*See Nu. 25, Va. 7; Th. 2, Th. 5.*)

What This Means: Sylarion, the vampire elf who now controls the Shadow Army in charge of retaking Drax Tallen, is probing the defenses prepared by the elves, toying a bit with their nerves. The Shadow Lord has ordered him to conquer the keep and take as many prisoners as he can, but without haste. For this reason he will delay the first big attack until he is sure enough to know how to bypass the elves' guards and hit them where it hurts.

What the PCs Can Do: Help the crusaders fight off all the zombies, skeletons and wyrds they encounter near Drax Tallen.

Vatermont 15, AC 1016: Mivosia Prepares for Conflict.

Location: City-State of Mivosia, Meghala Kimata Plains. DV

Description: In a secret meeting, the ruling Triumvirate of Mivosia discusses recent events concerning its attempts to spy on Polakatsikes. They have not heard from one of their spies for over two weeks, and rumors are already circulating among the elite that they have all been captured. The triumvirate realizes that, if they wish to hold off despair and unrest, they cannot allow news of this to reach anyone else. They decide to issue orders to the army to prepare for combat, and to improve Mivosia's defensive position by building more fortifications and other defenses. They confirm that the knights do indeed pose a threat to their interests, and resolve to drive them out of Davania. (*See Nu. 10, Nu. 27; Va. 21, Fl. 9.*)

What This Means: Mivosia's rulers realize that they can only gain so much from espionage. They have already lost one spy, and the status of the others is unknown. Preliminary reports have indicated to them that there are no more than 150 knights in Polakatsikes, and they are too busy consolidating their hold on the city-state to bother with expansion. They also know that the knights beat Polakatsikes's defenders when the odds were against them, hence the caution.

Vatermont 16, AC 1016: Dark Meetings.

Location: Town of Braastar, Principality of Krondahar, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: In a seedy tavern in Braastar, Princess Dolores Hillsbury and Aleah Virayana meet covertly. Dolores offers her support to Ralindi, Aleah's son, and the elder Virayana. In exchange, Aleah will use her influence over Ralindi on behalf of Dolores and her allies. Aleah gives her agreement, and the two part ways. (*See Nu. 1, Va. 3; Kl. 3.*)

What This Means: More dark dealings in politics on behalf of Dolores Hillsbury, a.k.a. Synn the night dragon. She sees a potential ally in the volatile Aleah (who will rule the Principality of Krondahar through her puppet of a son). The House of Singhabad has always been at odds with Prince Jaggar and his allies, and could be beneficial to Dolores's causes.

Vatermont 16, AC 1016: Alphatian Magical Training School Created.

Location: Grey Islands, NACE. AS

Description: The NACE Council approves a request made by Empress Eriadna and the Council of Alphatia, which consists in opening a new school of magic in the outer world where Alphatian students from the Hollow World may study and become magic users. (*See Nu. 4, Nu. 28; Va. 25, Th. 15.*)

What This Means: Since the arrival of Alphatia in the Hollow World, a preoccupation of the council, the Thousand Wizards, was the alarming depletion in number of spellcasters upon which the Alphatian society is based. Promising youths, despite the best efforts of their teachers, failed to learn to master the power of magic, even that granted by the Immortals. Researches and the newly-discovered effects of *mnemonic minerals* led to the conclusion that sending promising youths to the outer worlds may increase their chances of wielding magic.

The site for the school was selected for its proximity to the Sundsvall Maelstrom, from where the student and faculty will arrive, and on an island close yet separate from Ionace where the *mnemonic minerals* are mined and goods shipped from.

Vatermont 16, AC 1016: Beholders Vanish.

Location: North of Sea-Kingdom of Underocean. AS

Description: The forces assigned to watch over the aquatic beholders' exodus north report that they have vanished without a trace. It is believed that they entered an unknown underwater cavern system. Initial explorations show that the caverns in the area are too large to adequately explore. (*See Nu. 12, Nu. 20; Th. 8, Fl. 1.*)

What This Means: The aquatic beholder city that the tritons have previously encountered was a mere outpost of a greater realm. It is to this realm the other beholders have traveled.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs could discover the departure of the beholders or be sent to investigate further.

Vatermont 17, AC 1016: Kural Taken.

Location: Town of Kural, Kingdom of Rockhome. OW

Description: The town of Kural finally falls before the combined might of the goblinoid forces. Thar valiantly leads his army into the captured town, proclaiming its new name as Tharia, capitol of his orcish kingdom of the same name. He immediately sets about refortifying the town, and locks away those dwarves that did not manage to escape when the walls fell. (*See Nu. 9, Va. 4; Th. 5, Th. 9.*)

What This Means: Thar brought in some giantish allies to bombard the town with boulders, as well as a few pieces of artillery from Smaggeft. With their aid, he was eventually able to crumble the town's defenses and stage a proper assault. When the outer wall fell, the dwarven defenders fell back into the interior wall (formerly used for holding prisoners, though most were freed during last year's assault). Another long siege ensued, but the dwarves were overmatched and could not hold out forever.

Though Duric and Bifia, Thar, and Psa'gh are all theoretically allies, all have their own agendas in the Rockhome campaign. Thar is canny enough to realize this, and is taking precautions against them: he is fortifying the town as much against dwarven attacks as for assaults by his own allies.

Vatermont 17, AC 1016: Vyalian Forestation Project.

Location: Town of Greenheight, County of Vyalia, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: In the border expansion, the Count of Vyalia was granted extensive new territories along the Kerenda River and adjacent to Karameikos. This land consists almost entirely of hills, lightly forested at best. The elves of Vyalia prefer more heavily wooded areas, and begin a project of extending their forest north into the hills, using lavish applications of *plant growth* and *weather control* magics with the help of their kin. Some former Alfheim elves come to help with this project. (*See Va. 1.*)

What This Means: Over time this will alter the terrain and enlarge the forest, but this project will take years to complete even with the use of magic. The long-lived elves are patient, however.

What the PCs Can Do: Powerful mages and druids can assist in these efforts, perhaps finding creative ways to speed it up.

Vatermont 17, AC 1016: Storm on the Seas!

Location: Sea of Dread. OW

Description: After many days of good sailing, the Kastelian diplomatic mission encounters a terrible storm, not far from the Thanegioth Archipelago. After hours of fighting the waves and the winds, the four ships manage to make it through, though not after suffering damage. Fortunately, they have managed to keep their course, and are able to continue the journey while conducting small repairs. (*See Nu. 14, Va. 5; Th. 1, Th. 4.*)

What This Means: The storm was a natural occurrence for this region of the Sea of Dread; the Kastelians just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are present, the PCs could find themselves helping to steer the ships through the storm, and repairing them afterwards.

Vatermont 17, AC 1016: In the Name of Karaash.

Location: Black Bellies Camp, Badlands. SC

Description: Birkko Three-Eyes, shaman of Karaash from the Black Bellies goblins, charms the tribal chief and has him proclaim an alliance with the Flat Noses. The Flat Noses' emissary becomes advisor to the tribe leader, with Birkko's approval. The allied Flat Noses and Black Bellies start bullying the lesser goblin tribes into a single horde. The goblins also intensify their raids into the *Baronia del Grande Carrascal*. (*See Nu. 9; Th. 21, Fl. 4.*)

What This Means: Annoyed that the whole Pflarr-worshipping of the nearby gnolls has gone too far, Karaash has decided to put a stop to the Hutaakans' influence over his worshippers. His goal is not so much to destroy the human baronies but the gnollish one, though if the militant gnolls later join the forming horde to bring death to the human lands—or maybe to Hule—then so much the better.

Vatermont 18, AC 1016: Construction Crews Depart.

Location: Aquas Dome, Sea-Kingdom of Aquas, NACE. AS

Description: Amid great fanfare the personnel partaking in the construction of the new domed settlement board their *submersibles*. Of the twenty *submersibles*, five set a southerly course for Aaslin. The other fifteen set a westerly course for sunken Arogansa out in the New Alphatian Sea. (*See Nu. 20, Va. 7; Ya. 17, Ya. 22.*)

Vatermont 19, AC 1016: A New Threat.

Location: Skies over City of Jaibul, *Mumlyket* of Jaibul. OW

Description: The flying city of Serraine makes an appearance in the skies over Jaibul. The Master has commissioned the Grey Front, who controls the city, to assist him in his endeavors to bring Sind back to heel. The Master has been an ally of the nagpa Abatu since the Great War. The city will serve as a mobile base from which he can assault his enemies. Their first target is the *mumlyket* of Jhengal, which has been actively rebelling against the Master's forces. (*See Va. 5; Am. 3, Am. 12.*)

What This Means: The Master has redoubled his efforts to crush Sind, and is bringing in more forces with which to do so. The staging area of the flying city will provide him with overwhelming assistance against the land-bound forces of the Sindhi resistance.

What the PCs Can Do: If they can somehow manage to get aboard the flying city, they will certainly run across the gnomish resistance forces that have been hiding out in Undercity since Serraine was taken over. They can then join in terrorist actions against the nagpa and their servitors aboard the city.

Vatermont 19, AC 1016: The Sundowner Returns.

Location: City of Blueside, Kingdom of Lagrius, NACE, Bellissaria. AS

Description: The yacht Sundowner arrives at Blueside. The owner, Dreximar, sends a messenger to inform Queen Elenitsa of the discovery and his need of an audience. Dreximar has the two survivors taken to his estate and cared for. While this is being done, Dreximar places several of his crew as guards at Tarkoman's estate.

The messenger returns stating that the queen will see him immediately. Dreximar goes to the palace and relates the story of the discovery, going into detail about Tarkoman's intent to establish a zzonga trade. He also relates the loan arrangement and requests official recognition of his claim to, and his taking possession of, the late mage's estate, which is granted. As the papers are written up, Queen Elenitsa offers to take the two afflicted apprentices into her care. Dreximar agrees and departs to make the arrangements. (*See Nu. 26, Va. 9; Va. 21, Va. 24.*)

What This Means: During the journey to Blueside, Dreximar has re-questioned the survivors. His motivation is to discover what riches Tarkoman may have secreted within his estate. Unconcerned with their agony, he pressed the questioning. In addition to some details on their master's work, the survivors also told of Tarkoman's plans to restart a zzonga trade in the Notrion wilderness regions. Before the two survivors could divulge any further information, they succumbed to the intense pains and once again lapsed into unconsciousness.

With an idea of some of Tarkoman's wealth and traps, Dreximar had what he wanted. He decided to go straight to the queen to announce the death of Tarkoman and lay claim to the holdings. Normally such a death would have to be confirmed, but given Dreximar's popularity and the report that Tarkoman was going to produce zzonga, the matter is quickly approved.

Queen Elenitsa and her advisor, Siaron Lagrius, take solace in Tarkoman's demise. Though the exact legality of zzonga is questionable, neither wants the substance anywhere near their people. Dreximar's tale of the survivors and their pains have piqued the interests of Siaron; suspecting magic is involved, she wants to examine them herself.

What the PCs Can Do: Dreximar has been told of some of the hazards Tarkoman has placed within the estate to keep unwanted visitors out, but he is not about to risk his own neck by going in alone and he is not going to risk any of the crew of his yacht, so he needs experienced adventurers to aid him or perform the task outright.

Vatermont 19, AC 1016: Defensive Downsizing.

Location: City of Alfleish, Kingdom of Shiye-Lawr, Floating Continent of Alphatia. HW

Description: King Acroshiye announces that his kingdom will demobilize portions of its standing army. However he states that he remains confident in his kingdom's ability to defend itself from encroachment, as reservist militia units will supplement the smaller army. If circumstances call for a mobilization for imperial reasons, then the imperial treasury can pay the costs. Until that time, the elves will defend their borders as needed and live life as elves should. (See Th. 11, Th. 27.)

What This Means: Instead of a dependence upon the imperial treasury, the Shiye army is equipped and maintained by the Shiye kingdom. The cost has begun to take its toll on the kingdom. With a lessened sense of need for a large fighting force, Acroshiye has decided to demobilize part of his armed forces. It is unlikely that any of his neighbors will invade, or that Alphatia will be invaded by outside forces. Given the empress's doctrines, it is unlikely that Alphatia will use military force to expand its holdings in the Hollow World. If events call for the empire to need his troops, then the empire can pay for them.

Vatermont 20, AC 1016: Mount Thera Secured.

Location: Mount Thera. AS

Description: Commander Broderick readies his troops for battle as his scouts report that Mount Thera is heavily fortified. As he prepares to engage his "enemies" he sees them sporting the colors of Alphatia, and calls for parleys instead. He learns that this group, the remnants of a division from Randel, decided to return "home" after the destruction of Alphatia and ended up settling and fortifying this small patch of land, closest to where they once lived. (See Nu. 28, Va. 12; Th. 1, Fl. 2.)

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are helping in the campaign they may be the ones assigned with organizing the assault on the fortified island, in which case it is up to them to determine who the "enemies" actually are before too much unnecessary casualties add up.

Vatermont 21, AC 1016: Clues Gathered.

Location: Town of Woodgate, Kingdom of Wendar. OW

Description: The group of heroes working with Bensarian to discover who is behind the populace's unrest and the anti-elves campaign manages to intercept an encoded message before it is delivered to a *bürgermeister*, suspected to

be helping the Church of Idris. The heroes manage to decipher the message and learn of a big plot to assassinate an Alfheim clanmaster currently living in Wendar. They immediately inform Bensarian of their discovery. (See *Nu. 1; Th. 12.*)

What This Means: The letter is a fake, and everything is being carefully planned by the Church of Idris to lead this brave group of investigators into a big trap that will change Wendar's political asset. Bensarian (currently possessed by an Onyx Ring wizard's soul) is the linchpin in charge of the operations and so far everything is going smoothly.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are collaborating with Bensarian, they should try to unveil this conspiracy before it's too late.

Vatermont 21, AC 1016: A Peculiar Observation.

Location: City of Blueside, Kingdom of Lagrius, NACE, Bellissaria. AS

Description: Siaron Lagrius makes an astonishing discovery about the two surviving retainers of Tarkoman. The former queen states that their apparent pain comes from a spell that was found amid the ranks of the mages from the Alphatian Kingdom of Randel. The spell in question will cause the two intense pain and would eventually kill them.

Queen Elenitsa is intrigued and horrified at the affects of the spell. She asks Siaron if she can counter the spell, but despite recognizing the symptoms of the spell she does not know enough about it to *dispel* it. She tells her that even if she devoted time to research the matter it would probably be too late as the subjects would die from the recurring pain before a remedy could be found; even if a Randel mage could be found, it would be doubtful that he or she would counter it for them. (See *Va. 9, Va. 19; Va. 24, Th. 14.*)

What This Means: The spell in question is the notorious *traitor's regret* spell created and used by the warmages of the Kingdom of Randel. The spell is a form of a *geas*, which affect is that the person it is cast upon will experience agonizing pain when attempting to relate information. Each time the spell is triggered by the subject uttering predetermined information, they experience intense pain and an eroding of the afflicted's health. The Randel folks love to cast this spell upon traitors, thieves, and persons charged with knowing "sensitive" information.

Since the spell is a closely guarded secret, it is presumed that Randel mages are involved. This is not a great surprise as many of the stranded Randel troops became mercenaries or took commissions within other Alphatian kingdoms' armed forces, even Lagrius's forces have a fare share of Randel nationals. Siaron even knows of a few powerful Randel mages that could be powerful enough to know the spell; given the Randel mindset it would be doubtful that they would divulge the information or negate the spell, themselves. Given the power of these mages, it would be ill advised to attempt to force them to do either.

Elenitsa and Siaron do take the whole incident seriously. A massing of troops so close to Lagrius is one thing, but to mass them in the remote regions of Notrion is definitely threatening; the presence of Randel troops amid them denotes an added seriousness. Ordinarily there would not be this great deal of concern, but post-war NACE has made many of the lesser kingdoms desperate. One such kingdom is Notrion who has suffered greatly since the war; King Corydon may be desperate enough to attempt something to improve his hold on Notrion's rulership.

Vatermont 21, AC 1016: An Important Discussion.

Location: Dominion of Polakatsikes, Heldannic Territories, Meghala Kimata Plains. DV

Description: In the secrecy of his own offices, Wolfgang Stummel holds a private meeting with his most trusted advisors, in which he exposes information gleaned from interrogations of the three spies caught during the past month. Two of these men were caught trying to sneak inside military facilities in the city-state, while the other gave himself away. They soon resolve to send spies to the city-state of Mivosia, in order to assess what kind of threat it poses to Heldannic interests in the region. (See *Nu. 27, Va. 15; Fl. 9, Fl. 26.*)

What This Means: Wolfgang is worried that, if Mivosia continues to spy on Heldannic operations in the region, the knights' hold on Polakatsikes, and even Vanya's Rest, might be compromised. The fact that this city-state has

used espionage against them signals, to him, that Mivosia is a far more sophisticated and resourceful opponent than Polakatsikes was.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs participated in the conquest of Polakatsikes, then they will doubtless be present at this meeting if they are still in the city. They can provide additional information to Wolfgang if they have it. The PCs could also be sent to Mivosia themselves, as spies for the knights.

Fourth Week

Vatermont 22, AC 1016: Marauders in Hillvale.

Location: North of City-State of East Portage, NACE, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: Mario's Marauders, a renegade band of Thyatian mercenaries, is on the rampage once more, this time in the settlements of East Portage (a.k.a. Hillvale). They are very organized and efficient, making quick guerrilla raids and vanishing into the hills before a defense can be effectively raised against them. (*See Ya. 18.*)

What This Means: Increased pressures from Thyatian military offenses have pushed the renegades into Alphatian territory. They are hoping pickings will be easier on the Alphatian side if the Isle of Dawn.

Vatermont 23, AC 1016: Zudis Falls.

Location: Village of Zudis, Kingdom of Nithia. HW

Description: After over two weeks of hard campaigning, and slogging through swamps, dense forests, and pockets of Senkhite forces, the Selhomarrian army punches through enemy lines, and manages to secure the village of Zudis, on the Tarthis River. The task is made all the easier due to a lack of fortifications, and local resistance to Senkha's forces. (*See Va. 2, Va. 7; Th. 1, Th. 3.*)

What This Means: The Selhomarrians have been fighting hard for the past couple of weeks, steadily advancing westwards towards Tarthis. In the process, they have secured the delta of the River Nithia, and all of the villages and towns lying within it. Although the Senkhites have made the invading force pay for every mile they gain, they have been unable to muster their entire force to meet the Selhomarrians; they cannot afford to pull men away from the lands bordering the Jennites, and many soldiers are also required to quell domestic opposition to Senkha's rule. Also, the Senkhites are well aware that the ultimate target for the advancing Selhomarrians is Tarthis, and as a result they have been concentrating their forces over the past several weeks in that city. With the fall of Zudis, the way is now open to Tarthis, just over 10 miles to the south.

Vatermont 24, AC 1016: A Message to King Corydon.

Location: City of Aaslin, Kingdom of Notrion, NACE, Bellissaria. AS

Description: At the behest of Queen Elenitsa, Siaron uses magic to contact King Corydon of Aaslin. Elenitsa inquires if Corydon is aware of a large grouping of troops in his kingdom, as they could be perceived as a staging ground for aggression either against Lagrius. Visibly shaken, Corydon states that the troops' presence is unknown to him or his advisors. He says he will look into it immediately.

After breaking off contact with Corydon, Siaron takes the precaution of suggesting that Elenitsa not rely too heavily on Corydon. She suggests that Lagrius troops be readied and lake patrols strengthened and stresses that the patrols should not venture too close to Notrion as it would signify a distrust of Corydon and may potentially spark a political situation. (*See Va. 19, Va. 21; Th. 14, Th. 26.*)

What This Means: Corydon is being honest, he has no knowledge of the troops within his kingdom. From his reaction, both Elenitsa and Siaron believe him. It is apparent that something peculiar is afoot, though; in their

opinion, the troops are either brigands or domestic forces opposed to Corydon's rule and therefore the business of Notrion. To be safe, lake patrols are strengthened near Blueside to guard against any potential trouble; this is especially so as the highly anticipated yacht race is but a few days away.

Vatermont 25: Imperial Interdiction.

Location: City of Andaire, Kingdom of Jafilia, Floating Continent of Alphatia. HW

Description: First year applicants for the imperial magist schools are given extra attention in their pre-registration interviews. Of the freshmen, a number are propositioned to be the first students at a new magic institution being built on a Grey Island. Those that accept are immediately billeted in separate dorms awaiting their departure to the school without any more information. Wary of the secrecy, some students demand additional information. With their interviewers not coming forth, several students back out. (*See Nu. 28, Va. 16; Th. 15, Ka. 15.*)

What This Means: The students are unknowingly being recruited to be the initiating class going to the surface world to study magic without the hindrances of the *Spell of Preservation*. Secrecy is a must as the general population must not know about the surface world and Alphatia's true history—the ramifications of the truth being divulged is too unpredictable.

Vatermont 26, AC 1016: Disaster Recovery.

Location: City of Andaire, Kingdom of Jafilia, Floating Continent of Alphatia. HW

Description: Empress Eriadna decrees that the devastated former capitol of Sundsvall is to be salvaged and its rubble cleared. Likewise the city of Aasla will receive similar treatment. She declares that it would be a dishonor to Alphatia not to repair the earthquake-ravaged cities. (*See Va. 4; Fe. 13.*)

What This Means: The empress has decided that it is time to begin repairing the damage caused by the sinking. In their current condition the ruins, particularly Aasla and Sundsvall, are a blemish on the face of the empire. In Eriadna's opinion their restorations are a priority.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs may be called upon to clear the ruins of the two cities. Opportunities are virtually unlimited in stocking these ruins with nasty creatures. Also, there is the definite possibility that all manners of treasures and enchanted items may be salvaged from the ruins.

Vatermont 26, AC 1016: Linton Murdered.

Location: City of Athenos, Republic of Darokin. OW

Description: The servants of Linton mansion enter the private study of Lucius Linton after the merchant lord doesn't show up for supper. They are horrified to find Lucius Linton and his three sons lying on the floor in pools of blood, apparently murdered. Some valuables have also been stolen. Upon further examination, the servants discover that Corwyn, the youngest son [*54 years old, see GAZ11. Ed.*] is still alive, although severely injured and in a coma. The local priests are called to tend to the wounded Corwyn and to prepare the bodies of the other Lintons for burial. The city guard is alerted to investigate the burglary that resulted in the murder of the 83-year old Linton, and word is sent to the Inner Council at the capital. (*See Th. 7, Th. 21.*)

What This Means: Linton was indeed murdered—by business competitors. Recently, Linton House has greatly advanced its sea trade interests in the Sea of Dread, mostly at the expense of the merchants of the Minrothad Guilds. Fed up, several prominent guild masters and merchant princes commissioned Linton's assassination, in order to throw the house off balance. They also had some valuables stolen to make it look like a common robbery. For all their skill however, the assassins did not manage to quite kill Corwyn Linton. Although he is unconscious, Corwyn did see a face of one of the assassins, recognizing the man as an assassin from Minrothad.

What the PCs Can Do: Characters might be hired to conduct the assassination of Lucius or investigate his death.

Vatermont 28, AC 1016: Wail of the Banshee.

Location: Keep of Drax Tallen, Forest of Geffron, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: The crusaders are suddenly awakened during the night by a dreadful cry that echoes throughout the central building of the keep. When the first guards arrive inside the building, they find many elves literally dead-frozen in their bunks and others in the corridors. (See Va. 15.)

What This Means: The ghost of one of the dead Geffronell elves has returned from the grave and is now trying to find her lost love. She has taken on the form of a spectral banshee and wanders nightly inside Drax Tallen, approaching any elf that resembles her dead fiancé to give him one more kiss. Unfortunately, none of the kissed ones survived the meeting and she cried out her despair before disappearing into the Ethereal Plane, killing those who heard her mourning as well.

This haunting has nothing to do with Sylarion's plans of conquest, but will indirectly help him to weaken the elves' defenses of Drax Tallen if the banshee is not laid to rest properly rapidly.

What the PCs Can Do: Help the crusaders find the banshee and put her to rest permanently. This can be done either using a powerful spell (like *dispel evil*) or by helping her find her lost love (probably one of the zombies animated by the Shadow Lord or one of the corpses that lay in the dungeons of the keep).

Topic of the Month: Of Magic in Alphatia and the Hollow World

[Excerpted from the summarized version of a report with the same title by the Council of Alphatia to Empress Eriadna. Ed.]

Of Magic Working in the Hollow World.

Magic in the Hollow World is restricted because of a powerful spell cast by the Immortals, known as the Spell of Preservation, which seems to be maintained by the energy stream pouring out of the *gate* in the center of the world (commonly named the Red Sun).

The following spells do not work in the Hollow World:

All spells of Divination and Communication (Schools of Lesser and Greater Divination; some spells from the School of Alteration).

All spells of Summoning and Conjunction (School of Conjunction/Summoning, some spells from the Schools of Invocation/Evocation and Shadow).

All spells of Instantaneous Transportation (Schools of Dimension and Shadow).

Of Magic Working on the Floating Continent of Alphatia.

Unlike the rest of the Hollow World, all kinds of magic work within the confines of the Floating Continent of Alphatia, to the limits of the *skyshield* surrounding it. Evidences show that such is the case only since the first of Nyxmir AY 2015 [*Nuwmont 1, AC 1016. Ed.*], where magic prior to the Day of Dread was restricted the same way as it was in the rest of the Hollow World. Since this corresponds exactly to the creation of a new sun by the Immortals (dubbed the Moving Sun, which orbits the Red Sun), it is speculated by various sages that it generates both the antidote to the *mnemonic mineral* disease and to the restricting effects on magic of the Red Sun. This hypothesis seems to be validated by the effects observed by spellcasters who did not expose themselves to the sun each day. The exact process of this counter-effect is unknown as yet, though, and how or why it interacts only with the *skyshield* around Alphatia and not the world below, or even other floating continents, remains a mystery under heavy investigation.

All wizards and priests that have absorbed *mnemonic minerals potions* in sufficient quantities have the ability to cast those spells that are allowed only on the floating continent. Spellcasters that didn't are restricted to the same spell range as any inhabitant of the Hollow World, though they can still use magical items embedded with the powers they can't personally wield. Any such magic items brought without Alphatia become inert until brought back, and

spellcasters who leave Alphatia lose access to these extra spells which will fizz if cast (or if their effect will cross the Alphatian *skyshield*, like *teleporting* to the surface world).

Addiction to *mnemonic minerals* bears some drawbacks, though, in addition to its scarcity. Firstly, spellcasters can no longer cast during the fortunately often short period between the illness (when the poisonous substance is flooding the body) and the adaptation by the metabolism, a very dangerous period of incapacitation that is the reason for some powerful magic-users' reluctance to trying it out. To remedy this situation, the council recommends that first level spellcasters are addicted during the course of their university studies, as the loss of power is less dangerous at that stage of their lives.

The second restriction is that mineral addicted spellcasters must remain exposed at least one day to the light of the Moving Sun (though this remains an hypothesis at this point; other have it that it is the light of the Red Sun instead, while other speculations suggest other seemingly fantasist reasons). Failing to do so reverses the adaptation of the metabolism to the presence of the *mnemonic mineral*, and restore the risk of falling ill again.

The detail of the process of becoming infected with (and benefiting of the effects of) *mnemonic minerals* is this one:

Ingest 30 doses of *mnemonic mineral potions*, maximum one per day. During that time you gain one additional spell of level 3.

Take additional doses until failing a *save vs. poison* and becoming ill. While drinking additional potions you still gain the additional spell.

Get exposure to the Moving Sun at least one hour a day until you fail another *save vs. poison* and becoming adapted. During that period you are without spells.

Keep on exposing to the Moving Sun one hour each day or risk becoming ill again as above. From now on you can cast any spell while on Alphatia. If you stop the sunbathes you still get to cast spells normally, but do not get an additional spell again.

Of Magic Unknown to Savage Hollow World Natives.

Not all spells are available in the Hollow World, but even less are known and used by the primitive natives of the place.

The following spells are useable in the Hollow World but are not known except in Alphatia:

Spells of Holding (School of Enchantment/Charm).

Spells of Charming and Commanding (Schools of Enchantment/Charm and Mentalism).

Spells of Immortality (School of Necromancy).

Various offensive spells (School of Force, various spells from the School of Invocation/Evocation and some spells of the School of Alteration).

Wish-like spells (note that those spells do not work if used to emulate spells that do not work in the Hollow World).

Various sophisticated spells (including but not limited to those from the *Tome of Magic* and the *Spells & Magic* or those from the most sophisticated Schools like Artifice or Geometry or any secret arts).

Magic-users simply do not have those spells in their spellbooks, while priests are not granted them by their Immortals, even if they should logically be in their Immortal's portfolio and even if the spells are granted to the Alphatian priests of the same deity.

The council strongly advises against revealing the secret of these spells, some of which powerful, to the natives of the Hollow World, unless it is in the higher interest of the empire.

EVENTS: THAUMONT

First Week

Thaumont 1, AC 1016: Land!

Location: South of Ierendi Island, Sea of Dread. OW

Description: After weathering a bad storm last month, the Kastelian diplomatic mission sights land this morning, towards the north. As the hours pass, a cheer breaks out as the unmistakable profile of a large island comes into view. Consulting their maps once more, the Kastelians determine that this must be the main island of the Kingdom of Ierendi, and one of the ships sets its course for there. The remaining three decide to accompany the ship until it reaches its destination, after which they will continue north towards the mainland. (*See Va. 5, Va. 17; Th. 4, Th. 5.*)

What This Means: The Kastelian diplomatic mission has successfully crossed the Sea of Dread, something no one from that city-state has ever done before. This is fortunate because supplies were getting low. Kastelios's bid to expand its diplomatic contacts can now begin in earnest.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are present, the PCs will likely receive hearty thanks for their assistance. They could also soon find themselves briefing the potential diplomats as to how to properly greet the rulers of the various nations.

Thaumont 1, AC 1016: Eadrin Island Secured.

Location: Eadrin Island. AS

Description: Commander Broderick takes possession of Eadrin Island unhindered, and discovers a secret facility constructed by Zandor when he was emperor. The staff does not oppose the Alphatians' arrival, as they do not know about Zandor's fall and the creation of the NACE, but instead assumed the mad emperor had temporarily forgotten about them and the secret lab, and just continued with their researches on *skyship* design and other fields—though the work has been dramatically delayed by the lack of fresh supplies. (*See Va. 12, Va. 20; Th. 8, Fl. 2.*)

What This Means: The NACE are delighted to put their hands on an hitherto unknown facility that can conduct research and experiments on *skyship* building and other magical studies.

Thaumont 1, AC 1016: East Portage Fund Cut.

Location: City-State of East Portage, NACE, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: The city-state of East Portage ceases to receive financial aid from the NACE to help in its reconstruction and is officially declared as having recovered from the war. One day of celebration is issued. (*See Ei. 1.*)

What This Means: Ever since East Portage became a member of the confederacy it has benefited from a special reconstruction fund along with the other city-states. The city of East Portage, which had been relatively only lightly hit by the war in comparison to Ekto and Trikelios, has largely benefited from this influx of money. The council has decided to stop that aid that was only benefiting already rich merchants, and instead promote the results of the rebuilding efforts as a morale booster.

Thaumont 1, AC 1016: Battle of Pharaoh's Road.

Location: *Pharaoh's Road*, 3 miles north of City of Tarthis, Kingdom of Nithia. HW

Description: The southward-moving Selhomarrians, fighting increasing resistance with every mile they gain, are stopped by a massive host of Senkhites. The great battle ensues on the *Pharaoh's Road* itself, with Nithian priests and wizards casting offensive magic against the Selhomarrians, with their Selhomarian counterparts responding in kind. Floating barges, brimming with bowmen, do battle with solar chariots, streaking across the sky and raining arrows and offensive spells on the defending Nithians. For hours, the line holds, but by midday, slowly, the Selhomarrians are forced to give ground.

Pressing their advantage, the more numerous Nithians press northwards, splitting the invading army in two. Just as they begin to take advantage of the situation, loud horn-blasts are heard from the east! Both sides turning to see what is happening, they see, advancing from the nearby River Nithia, barges loaded with fresh Selhomarian troops, who then plunge into the fray. Relieved at the arrival of reinforcements, the Selhomarrians return to the fray with renewed vigor, crushing the advancing Nithian spike, and slowly pressing southwards once more.

Within an hour, the tide turns decisively against the defending Senkhites, who, seeing that they are outnumbered, and pressed from two sides, swiftly withdraw to Tarthis. Although many Selhomarian troops try to give chase to their enemies, they are held back by the wise counsel of the officers, who decide that there has been enough bloodshed for one day. (*See Va. 7, Va. 23; Th. 3, Th. 6.*)

What This Means: This was the first major battle of the entire campaign. The Senkhites had been concentrating their soldiers around Tarthis to prevent its fall, and decided to send some of that force to delay the advance of the Selhomarrians, as well as test their combat readiness. They also used this battle as an opportunity to learn about the Selhomarrians' offensive magic and any other capabilities they might possess. The officer in charge of the defending force did not take into account that, having control over the delta, the Selhomarrians might use the waterways to their advantage—in this case ferrying troops further upstream. This miscalculation cost the Senkhites dearly: almost 1,600 dead, and 570 captured.

Although the invading Selhomarrians won, it was a Pyrrhic victory. Of the 5,000 troops who met the Senkhites' initial counterattack, over 1,300 have died, and almost 600 are seriously injured. Were it not for the additional 1,500 soldiers who arrived by barge, the battle could very well have been lost.

What the PCs Can Do: Apart from tending the wounds of the injured, and keeping watch over the captured Nithians, the PCs could scout the area for any enemy forces left behind to harry the Selhomarrians. They could also assist in the somber task of taking down the names of the dead, and seeing that the bodies are disposed of in a great funeral pyre. Those soldiers who die in this campaign will have their names added to the lists of heroes of Selhomarr.

Thaumont 2, AC 1016: On Bat's Wings.

Location: Keep of Drax Tallen, Forest of Geffron, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: During the night, Sylarion manages to enter the keep of Drax Tallen unseen using his bat and gaseous forms and penetrates inside the main keep where the well lies. After *charming* the two guards by whispering them the order to go outside, he materializes and pours some powder inside the well. Then, just like he went in, he leaves the keep without triggering any of the magical alarms. (*See Va. 15; Th. 5, Th. 8.*)

What This Means: Sylarion wants to gain an edge on the crusaders and has started playing dirty. He has concocted a rare poison that will put all those who eat or drink it into a slumbering state for the next 24 hours (similar to the *slow* spell effects). By poisoning the common well he hoped to affect all the elves in the long period. If his scheme is not discovered, he will undoubtedly gain a great advantage on his enemies in the final battle.

What the PCs Can Do: Discover Sylarion's doings before it's too late and purify the common well's waters.

Thaumont 2, AC 1016: The Hidden Forces of Sarojun Sur.

Location: Mumlyket of Nagpuri, Kingdom of Sind. OW

Description: Hulean and resistance forces have been fighting a running battle in the hills of Nagpuri for weeks now, but remain roughly stalemated. As the morning begins to dawn, however, a third regiment appears on the battlefield, sporting the colors of Punjab. They rally to the side of the Nagpuri resistance, and manage to rout the Master's forces in a decisive battle. (*See Va. 5; Th. 14, Th. 19.*)

What This Means: The *Maharajah* Sarojun Sur has been training a secret army for many years now. Though their original purpose was to support a move for Punjab's independence, the *maharajah* decided he would rather live under Chandra ul Nervi's rule than Hule's. Ironically, the *rajadhiraja* has long known about the "secret army," but the Master's forces did not. The Huleans are going to have to regroup for another assault against the northern *mumlykets*.

Thaumont 2, AC 1016: A Meeting in Kastelios.

Location: City-State of Kastelios, Serpent Coast. DV

Description: Having waged an unsuccessful campaign against the Twaelar thus far, Thyatis, desperate to find a secure route to transport colonists and goods to the Hinterlands, has decided to approach Kastelios for assistance. It sends Helena Delanarius, one of its top negotiators, to the city-state to gain some vital concessions, and she arrives today without fanfare. After disembarking and presenting her credentials to the city guards, Helena is escorted to the Public Forum, where she asks for an audience with the City Council. The council grants her request, and proposes to meet with her tomorrow. (*See Nu. 18, Nu. 21; Th. 3, Th. 4.*)

What This Means: Thyatis has known of Kastelios for quite some time, though its contacts with the city-state have been sporadic at best. It knows that Kastelian sailors know the coastal waters of northern Davania very well, and are almost renowned for their ability to navigate the often-treacherous currents to reach their intended destinations. Thyatis hopes that it can come to some sort of agreement in which Kastelios will allow Thyatian shipping to enter its waters, and then guide the Thyatian ships to the Hinterlands. Helena had hoped to begin the meetings today, but the Kastelians knew that to do so would mean a weakening of their own position, hence the arrangement for talks to begin tomorrow, at a time of their own choosing.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are accompanying Helena, they could be serving as her bodyguards, or as general aides. In any case, they will not be allowed to attend the meetings that follow, unless the DM decides to have them take the place of Helena herself, in which case they will have to negotiate with the Kastelians firsthand. If the PCs are with the Kastelians, they could be told to keep an eye on Helena and her companions, to ensure that they do not cause trouble.

Thaumont 3, AC 1016: Tarthis Surrounded.

Location: City of Tarthis, Kingdom of Nithia. HW

Description: Early today, Selhomarian troops begin taking up positions around the outer walls of Tarthis. For the most part, local resistance is confined to the occasional volley of arrows raining down on the invaders, as well as the odd skirmish. Tarthis's defenders line the walls, and watch their enemies entrench themselves. (*See Va. 23, Th. 1; Th. 6, Th. 9.*)

What This Means: Word has spread of the magical power of the Selhomarians, as well as their competence in battle. The local garrisons are unwilling to sacrifice more men unless their position is secure, as it is in Tarthis. They know their city is well-stocked, and that they could withstand a very long siege if need be.

Thaumont 3, AC 1016: Senate Clears Borydos.

Location: Borydos Island, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Almost two years after the prison break from Borydos, the senate has decided to close the prison on the island. The prison break proved that the island was not as escape free as it was billed, and it is needed for other

things now. Prisoners deemed unreformable will be transferred to other facilities, while most of the prisoners will be given contingent pardons. The island will be converted into the “Borydos Naval Research Base.” (*See Th. 21, Fl. 2.*)

What This Means: The research conducted on Borydos will actually concentrate as much on airships as on sailing ships. Construction facilities at Aegos will be dismantled and personnel operating there transferred to Borydos. The new facility will be both nearer (closer to the heart of the empire) and more convenient (near Sclaras).

The prisoners that have been given contingent pardons will be given infrastructure tasks. They will work for a year or so (depending on their original sentences) constructing roads and other amenities in the Hinterlands and other colonies, or improving the facilities on Borydos for use by Thyatis’s military. After that, they will be given colonial land grants.

Once again this is part of Eusebius’s multi-pronged policy: it makes him look kindhearted, gives him workers during a labor shortage to construct the necessary colonial improvements, and strengthens his hold on the colonies.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs loyal to the Thyatian Empire (and very trustworthy) might be stationed at the Borydos Naval Research Base. This proves to be a base for constructing and outfitting airships of a special sort intended for future use against the Twaelar and other enemies.

Thaumont 3, AC 1016: Thyatian Outcry.

Location: Confederate Capital of Ionace, NACE. AS

Description: Master Terari forwards a message to the council informing them of a Thyatian demand: the Thyatians are outraged by what they see as the NACE supporting the Twaelar in their attacks against Thyatian shipping. The council disavows any knowledge of any arms shipments. Since the Thyatians cannot, or will not, present any evidence to support their accusations the matter is dropped. (*See Nu. 20; Fe. 20.*)

What This Means: The Thyatian ambassador in Karameikos has come across information reporting Alphatian weapons being sold to the merrow. Since Thyatis and the NACE maintain little in the ways of direct diplomatic ties with each other, the news is forwarded to them through Terari. Ambassador Cornel Osteric cannot press the matter, as it would require him to divulge the identities of several of his agents within Karameikos.

The council officially has nothing to do with any arms shipments; individuals acting upon their own are organizing these shipments. This is not to say that some council members were not aware of them, but given the last few years, there are few Alphatians that will sympathize with the Thyatians.

What the PCs Can Do: With the Thyatians knowing about them, Alphatians smuggling arms to the Twaelar will be more careful. PCs may be hired to supplement crews for security or oversee the deliveries themselves, or to seek out any possible leaks in Karameikos and eliminate them. Thyatian PCs may be hired to investigate the arms smuggling, or more likely, to intercept and eliminate smugglers.

Thaumont 3, AC 1016: A Tense Meeting.

Location: City-State of Kastelios, Serpent Coast. DV

Description: Helena Delanarius meets with the Kastelian City Council to discuss a possible agreement to aid Thyatis in getting its ships to the Hinterlands. She says that an outside power is harming Thyatis’s shipping, making direct transit to the Hinterlands all but impossible for the moment. Tensions in the Sea of Dawn also make shipping along an easterly route a risky prospect. She tells them that the safest route they have found is one that goes west from Ierendi, towards Yavdlom, and then south to Kastelios. Thyatis requests a lease on Kastelios’s port facilities, usage of its ships, and assistance in plotting a safe course eastwards along the Davanian coast to the Hinterlands. After an hour of consideration, the City Council refuses these terms, and proposes a meeting tomorrow in which it can share its own proposal. Helena is furious over this treatment, but she does not let it show, and she agrees. (*See Nu. 21, Th. 2; Th. 4, Th. 14.*)

What This Means: Helena has asked for the maximum terms Thyatis was prepared to ask for, which would amount to a virtual annexation of Kastelios. The Kastelians realized that Thyatis was testing their resolve, and they made

their own move by refusing these terms, and forcing Helena to wait another day before the negotiations can continue. They realize that they are playing a potentially dangerous game, but they know that they cannot afford to sacrifice Kastelian interests or sovereignty. By making Helena wait, they are maintaining control over the situation.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are doing the negotiating, there are ample opportunities to role-play this scenario. If they are with Helena, they could serve as her advisors, suggesting to her various tactics between meetings in order for Thyatis to get what it wants. The same could apply if the PCs are with the Kastelians.

Thaumont 4, AC 1016: Magistrate Dies.

Location: Republic of Darokin. OW

Description: The magistrate of one of the borderland territories in Darokin dies of old age. Fortunately, he has left behind a will naming his successor, so the borderland will not be absorbed into the Heartland regions of the republic.

What the PCs Can Do: This is a good opportunity to run the adventure module CM8 *Legacy of Blood*, if the DM owns it. Otherwise, it is still a good opportunity to grant high-level PCs a dominion of their own, along with all the hazards and rewards that come with ruling.

Thaumont 4, AC 1016: Kastelios Makes its Move.

Location: City-State of Kastelios, Serpent Coast. DV

Description: In today's meeting with Thyatian envoy Helena Delanarius, the City Council sets out its own terms. It asks that, in exchange for being guided by Kastelian ships, Kastelios will receive 50% of the value of all goods passing through its waters, payable on the first day of each month. In addition, the council asks that Kastelian merchants receive tax breaks when they do business in the Hinterlands. Finally, the council says that under no circumstances will Thyatian military personnel be allowed within the borders of the city-state. After a moment's consideration, Helena refuses these terms, and requests that both sides enter into formal negotiations. The council agrees, and schedules the negotiations to begin on the 7th of Thaumont. (*See Th. 2, Th. 3; Th. 14, Fl. 17.*)

What This Means: In response to Thyatis's demands, Kastelios proposes its own terms, the most they are prepared to request of the imperial power. Now that both sides have presented their demands, they both have a reference point at which they can work out an agreement. Once again the Kastelians exercised their control by determining when the actual negotiations would begin.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are negotiating for Thyatis, the PCs will have their work cut out for them. If they are part of Helena's delegation, they will be assisting her in coming up with a strategy to help Thyatis get as much as it can out of the deal. Similarly, if they are on the Kastelian side, they will likely either be helping Kastelios get the terms it wants, or keeping an eye on the Thyatians to make sure they do not learn anything they should not, or cause trouble.

Thaumont 4, AC 1016: New Recruits.

Location: Dominion of Polakatsikes, Heldannic Territories, Meghala Kimata Plains. DV

Description: The recent show of force on the part of the Heldannic Knights, as well as constant efforts to show the people of Polakatsikes that Vanya is an Immortal of great power, have begun to bear fruit. A small group of local men ask a patrolling knight how they could join the order. The knight then guides them to the nearest barracks, where the men begin a series of tests to determine their suitability. (*See Va. 10; Ya. 3.*)

What This Means: The knights have been in power long enough to provide ample displays of their power, as well as share tales of their exploits around the world. This has affected some of the more impressionable youth in Polakatsikes, especially those who wish to rebel against the traditions of their people. The knights, because they are so different and possess power, seem to offer a chance for adventure and a change of pace. Over the next few months, many more young Polakatsikans will become interested in joining their ranks.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are knights themselves, the PCs might be approached by some of the locals and asked how a person joins the order. If they are natives of Polakatsikes, having the PCs join the knights as youths could be a springboard into an interesting campaign.

Thaumont 4, AC 1016: A Meeting in Ierendi.

Location: City of Ierendi, Kingdom of Ierendi. OW

Description: A few hours before midday dockers point out ships in the distance, the emblem on their sails unfamiliar. As minutes pass, one of them breaks off from the others, and heads towards the port city, while the others continue north. Soon, the ship resolves itself into a slightly damaged, medium-sized cargo vessel. As the ship slowly pulls into port, and casts its lines to the dockers, it soon becomes apparent that this ship does not come from a nearby place. As onlookers gather, the passengers disembark—strangely armored men gather around a young man, dressed in robes. In halting Thyatian, the man asks to see the ruler of the nation, as he is an emissary from the city-state of Kastelios, wishing to open diplomatic relations. City officials are quickly summoned, and preparations are made for a formal exchange of diplomatic protocols tomorrow. (*See Va. 17, Th. 1; Th. 5, Th. 6.*)

What This Means: Kastelios has successfully sent an emissary to a nation of the Old World, and diplomatic relations will soon begin between the two nations. The Kastelian ambassador, Tyros Salmadakis, will arouse some curiosity amongst both the elite of Ierendi society, as well as the average folk, because he is so foreign.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are part of the Kastelian delegation, and they speak both Milenian and Thyatian, the PCs could end up being interpreters for Tyros, as well as guides—provided they know Ierendi. If the PCs were already in Ierendi, they might be told to observe Tyros and determine whether Kastelios poses any threat to Ierendi interests, or those of other nations.

Thaumont 5, AC 1016: Night of the Walking Dead.

Location: Keep of Drax Tallen, Forest of Geffron, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: The nightly lookouts at Drax Tallen are caught by surprise by a group of wraiths that assault and slay them without noise. Then they proceed to open the portcullis and the main gates of the keep and the corporeal undead led by a greater wyrd (the late crusader Aeleris himself) suddenly storm the elven keep. The elves' reaction is slow because of the *slow* poison poured into their well by Sylarion during the previous nights, and the undead manage to strike dead many of the crusaders before the resistance wipes out the dumber ones and drives off the rest of the quicker and smarter undead. The casualties among the elves are low, but after the battle many report strange festering bruises and scars. (*See Va. 15, Th. 2.*)

What This Means: Sylarion did not plan this to be his major strike. Instead this is the last step in his tactic to weaken the enemy before giving it the real blow. With this nightly raid he only wanted to test the effect of his special *slow* poison and to infect as many elves as possible with a debilitating disease to keep them occupied in the following days, hoping the disease will claim several more elves before his army strikes out. The disease itself was contracted by those who were injured by the zombies and ghouls and will run its course in a week, during which the scars will fester and will not heal naturally. If not treated properly, the disease will extend to all those who touch the afflicteds' scars, blood or saliva, and will finally put them into a semi-comatose state within a week.

What the PCs Can Do: Help the crusaders resist the incursion, avoid falling ill and find a cure for the debilitating disease.

Thaumont 5, AC 1016: Pass Is Clear.

Location: Fort Hobart, Republic of Darokin. OW

Description: Scouts from Ft. Hobart report that the Darokin Tunnel is cleared of snow, and can now be passed. Word is immediately sent to the other member nations of the Western Defense League—Karameikos, the Five Shires, and Vestland—that they can begin to deploy their forces to march on Rockhome. (*See Va. 4, Va. 17; Th. 23, Ya. 6.*)

What This Means: The tunnel is actually little more than a narrow game trail leading through the Dwarfgate Mountains, but it forms one of the few ways into Rockhome from the Darokin side of the border. Though often held to be a dwarven secret, its existence has been well known by Darokin for some time.

It is through this pass that reinforcements from the nations of Darokin, Karameikos, and the Five Shires will march to the aid of their former dwarven allies. The dwarves have been having trouble with goblinoids over the course of the past year, and are in desperate need of assistance.

Thaumont 5, AC 1016: Agency's New Quarters.

Location: Grey Islands, NACE. AS

Description: The Alphatian Artifact Agency decides to use the northern-most Grey Island as a base of operation for its secret branches, excluding the power researchers who will have their facilities elsewhere. The front cover operations of the agency, i.e. its official business of magical items retrieval and restitution, remains in Ionace. (*See Nu. 2, Th. 1; Th. 8, Fl. 17.*)

What This Means: The location was chosen because of the proximity of the new Alphatian Magical Training School on the western-most Grey Island. The faculty are high-level wizards of the Floating Continent of Alphatia in the Hollow World who often are quite knowledgeable in the magic items the agency recovers, and sometimes can recognize the work as being that of a fellow wizard they know because he was a former student or came for advice. Such help is of course very useful for the history researchers.

Thaumont 5, AC 1016: A New Ambassador in Ierendi.

Location: City of Ierendi, Kingdom of Ierendi. OW

Description: In a brief ceremony, Tyros Salmadakis of Kastelios and King Reston of Ierendi exchange formal words of greeting, as well as gifts. Onlookers are amazed at the beauty of the gifts from Kastelios, from delicate pottery and statuettes to exotic wines. After shaking hands, the two men part, and Tyros is escorted to a small building in the downtown portion of the city, which is to serve as the Kastelian consulate. (*See Th. 1, Th. 4; Th. 6, Th. 8.*)

What This Means: Kastelios and Ierendi have formally established diplomatic relations, and now Kastelios has a representative in Ierendi.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs can provide translation services (if they know both Thyatian and Milenian), but otherwise there is not much for them to do.

Thaumont 6, AC 1016: A Puzzled Treekeeper.

Location: Colony of Aengmor, Shadow Elves' Territories. OW

Description: Jorodrin Feadiel, master treekeeper of Alfheim Elves, secretly reaches the place where the *Trees of Life* of clans Long Runner and Mealidil were magically hidden during the flight from Canolbarth nine years ago, to check their health. There he is astonished to discover that their status has not worsened, and that it even seems that they have had a regain of energy lately.

Back to his house in Rafielton he immediately sets at studying the cause of that return of energy. (*See Th. 27.*)

What This Means: The partial regain of energy of the two *Trees of Life* that were left in Canolbarth is due to the effect of the *Chamber of the Spheres* fusing with the *Trees of Life*. Jorodrin obviously does not know about the Chamber of the Spheres, so he is puzzled.

Actually this is a joint plan of Ilsundal and Rafiel to counteract the entropic spell that causes the death of Canolbarth Forest fusing together the power of the *Chamber of the Spheres* with that of the *Trees of Life*, both artifacts of Energy.

Thaumont 6, AC 1016: Athenos Receives a Visitor.

Location: City of Athenos, Republic of Darokin. OW

Description: Sentries notice a strange ship on the horizon today, heading towards the coast. Within hours, it becomes apparent that the ship is some sort of cargo vessel, and that it is damaged. As scouting vessels are sent out to guide the ship into port, it becomes apparent that this ship is not of any known nation; its markings are unlike any ever seen before. As the ship's crew and passengers disembark, a woman, apparently the person in command, asks in Milenian to see the city's ruler. No one is able to understand her, and sages are summoned to determine what she is saying. Tense hours pass as various sages in Athenos are brought to the docks, and eventually a sage is found who can get the gist of what the hopeful diplomat, Valeria Theramenes, is saying.

It soon dawns on Valeria that Athenos is not a city-state, but a major port of Darokin, and to meet the ruler of this nation, she would have to travel many miles inland. She opts to remain in the city for the time being. Likewise, the locals misunderstand what Valeria is saying. The sages incorrectly translates some of what she says, leading the local officials to believe that Kastelios is a great seafaring nation. (*See Th. 4, Th. 5; Th. 8, Th. 11.*)

What This Means: This is what happens when jobs are rushed. Valeria's party received a map, but no information on Darokin. She was led to believe that Athenos was a city-state, and, because of the similarity of its name to Milenian words, she thought that it was a Milenian-speaking nation. No one had the time to make sure all the information was correct when the ships were sent off, and by pure chance her group got the least useful information. After the long voyage, the last thing Valeria wishes to do is venture even further.

The misunderstanding also caused some chaos for the people of Athenos, too. Since the sage only knows rudimentary Milenian, and even then of an archaic kind, he only understood about one-third of what Valeria was saying. As a result, the people of Athenos will be under the impression that Kastelios is a great nation for the next while.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs have a chance to be a big help here. If they speak Milenian, and are originally from the Old World, they can act as translators, and possibly help avoid the situation given above. In fact, if they were assigned to guide Valeria, they should have been able to correct any incorrect information that may have been given. If this is the case, then the above event does not happen as described, and Valeria stops in Athenos for a rest, but the remaining events happen as given, unless otherwise noted.

Thaumont 6, AC 1016: A Landing.

Location: Approximately 24 miles south of City of Inun, Kingdom of Nithia. HW

Description: A large group of Selhomarrian sailing vessels draws up near the Nithian mainland here, and almost 3,000 soldiers disembark over the period of an hour. Once they are all on land, the ships turn northwards and sail away, while the soldiers press inland. (*See Th. 1, Th. 3; Th. 9, Th. 11.*)

What This Means: This is the second phase of the Selhomarrian intervention in Nithia. These soldiers are to open a second front in the east, thus dividing the attention of Senkha's forces while liberating as much territory as possible.

Thaumont 6: Flash Point.

Location: Seaboard off Village of Fjar, Isle of Kepir. SC

Description: A squadron of warships under the Slagovian hero Zuberi and a force of Hojahan ships clash north of the Isle of Kepir. Zuberi masterminds a skillful victory by the Slagovian ships, sinking two Hojah vessels and capturing a third. The remainder turn tail and flee for Shkodar. Following the battle, Zuberi unloads marines in the recently rebuilt village of Fjar on the Isle of Kepir, to take control of the island. (*See Ya. 26, Fy. 24.*)

What This Means: Both Hojah and Slagovich want control of the Isle of Kepir as it improves their control of the seas around Slagovich. Slagovich now has control of the island, and given their control of the Isle of Vlör, they can now more easily protect their merchant and *cinnabryl* shipping to and from the Savage Coast and Yavdlom.

However, this is the first major flare up between the two rising sea powers of Hojah and Slagovich. For the moment though, both sides are wary of engaging the other in a full-scale war.

Thaumont 7, AC 1016: New Road Commissioned.

Location: City of Glantri, Principalities of Glantri. OW.

Description: Representatives of the Merchants' Guild of Darokin finalize agreements with the Glantrian Council of Princes to begin construction on a new trade road. The road is to run south through the newly created Barony of Celedyl and through Fort Fletcher. Construction is expected to take the better part of a year. (*See Nu. 2.*)

What This Means: The new road will enable caravans to bypass the chaotic lands of Aengmor entirely, and spare merchants the difficulty of having to deal with potentially hostile shadow elves.

What the PCs can do: There is ample opportunity for the PCs to get involved—humanoids from the nearby Great Crater as well as the former Broken Lands will attempt to prey on construction workers in the region.

Thaumont 7, AC 1016: Inner Council Convenes.

Location: City of Darokin, Republic of Darokin. OW

Description: The Council of Darokin holds a special secret session, with the Linton murders as the main topic. The council decides that the thieves may well try to kill Corwyn Linton again if they find out he still lives, to eliminate the witness. Therefore they debate the matter a little, and finally Chancellor Corwyn Mauntea makes a public announcement that Lucius Linton and his immediate family were all murdered, and the council shall try to decide within a month what to do about Linton House assets. (*See Va. 26; Th. 21, Fl. 8.*)

What This Means: The council is trying to make the killers think that they succeeded. The priests who tend Corwyn Linton, as well as other persons who know that he is alive, will be sworn to secrecy.

What the PCs Can Do: Players can be hired by the council, its agents, or Linton House to begin investigating the crime. Due to protective magics (like *amulets of proof vs. detection and location*), divination spells will be less useful than normal in the investigation. Old-fashioned legwork will be required.

Second Week

Thaumont 8, AC 1016: Blood Ties.

Location: Keep of Drax Tallen, Forest of Geffron, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: Sylarion and a couple of other vampire elves under his control sneak into Drax Tallen again and begin to bleed dry all the elves they meet. They have not fed properly in the last week and now want to take their deserved nourishment. They are under a strange phenomenon called blood frenzy and act like wild animals inside a slaughterhouse. Suddenly Sylarion regains his mind when he is about to finish off his new victim, and throws the helpless elf on the other side of the room in horror. Then he orders the retreat without an explanation and leaves the keep in a hurry, followed by his not-really-satisfied companions. (*See Va. 15, Th. 2; Th. 10, Th. 14.*)

What This Means: Sylarion's strange behavior was caused by the fact that he recognized his last victim as his younger brother. Sylarion is an elder vampire, older than 300 years, but the elven life span is indeed long enough to rival that of any vampire. His younger brother is now 500 years old, while Sylarion stopped growing old at the age of 256, but he still recognized his sibling when he saw him. This caused him a great shock and something unexpected: grief and sorrow. He was not able to finish him and chose to flee instead of confronting him.

Thaumont 8, AC 1016: Caravan Attacked.

Location: Sea of Grass, Ethengar *Khanates*. OW

Description: A Darokinian merchant caravan is attacked by horse nomads while attempting to cross the Overland Trade Route into Vestland. Most of the people are killed, and all of the goods are stolen by looters. (*See Nu. I.*)

What This Means: The civil war in the *khanates* has effects on nations other than just Ethengar. It is going to drastically affect trade across the northern nations of the Old World.

Thaumont 8, AC 1016: Power Researchers Find New Quarters.

Location: Eadrin Island, NACE. AS

Description: The most secretive branch of the Alphatian Artifact Agency, the Power Researchers, decides to use the secret facilities left by Zandor and recently discovered by the NACE as its new base of operation. The *skyship* building facilities remain in full use, for the benefit of the NACE, and two men-of-war and one sumptuous yacht—which was intended as Zandor’s luxury boat—which were ready and waiting are commissioned by the NACE. (*See Th. I, Th. 5; Fl. 17, Ya. 16.*)

What This Mean: This location is very practical for the branch: not only is it an unsettled land, but it already has many facilities and is located very close to the Sundsvall Maelstrom.

Thaumont 8, AC 1016: Protests in Underocean.

Location: Town of New Smaar, Sea-Kingdom of Underocean. AS

Description: A small group of tritons who wish to have the council reinstated attempt to stage a protest. However, it ends prematurely when some of the former council members arrive and state that they support the measures King Juliast has taken. (*See Nu. 20, Va. 16; Fl. 1, Kl. 11.*)

What This Means: The council members are not under any form of compulsion. They at least partially feel the way they said. This closes the possibility of any further serious protest on the matter.

Thaumont 8, AC 1016: The Big Race.

Location: City of Blueside, Kingdom of Lagrius, NACE, Bellissaria. AS

Description: Amid great fanfare the great yacht race is held. The streets are alive with spectators, vendors, and entertainers. Shortly before noon the race participants toss off their moorings and form up to compete. The vessels will sail out into Lagrius Lake along a series of waypoints established by city officials with city-owned vessels.

By late afternoon the lead vessels have rounded the last waypoint and are headed towards the finish line. Dreximar and Zeraxim, the crowd favorites, stage a spectacular fight to gain the homestretch lead; on their heels is a third vessel, The Windhover, owned by the non-spellcaster Brodicim. As the race leaders approach the finish line The Windhover almost overtakes the two favorites; however, as the finish line is breached it is Dreximar’s vessel that proves to be the victor. Brodicim comes in second and Zeraxim comes in third.

The spectators meet Dreximar and his crew and his victory celebrated. Even before all of the participants have finished Dreximar is awarded the prize money and Zeraxim publicly settles up on their side bet. In spite of Dreximar being victorious, the person drawing the most attention is Brodicim: a virtual unknown, his second place finish makes him an instant celebrity.

Dreximar offers a toast to the other participants then stuns the audience by rewarding each of his crew with a share of the prize. The crowd applauds the move, knowing that the victor has given away the majority of his winnings. (*See Nu. 26, Va. 19; Sv. 13, Sv. 16.*)

What This Means: The race unfolded pretty much as expected. The biggest surprise is the strong showing displayed by Brodicim that drew away much of the attention that the victor thought he deserved. It was to regain this attention that caused Dreximar to be so generous with his earnings.

Thaumont 8, AC 1016: Clarifications.

Location: City of Athenos, Republic of Darokin. OW

Description: After many hours with the Kastelians, the sage commissioned by the authorities of Athenos to act as an interpreter finally realizes what Kastelios actually is, and where it is. He visits the mayor of Athenos, and quickly tells him the truth, that Kastelios is a large city-state on the northern coast of Davania, and possibly a remnant of the Milenian Empire, an obscure empire rumored to have existed on that continent over a thousand years ago. The mayor decides that, although there was a misunderstanding, the fact that a foreign dignitary from a far-off land has come here is important. He decides to pass a message on to Darokin City describing the situation, and suggesting that Athenos could possibly provide a small consulate for the Kastelians, out of convenience. (*See Th. 5, Th. 6; Th. 11, Th. 15.*)

What This Means: The sage, in talking with the Kastelians some more, managed to pick up some of their dialect. As a result, he finally understood what the Kastelians were saying, and, with the aid of a map, was shown by them where they are from. The mayor of Athenos has decided that having a foreign consulate in his city could be of some benefit, albeit a small one. He has also taken pity on the Kastelians, for he now knows the effort they expended in coming here.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are part of Valeria's entourage, and they translated for her when she arrived in Athenos, then this situation does not happen as written, either. Instead, the mayor sends the message to Darokin City, saying that he will host the consulate if there are no objections.

Thaumont 9, AC 1016: Raids Near Greenston.

Location: Stahl Lowlands, Kingdom of Rockhome. OW

Description: Farmlands and outlying villages in the vicinity of Greenston fall victim to the latest goblinoid raids in western Rockhome. Many dwarves are forced to flee to the safety of the larger settlements such as Greenston and Stahl. (*See Va. 17, Th. 5; Kl. 1, Kl. 4.*)

What This Means: Alebane's raiding bands have been wintering in the Dwarfgate Mountains, and have managed to keep away from dwarven patrols. As a result, due to the relative goblinoid inactivity in western Rockhome for the last few months, most of the dwarven military in the region has been pulled to Dengar, where it can assist in the war with goblinoids in the Klintest Lowlands.

Alebane has brought his forces out once more, to raid in the easy pickings of the largely undefended west. His raiders will plague the settlements of western Rockhome for the next several months, always managing to stay a few steps ahead of the beleaguered dwarves.

Thaumont 9, AC 1016: Hi Ho, Hi Ho, It's Off to Work We Go.

Location: County of Buhrohur, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Word has spread to Rockhome that their cousins to the south have acquired new lands. Furthermore, the Buhrohur dwarves are not numerous enough to mine and settle this region themselves, and are welcoming immigrants (as long as they are dwarves). Some of the more enterprising and less insular Rockhome dwarves decide to capitalize on this opportunity, and begin migrating to Buhrohur. (*See Va. 1.*)

What This Means: The strife in Rockhome has caused some dwarves to become refugees. Also, not all the dwarves of Rockhome have been happy with the kingdom's recent isolationist attitudes. They would like to see the world and be seen by it, and are excited by the opportunity to carve a new home out of the wilderness and live among

other people. A large number of these newcomers will be part of the disrespected farmer class (mainly of the Wyrwarf clan) and merchants (notably of the Syrklist clan). The dwarves of Buhrohur believe they are getting “their kind of people” [i.e. *other dwarves*. Ed.], but they might be surprised: the new immigrants are more open to interaction with outsiders, more open minded, and less stuffy than the Buhrohuri are.

What the PCs Can Do: Dwarven characters will be welcomed by the Buhrohur dwarves as long lost cousins, greeted warmly and treated generously. This is an opportunity for them to get a small (but potentially wealthy) fief of their own, subject to the Count of Buhrohur. They will need to mediate between the isolationist and open factions as time goes by, helping to head off potential strife as Buhrohur grows.

Thaumont 9, AC 1016: Most Unwelcome News.

Location: City of Tarthis, Kingdom of Nithia. HW

Description: Senkha, while reviewing reports from her advisors, is approached by a messenger, who begs leave to deliver a message. Upon giving her consent, Senkha hears news that is not in the least welcome. Although her forces have managed to hold off the Selhomarrians’ assaults against the city—by land, air, and water—and although supplies are more than adequate, several towns and villages have either fallen to the invaders, or deposed their administrators. Reports of how many soldiers are invading conflict, but intelligence reports state that there are at least two groups in western Nithia—one besieging Tarthis with roughly 5,000 men, and another group reported to have landed at Zudis, numbering at least 3,500 men.

To make matters worse, rumors are beginning to spread of a man claiming to be the deceased *pharaoh*, Ramose, basing himself in the village of Kom-ombar and raising a military force of his own. Displeased with the news, Senkha orders the messenger out of her sight. (*See Th. 3, Th. 6; Th. 11, Th. 16.*)

What This Means: News of the continuing Selhomarian advances has struck a chord amongst the populace, a great number of whom oppose Senkha. Seeing that their ruler’s forces can be defeated, the populace in the villages of Wajel-set and Jeri-med have managed to oust their Senkhite governors from power, and reinstate their administrators who were appointed by Ramose. Also, many soldiers in those regions have begun to distance themselves from Senkha, refusing to answer her summons to come to the capital and relieve its defenders.

Although the rumors of Ramose’s activities in Kom-ombar cannot be verified, their spread will galvanize the people even more against their ruler.

Thaumont 10, AC 1016: A Family Reunion.

Location: Keep of Drax Tallen, Forest of Geffron, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: In a darkened hall inside one of the outer wings of the keep, a frightened crusader is talking to a mysterious cloaked figure. The meeting goes on for most of the night, and at the end the cloaked stranger disappears into the shadows. The elf remains silent for a while, looking at the dead bodies of two of his comrades who have been lying limp on the floor for some hours, then cries out the alarm. When questioned by the other guards, he simply tells them he spotted the grim duo while patrolling that part of the keep. The dead bodies seem to be missing their heart, as if somebody had torn them away. (*See Th. 2, Th. 8; Th. 14, Th. 19.*)

What This Means: Sylarion finally met his brother and had the opportunity to talk to him in private. The two guards who tried to disturb them soon found out their mistake, but they had not the time to regret it. Delharis, Sylarion’s brother, strangely chose not to reveal his brother’s deed nor their secret meeting to his superiors; Sylarion’s revelations probably have had a great impact on the elf’s mind.



Thaumont 10, AC 1016: Renewed Sacrifices Still the Solution.

Location: Azcan Empire. HW

Description: The most zealous priests of Atzanteotl, in an effort to regain their Immortal's favor, which they think they have lost due to the civil war, lead a purge of the "decadence and debauchery" they feel has afflicted the leaders of the empire. Chupicuaro, High Priest at Huitlaktima, leads the purge. He points to the current revolution as evidence of Atzanteotl's displeasure. The solution? Step up the sacrifices! Thousands more are scheduled. Within a few weeks, Azcotica's brothers Oaxapotli and Tlachtatlatlan are slain, leaving the empire without a formal heir. (*See Nu. 23, Va. 12; Ya. 19, Kl. 7.*)

What This Means: The downside of these ever-increasing sacrifices is that, ironically, it is easier to find loyal followers of Atzanteotl than rebellious New Way followers. The result is that the priesthood is bringing about its own downfall by purging many of their faithful. However, this shouldn't be stressed too much—a lot of New Way and "neutral" people are sacrificed too.

What the PCs Can Do: Avoid being the last ones sacrificed!

Thaumont 11, AC 1016: Kastelians Reach Harbortown.

Location: City of Harbortown, Minrothad Guilds. OW

Description: Two ships are sighted just off of Open Isle early this morning, bearing unfamiliar colors on their sails. Before noon, one changes its course, heading towards the northeast and the coast of Hattias, while the other appears to be bearing down on Harbortown. Word spreads through magical means and by messengers, and by late afternoon, a small party is gathered at the piers of Harbortown, awaiting the arrival of the Kastelians, among whom Oran Meditor stands.

The Kastelian vessel silently glides into the port, docks, and its passengers disembark. As a middle-aged man separates himself from the small group of newcomers, bearing a scroll, one of Oran's aides greets the man in fluent Milenian, introducing Oran to the Kastelian ambassador. Through the translator, the two exchange greetings, and the Kastelian, Aristos Selenios, makes it known that his nation is interested in full diplomatic relations with Minrothad. He then presents Oran with a decorative urn inlaid with small jewels. Astonished, Oran accepts both the gift, and the offer to open formal diplomatic relations. Both parties then depart for Oran's residence, where the fine details of the relationship will be worked out. (*See Th. 6, Th. 8; Th. 15, Th. 18.*)

What This Means: Kastelios and Minrothad have known of each other for many years, and have traded sporadically in the past. The Kastelian leadership decided that the time had come to open more formal relations with this trading nation.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are part of Aristos's entourage, the PCs can provide information about Minrothad (if they know anything about it). If they are with the Minrothaddans, and if they know anything about Kastelios, they can provide them with information. Apart from that, there is nothing much they can do.

Thaumont 11, AC 1016: Peace Talks Resumed.

Location: City of Rafielton, Colony of Aengmor, Shadow Elves' Territories. OW

Description: As more and more Alfheim refugees, not just those involved in saving the forest, get back to Canolbarth following the treaty signed on Fyrmont 26, peace talks resume in Rafielton under the patronage of the DDC. King Doriath for the Alfheimers and Princess Tanadaleyo for the Shadow Elves attend the meeting.

The area in East-Rafielton is no more able to host all the elves that are getting back from Wendar, so King Doriath asks the shadow elves for a place in the south-eastern area of Canolbarth, where once lived the Red Arrow clan. (*See Nu. 23; Th. 14, Th. 27.*)

What This Means: Though no significant results in healing the forest have been reached yet, the peace process between the two groups of elves goes on.

More and more Alfheimers, including King Doriath and his court, are coming back to Canolbarth and the enclave in Rafielton is quickly becoming too small to house them all. Doriath, who still does not completely trust the shadow elves, asks Princess Tanadaleyo to allow his elves to settle in the southwestern area of Canolbarth, i.e. close to friendly Darokin and far from the dangerous Orclands.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs may take part in the peace meetings as bodyguards, ambassadors, spies, correspondents for *Joshuan Gallidox Publishing...*

Thaumont 11, AC 1016: Vannopolus Returns to Dunadale.

Location: City of Dunadale, Kingdom of Heldun, Thyatian Empire, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: A squadron of imperial dromonds under the command of Demetius Vannopolus sails into Dunadale's harbor today, bearing several hundred Thyatian troops. Vannopolus greets Duke Tiberia warmly, saying that the emperor dispatched additional forces to quell the unrest in Dunadale. Vannopolus's troops begin to help in patrolling the city and enforcing the duke's edicts. (*See Va. 6, Va. 13; Th. 14, Th. 18.*)

What This Means: Vannopolus is trying to get the duke to trust him. He is afraid that if he acts at once to depose Tiberia, armed conflict between his men and Tiberia's thugs would break out, and he wants to avoid bloodshed. Members of the dissident faction believe that Vannopolus has betrayed their trust, but he will try to contact them discretely over the next several days to explain his plan.

What the PCs Can Do: Thyatian players could be the agents sent by Vannopolus to re-assure the dissidents of his intentions. They will have to be very persuasive in getting them to go along with Vannopolus's plan. Dunadaler PCs could be the ones approached by Vannopolus, and will have to decide if they trust him.

Thaumont 11, AC 1016: Khem-kor Falls.

Location: Village of Khem-kor, Kingdom of Nithia. HW

Description: Advancing Selhomarrian troops manage to secure the Nithian mining village of Khem-kor, located near the Fire Wall Mountains, with a minimum of resistance. Within hours of its fall into Selhomarrian hands, a provisional government is established under the aegis of the local priests of Rathanos and Pflarr, and the Senkhite governor is imprisoned. (*See Th. 6, Th. 9; Th. 16, Th. 19.*)

What This Means: The Senkhites, being primarily concentrated around Tarthis, have little in the way of military might in the northeastern region of Nithia, save for those soldiers at Fort Horys. Khem-kor was also a center of local opposition to Senkha's rule last year, and the Senkhite administration has been harsh at times as a result.

Word has also spread of the Senkhite losses to "strange invaders" in the north, and of Menkara's liberation. This news has given hope to supporters of Ramose, who, learning of the Selhomarrians' arrival near Khem-kor, staged an uprising that aided the invaders.

What the PCs Can Do: The locals will have a great deal of information about troops movements and the like—information that could aid the Selhomarrians in their efforts. The PCs could be charged with obtaining that information, or scouting the area to find out for themselves what is going on.

Thaumont 11, AC 1016: More Military Downsizing.

Location: City of Trollhattan, Kingdom of Limn, Floating Continent of Alphatia. HW

Description: King Drushiye and Queen Mellora announce that Limn's armed forces will follow the Shiye example and downsize their military. (*See Va. 19; Th. 27, Fy. 15.*)

What This Means: Like the Shiye's, Limn's armed forces are funded by the kingdom instead of the empire. However, Limn's downsizing is less of an issue of economics as it is a matter of officers. The Hollow World's never ending daylight has wreaked havoc with the kingdom's undead officers, in particular the vampiric ones. The ones that have survived the sun's rays can do little to contribute to their commands, as their movements are restricted to the confines of their enclosed strongholds. As such, troop efficiency has suffered. Drushiye and Mellora have ordered their military commanders to reorganize and downsize the existing units to fit the depleted pool of officers.

Thaumont 12, AC 1016: Mealidan Leaves.

Location: Forest of the Curse, Kingdom of Wendar. OW

Description: Mealidan Mealidil receives the visit of a group of mixed human and elven adventurers that inform him he is going to be the target of an assassination attempt in the next weeks. After questioning the adventurers and examining the presented proofs, Mealidan immediately decides to leave Wendar with his close assistants and guards and settle in Darokin for the time being. (*See Va. 21.*)

What This Means: The investigators working with Bensarian were able to determine that Mealidan was the clanmaster that the Church of Idris wanted to kill. They have informed him of the situation and offered their protection, but he politely declined and preferred to leave Wendar, which is becoming a hot spot for Alfheimers.

Thaumont 12, AC 1016: Mystics Denounce Faith.

Location: City of Edairo, Kingdom of Thothia, NACE, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: A ceremony honoring the Immortal Rathanos is interrupted by adherents to the former mystical faith of Thothia. A number of mystics decry Rathanos and the Magian Fire-Worshipper faith as heresy, and *Pharaoh* Ramenhotep XXIV as a pagan and usurper. When the *pharaoh*'s guards attempt to quell the disturbance, violence erupts. A small riot breaks out as citizens join both sides in the fighting. When all is over, several people are dead, though the ringleaders of the mystics manage to escape. The *pharaoh* concludes the ceremony, but there is noticeable tension in the air. (*See Fl. 5, Kl. 4.*)

What This Means: Ever since taking the throne years ago, Ramenhotep has worked to restore the old Magian faith of his ancestors. It has been difficult to get the complacent Thothians to abandon their old ways, but he has been making great strides. Events such as happened today are not uncommon, though they do not usually end up quite so violently.

Little does Ramenhotep know that the incident was sparked by a group of werespiders—shapeshifting, intelligent spiders that are a part of aranean society. The araneas on the Great Escarpment have been very active in the past few

years, and are attempting to once more work their way into Thothian society. They hope to play off the religious discord in Thothia to weaken the kingdom before making their attempt to take over.

Thaumont 14, AC 1016: The Shadow over Drax Tallen.

Location: Keep of Drax Tallen, Forest of Geffron, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: The Shadow Army (composed of humans, humanoids and undead all under Sylarion's leadership) moves outside Drax Tallen's walls and begins its siege, using light siege machines and incorporeal undead to cause troubles to the elves. The elves on their part do not seem able or intent on engaging the enemy troops, which are not as numerous as they thought. Brief skirmishes occur on the keep's walls, but nothing major happens. (*See Th. 2, Th. 5; Th. 19, Th. 20.*)

What This Means: Sylarion decided that the time of the final assault has come. He has gathered all the forces stationed in the Great Forest that the Shadow Lord left him and positioned them near Drax Tallen. He plans to take the keep in a week, as he told his living lieutenants, and expects everyone to obey his orders or die. The soldiers and officers do not comply, being used at the Shadow Lord's similar requests.

Thaumont 14, AC 1016: First Volume of the Thrainkeliad Published.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: The first volume of a historical biography of the life of Thincol Torion, covering his personality, his reign, and the triumphs and defeats of the empire under his rule, is released today. Written in Redstone by Stefania Torion but published in Thyatis City, this first volume covers the life of her father up to his coronation as emperor. Included is a forward written by the magist Demetrian.

What This Means: A surprisingly well written and forthright study of her father, this book proves that literature and historiography is alive and well in Thyatis. The entire series of three volumes (the other two coming out next year) proves to be a sensitive and admiring portrayal of Thincol's life, as told by Stefania, including his failures as well as his successes. The Thrainkeliad soon becomes the standard work covering that period of Thyatian history referred to by Mystaran historians and sages. The depth, accuracy, and erudite style impress many who always thought Asteriela was the only scholar of the family.

Thaumont 14, AC 1016: Brishnapur's Legacy.

Location: Mumlyket of Nagpuri, Kingdom of Sind. OW

Description: In the palace of the *Rajah* of Nagpuri, Sitara Rohini gives birth to a baby girl. The girl is the daughter of Sitara and Anand Brishnapur, the great hero of the resistance. Sitara first became aware of her pregnancy in Fyrmont of last year. For the past few months, she has been residing here in the palace, awaiting the birth of her child and administering to her clerical duties. The girl is named Ananda, after her father. (*See Va. 5, Th. 2; Th. 19, Fl. 13.*)

What This Means: The birth of Sitara's child shows that even in the midst of the tragedy of war, there can be found some joy.

Thaumont 14, AC 1016: Bad News for Alfheim Elves.

Location: City of Rafielton, Colony of Aengmor, Shadow Elves' Territories. OW

Description: Princess Tanadaleyo allows the Alfheim elves to settle in Aengmor, but in the eastern area near Selinar Lake, instead of the south-western corner as King Doriath requested.

The Alfheimers are not happy about this. King Doriath tries to complain, but in the end he grudgingly accepts. (*See Th. 12; Th. 20, Kl. 3.*)

What This Means: Tanadaleyo knows that Alfheim elves and goblinoids would never be able to cooperate, while she still fears a Darokin-Alfheim alliance. She thus decided to send the Alfheimers near the Orclands, using them as a shield against the goblinoids of General Tlatepetl, who are becoming more aggressive every day.

Unfortunately this raises the tension between the two groups of elves.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs may be hired by Alfheimers as mercenaries, to escort them to the Selinar area and to protect them from the goblinoids until they manage to set up more solid defenses.

Thaumont 14, AC 1016: Survivors Perish.

Location: City of Blueside, Kingdom of Lagrius, NACE, Bellissaria. AS

Description: A palace servant informs Siaron and then Queen Elenitsa that the two surviving retainers of Tarkoman have died from the affects of the *traitor's regret*. Preparations are made to have the bodies cremated, with Siaron overseeing the matter herself with the help of several clerics. (See Va. 21, Va. 24; Th. 26, Fl. 2.)

What This Means: The two survivors have finally succumbed to the affects of the Randel spell. Siaron has them cremated to destroy the corpses out of fear that other unknown properties of the spells may manifest after their death as rumors have reached her that the spell causes the slain victims to explode or even rise as undead. These fears are unfounded, as they are unfounded.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs from Randel, or with knowledge of them, may be asked to consult on this matter. Given the Randel mind set, is doubtful that Randel nationals will divulge any usable information on the spell.

Thaumont 14, AC 1016: Imperial Delegation Reaches Helskir.

Location: City of Helskir, Kingdom of Heldun, Thyatian Empire, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: Two vessels, one flying the banner of the NACE and one flying the Thyatian imperial standard, sail into Helskir harbor this day, bearing diplomatic streamers. They remain under the watchful—and distrustful—eye of the harbor guards as the delegations disembark. Tension eases swiftly when King Zaar strides onto the docks and warmly embraces Asteriola. The group moves on to the palace and begins a series of closed-session meetings. (See Va. 13, Th. 11; Th. 18, Th. 20.)

What This Means: Alphatian officials were given advanced notice of the delegation by Thyatis, via magical communication, and sent their delegation shortly after the Thyatians set sail from Thyatis City. They arrive simultaneously because of good planning.

What the PCs Can Do: King Zaar could arrange to have the PCs on hand to guard the delegation and insure no harm comes to anyone. Many Alphatians and Thyatians alike are opposed to any peaceful negotiations with their long-time enemies. On the other hand, the PCs themselves may want the negotiations to fail, and initiating a diplomatic incident could cause the meeting to collapse before it begins.

Thaumont 14, AC 1016: Agreement Reached.

Location: City-State of Kastelios, Serpent Coast. DV

Description: After a week a hard bargaining on both sides, Thyatis and Kastelios have reached an agreement on shipping to the Thyatian Hinterlands. For its part, Thyatis will pay Kastelios 20% of the value of all goods shipped to the Hinterlands through Kastelian waters, and it will not allow military personnel to leave their ships during any stopovers in the city-state, except in groups of 50 or less at any time. Kastelios, in turn, will provide military escorts for the ships, and ensure that the best possible route is taken to the Hinterlands, in the least amount of time. Should any Thyatian ships be lost while under Kastelian guidance, the city-state will reimburse Thyatis for half of the value of all non-living goods lost. This treaty, called the Thyatis-Kastelios Accord of AC 1016, is good for ten years, and it may be renewed after that time. Moderately satisfied with the agreement, Helena Delanarius departs for Thyatis. (See Th. 3, Th. 4; Fl. 17, Fl. 18.)

What This Means: Thyatis and Kastelios have finally reached an agreement concerning what sort of aid Kastelios will provide to Thyatis in its efforts to re-establish a regular shipping link to its colonies in Davania. Generally speaking, Kastelios got the better deal, since the final terms come closer to what it wanted. Helena was not as good a negotiator as she thought, and since she was pressed for time, she had no choice but to accept the terms. There will be many unhappy people in the Thyatian government.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs were aides to either side, they could provide advice, or otherwise try to obtain information on the Kastelian position (if they are with Helena) or to ensure no information is stolen or otherwise “lost” (if they are with the Kastelians). If the PCs were part of the actual negotiations, then the outcome could very well be different from the one above.

Third Week

Thaumont 15, AC 1016: New Academic Year.

Location: Alphatian Empire, NACE and Kingdom of Karameikos. HW, AS, SD, NW, OW

Description: Today marks the day when schools open all around Alphatian territories, both in the outer and the inner worlds, and in Karameikos.

Of those, one is a brand-new, experimental school, as it is located in the outer world yet is attended by students from Alphatia in the Hollow World. This school, the Alphatian Magical Training School, is located on the western-most Grey Island, and is devoted to teaching young students the concepts of wizardry, spell-casting, Immortal-worshipping, and Hollow World magics. Promising students attend this school only one academic year, at the end of which they must be able to cast their first spell to be allowed to drink *mnemonic mineral potions* until they fall to its power. Those that fail to casting spells by the academic year’s end return to Alphatia as commoners, while those that succeed return as aristocracy and can attend advanced classes on the floating continent.

For its first year the school can only accommodate thirty students. One of them is lost and supposedly drowned in the Sundsvall Maelstrom, and school begins with only 29 students. (*See Nu. 28, Va. 25; Ka. 15.*)

What the PCs Can Do: A new party of Alphatian PCs may be introduced to the outer world through the school. Most of them should be prospective wizards or clerics, though those who fail may become fighters or thieves—a bad thing for this new school’s statistics, for sure. The PCs can then return to Alphatia and adventure in the Hollow World, or, intrigued by this world, escape the island (probably before the end of the academic year) and explore this strange new world—this is an opportunity to play a reverse outer-worlder-lost-in-the-Hollow-World campaign, with Alphatians stumbling unto the secret of their not-so-distant past.

[With the D&D rules clerics cannot cast spells until they reach second level, so clerics-in-training are judged by their Immortal’s acceptance in the clergy instead.]

Thaumont 15, AC 1016: A Strange Ship in Thyatis.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: A ship bearing strange markings sails up Vanya’s Girdle, and approaches Thyatis City today. Guards on duty report the ship’s description to their superiors, who then pass the word up the chain of command. Within two hours, archived Thyatian records are found that verify the ship as being Kastelian in origin. As the ship docks in the harbor, and the passengers disembark, a small group of Thyatian port officials meets them. Speaking in Thyatian, the hopeful ambassador, Constantine Telamanes, asks to be escorted to the emperor, as Kastelios is interested in opening formal diplomatic relations.

The Thyatians conduct Constantine and his entourage to the offices of a senior senator, telling him that the emperor is on important business and will not be able to meet him, and that the senator is more than capable of handling such affairs of state. Constantine is unhappy, but he does not show it, and he presents the senator with a

finely-woven tapestry, as well as his credentials. The senator receives them both, and welcomes Constantine to Thyatis.

The Thyatians then escort Constantine to temporary quarters in the diplomatic section of the imperial palace (where they can keep an eye on him) until more permanent arrangements can be made. (See Th. 8, Th. 11; Th. 18.)

What This Means: The Thyatians have had contact with the Kastelians, but it has been very infrequent over the past two decades. It was enough to allow them to recognize the Kastelian colors as the ship pulled into the harbor. Word of the deal with Kastelios has not yet reached Thyatis, so attitudes are still neutral towards the city-state, and Eusebius's absence was not a diplomatic snub aimed at Constantine, who had frayed nerves as a result of his long journey. As of today, Kastelios has official diplomatic relations with Thyatis.

What the PCs Can Do: Aside from providing assistance to the side they are on, whether it is in terms of providing information or otherwise, there is not much the PCs can do here.

Thaumont 16, AC 1016: Selhomarrians Take Tuhf-kebes.

Location: Village of Tuhf-kebes, Kingdom of Nithia. HW

Description: The Senkhite governor of the village of Tuhf-kebes is alarmed by reports of an advancing force of foreign soldiers, marching from the northwest. Although reports of the exact numbers of attackers are inconsistent, they all relate that at least a thousand men are heading towards the village. Frantically, the governor orders his men to meet the threat, in order to hold them off as long as possible. After his soldiers depart, he grabs several bags of collected tax money from the civic building he was given as a residence, and runs for the southeastern gate.

Before he can make his escape, however, he is spotted and apprehended by several irate villagefolk, all of whom notice that he was trying to leave with the tax money they paid. Dragging him back into the village, they are shocked by the sight of several hundred Selhomarian troops entering from the northwest, as well as those soldiers who were sent out to meet them—now prisoners of war!

One Selhomarian soldier, speaking in Nithian, tells the crowd that their village is no longer under Senkha's control, and that the lawful authority of *Pharaoh* Ramose has been restored. Many of the assembled villagers cheer at this news, while others angrily push the former governor to the fore, and accuse him of being an accomplice to Senkha's brutal regime, as well as trying to steal tax money. After arranging for a provisional government under the leadership of the priests and Selhomarian officers, the governor is detained. (See Th. 9, Th. 11; Th. 19, Th. 22.)

What This Means: The people of Tuhf-kebes are strongly supportive of Ramose, and resented the repressive regime imposed by Senkha on the people. The man who was appointed as governor of their region was well-known for being a petty crook; a crook with connections. For the villagers, the Selhomarians are welcome liberators. The warm reception received here is a reprieve from the indifference, or mild approval, encountered by the Selhomarians elsewhere.

What the PCs Can Do: Tracking down other runaway governors, most of whom fled with ill-gotten gains, is a perfect task for adventurers. Seeing the advancing tide of the Selhomarian forces, many supporters of Senkha in positions of power fled, rather than face justice for their crimes. Many of these former governors have enough wealth to hire mercenaries to help them build a power base for themselves, and so could pose a continued threat.

Thaumont 16, AC 1016: Olgar Rise Again.

Location: Town of Kulnovo, Converted Lands, Hulean Empire. SC

Description: The Olgarian resistance has come out of the shadow once again. Seeing the desperate situation in which the Hulean armies are, the rebels led by the Olgarian Church of Traladara are trying once again to fulfill their final goal: liberate their land from the Hulean domination. The new rebellion takes an unusual turn however as the small garrisons left in place by the Master are unable to cope with the popular uprising and the Talmav cavalry sent as reinforcement by the Empire of Zuyevo.

What This Means: The uprising in Olgar is a natural outcome of the over-extension of Hule's military. With his armies stretched from the Bylot Hills to Sindrastan, and a mortal threat pending at the northeastern border of the empire, the Master has come to accept the loss of some less vital regions. Also, this event means that the Empire of Zuyevo is really interested in having a lasting influence in the region, something that the Master hasn't understood yet.

Thaumont 17, AC 1016: Armies Clash.

Location: Klintest Lowlands, Kingdom of Rockhome. OW

Description: On the plains outside of the village of Murgar, near Lake Klintest, dwarves and kobolds fight. The kobolds are firmly entrenched in the hillside around the village, but the dwarves are determined to drive the intruders out. The conflict will continue for some days. (*See Va. 4, Th. 9; Ya. 2, Ya. 7.*)

What This Means: The dwarves mobilized their army as soon as the pass through the Denwarf Spur was cleared of snow. Anticipating this, Duric and Bifia had Psa'gh take his kobold army north along the Smaggeft Road. With luck, the kobold leader can hold the dwarves at the village until reinforcements can arrive. If not, the additional time will still help Duric and Bifia fortify Smaggeft against intrusion.

Thaumont 17, AC 1016: Wolf Problems.

Location: Village of Stratford, Archduchy of Westheath, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: A pack of wolves—were and normal—raid the village of Stratford in the evening. Five men and women are killed, and the town's livestock are sent fleeing into the nearby hills. The biggest problem, however, are the dozens who are injured during the attack. A messenger is sent to the archduke to plead for his assistance in getting clerical help before the next full moon, when it is feared the injured may become werewolves themselves! (*See Nu. 1, Va. 13; Fl. 20, Ya. 1.*)

What This Means: This is Synn's work yet again. The wolf pack in her service has grown, and part of it now terrorizes the regions near Glantri City. Even worse, she has managed to coerce Malachie du Marais's brother, Noussoir [*see Glantri: Kingdom of Magic or Joshuan's Almanac. Ed.*], into working for her. He now leads the pack that assaulted the village. It was his idea to attempt to infect others rather than simply slay them outright, in the hopes that Les Loups de la Guerre will be able to increase their ranks.

Archduke John Beaumarys-Moorkroft will reluctantly file the forms allowing clerical magic to be practiced in his dominion, and hopefully stave off an epidemic of lycanthropy. He will not forget this event, however, and will likely become a staunch (and powerful) opponent of the Prince of Morlay-Malinbois at the parliament.



Thaumont 17, AC 1016: Welcome Back Stranger.

Location: City of Bluenose, Kingdom of Arogansa, Floating Continent of Alphatia. HW

Description: During a lavish party, an unexpected guest arrives. Though she had been missing for years, the magist Karyndra is warmly welcomed in and becomes a focal part of the gathering. When asked, she explains her absence as her being involved in mage matters. (*See Nu. 7; Ya. 12, Kl. 3.*)

What This Means: Karyndra's reappearance is another ploy of Alphaks to stir up trouble in Alphatia. With His earlier transplant perceived as being crazed and quickly killed, He found another potential candidate among the refugees in Esterhold. Karyndra had been a popular socialite in Bluenose therefore she should be more memorable to the locals. Alphaks offered her passage to Arogansa. Karyndra may be a stereotypical Arogansan, but she does not follow the edict of Alphaks; she only wishes to leave Esterhold and return to Arogansa.

Thaumont 18, AC 1016: Athenos Hosts a Dignitary.

Location: City of Athenos, Republic of Darokin. OW

Description: Word arrives to the mayor of Athenos from Darokin City today. The ruling houses, and the chancellor, have agreed that Athenos would be a suitable location for the Kastelian embassy, considering the situation. They give the mayor permission to open diplomatic relations with Kastelios, and ask him to report on the outcome.

Soon afterwards, the mayor meets with Valeria Theramenes, and, through translators, they formally open diplomatic relations between the two countries. Onlookers are amazed at the beauty of the gifts Valeria lavishes upon the mayor, including fine robes and pottery. Afterwards, Valeria and her entourage are conducted from the inn at which they are staying to a building deemed suitable as an embassy. (*See Th. 11, Th. 15.*)

What This Means: Although the Darokinian leadership has more pressing matters to consider, the fact that there are possibly wealthy nations lying across the Sea of Dread, who might buy Darokinian goods, has not escaped them. Having no wish to offend the Kastelians, they decided on this arrangement to inconvenience everyone as little as possible, as well as resolve the issue quickly.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are part of Valeria's entourage, the PCs will surely be needed to help the Kastelians move into their new embassies.

Thaumont 18, AC 1016: Tiberia Deposed.

Location: City of Dunadale, Kingdom of Heldun, Thyatian Empire, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: Demetius Vannopolus and a squad of Thyatian troops march into Duke Tiberia's palace early this morning as the duke is sitting down to breakfast. Vannopolus announces that the duke is under arrest, by order of the emperor, for misadministration and violation of the rights of Thyatian citizens. The duke orders his men to move against the Thyatian troops, but as they do so the servants pull blades on the duke's guards. A short scuffle breaks out, and Tiberia sends one of his thugs to muster the rest of his troops from their barracks, but no one returns and Edmondo is eventually captured and chained. (*See Th. 11, Th. 14; Th. 20, Th. 23.*)

What This Means: Vannopolus prepared the way for this expertly. Dissident Dunadalers replaced the usual servants in Tiberia's palace. Vannopolus had his troops on "guard detail" the previous night. Before dawn he sent a detachment to the ducal guard barracks and had everyone disarmed and detained. Tiberia will be sent back to Thyatis and tried for his crimes; his loyal cronies will be sent to *Provincia Septentriona* to start a new, rugged colony.

What the PCs Can Do: This is a prime opportunity for a swashbuckling melee, swinging from chandeliers and fencing on balconies. Tiberia could try to escape through a secret passage, leading to a chase through the maze-like corridors of his palace.

Thaumont 19, AC 1016: Battle of Sothys.

Location: Village of Sothys, Kingdom of Nithia. HW

Description: Selhomarrian troops approach Sothys today, in the hopes of liberating it from the control of Senkha's armies. Unfortunately, the village is ringed with tents, and amongst them are hundreds of Nithian soldiers, travel-worn but ready for battle. Upon sighting the advancing foreigners, the defending Nithians charge them, plunging into their ranks and dealing death in every direction.

The Selhomarrians are able to recover quickly, and soon enough they slowly begin to gain ground, but not without losing significant numbers of men. By day's end, both sides are weary of battle, and the Selhomarrians withdraw a few miles to the north, and establish defensive positions there. (*See Th. 11, Th. 16; Th. 22, Th. 23.*)

What This Means: Reports of the Selhomarrians' conquest of Khem-kor quickly reached Senkhite forces stationed at Fort Horys, and several hundred soldiers—almost the entire garrison—rushed to Sothys to prevent the village, and the east-west road it straddles, from falling into enemy hands. Had the Selhomarrians left Khem-kor even two days earlier, they may have arrived in Sothys before the army.

Though both sides suffered losses, the Senkhites consider this is victory. The Selhomarrians, having entrenched themselves a few miles north of the village, will remain a threat to Senkhite activities in the region for quite some time.

What the PCs Can Do: Provided the PCs are on the Selhomarrians' side, they could perform scouting missions, ambush lone enemy patrols, and attack caravans heading west into the Nithian heartland, thus depriving Senkhite forces further west of essential metals and other goods needed to maintain their war effort. Though this would not cripple the Senkhites, it would certainly reduce their power and reach somewhat.

Thaumont 19, AC 1016: Kidnapped!

Location: Mumlyket of Nagpuri, Kingdom of Sind. OW

Description: In the dark of night, stealthy agents working for the Master of Hule sneak into the *rajab's* palace and kidnap Sitara Rohini and her daughter. Their disappearance is not discovered until the morning, and by then the kidnappers are long gone. An investigation is immediately implemented, headed by the *rajab* himself (an accomplished mage). Magic use is detected, but it is suspected that inside help was also given to the kidnappers. (*See Th. 14; Fl. 13, Fl. 21.*)

What This Means: Elite members of the *buraiya* (an assassin cult), assisted by the evil mage Bargle the Infamous, were responsible for this heinous deed. Sitara is a prominent figure in the hearts and minds of the Sindhi resistance—both among the followers of Gareth as well as those who believe in more traditional Sindhi practices. Her abduction will be a serious morale damper for Sindhi forces.

Thaumont 19, AC 1016: Shadow Falls.

Location: Keep of Drax Tallen, Forest of Geffron, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: Suddenly, after sunset the many undead stationed outside Drax Tallen start to make a definite major attempt at breaking the gates and storming the keep, helped by a few hundred humanoids. Distracted by this event, the elves do not realize that the rest of the Shadow Army is penetrating the keep by those same underground tunnels they used to leave it in AC 1015, and when they discover the intruders it is already too late. Chaos and panic follow, with the humans and humanoids of the Shadow Army chasing the elves inside the keep. Somebody also manages to lift the portcullis and open the main gate and the undead legions of Sylarion enter as well, following their living comrades inside the complex.

Victory seems at hand for the Shadow Army as they nearly surround the stunned and sick elves inside Drax Tallen's main building. But then the elves start retaliating with more strength and vigor, as if they were not sick anymore, and when the humanoids try to gain open ground, they find Sylarion's undead blocking all the ways out of the keep. And this is when the undead begin turning on their own comrades of the Shadow Army.

In the next confused hours, many shadow soldiers fall to the blades and spells of the crusaders and to the claws of the undead, and only a few hundreds manage to flee using the same tunnels they came from. They scatter in the forest, still unable to tell what happened inside the keep. (*See Th. 5, Th. 14; Th. 20.*)

What the PCs Can Do: Fight against the Shadow Army with the unexpected help of the evil undead. It's an opportunity that comes only once in a lifetime for good heroes, so do not waste it!

Thaumont 20, AC 1016: Unholy Alliance.

Location: Keep of Drax Tallen, Forest of Geffron, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: After the Shadow Army's retreat, the undead led by Sylarion gather in the dungeons below Drax Tallen, and some of them stay motionless under the suspicious gaze of dozens of crusaders. Above ground, the elven generals meet with Sylarion and the highest ranking undead, including Sylarion's vampiric kin and greater wyrds. After a few seconds of indecision, General Durifern extends his hand and the vampire returns the gesture. A smile appears on Durifern's face when he feels his vital energy is still intact. Sylarion is then greeted by the other generals and the strange party enters the main building to parlay, while the majority of the crusaders still seems unsure and suspicious about the situation. (*See Th. 14, Th. 19.*)

What This Means: Sylarion decided to betray his master, the Shadow Lord, after he met with his brother. That night he told him of his undying life and the misery he had to cope with, envying him for the life he still had. That night he had come to take his life, but he found out he could not after having heard his brother's tale of captivity and torture at the hands of the Shadow Lord. Sylarion discovered he hated the Shadow Lord for what he did to his kin and to himself more than the hatred he felt towards the living beings. So he struck a bargain with his brother: he would use his undead servants against the Shadow Lord's soldiers and ally with the crusaders in the final battle. To prove his trustworthiness he informed his brother of the poison he had poured in the wells and gave him instructions on how to neutralize it. When Delharis reported the news to the generals, they were highly suspicious, but when Sylarion informed them of his little trick of creating a diversion and using the tunnels to infiltrate Drax Tallen, they decided to give him a try.

The new alliance the two sides are negotiating seems a really strange one and nobody knows how long it may last. Maybe Sylarion has other plans of his own that he has not yet revealed, but up to now he has helped the crusaders defeat the Shadow Army, and so he and his undead legions are welcome. Maybe this is indeed the way to win the war in this accursed place: fight fire with fire.

Thaumont 20, AC 1016: Avengers Turn to Dark Side.

Location: Colony of Aengmor, Republic of Darokin, Kingdom of Karameikos and Kingdom of Wendar. OW

Description: After the peace agreements of AC 1015 and the recent developments, Alfheim Avengers got increasingly disappointed in Doriath and the treekeepers. In the end some of the most hot-tempered and disillusioned ones start turning their back away from Ilsundal and get involved in darker and more violent practices, including murders, sabotages and kidnappings. (*See Th. 11, Th. 14; Fl. 12.*)

What This Means: Atzanteotl, eager for a revenge on Rafiel and Ilsundal, infiltrated some of His agents in the Alfheim Avengers' ranks to exploit their "violent" nature [*most of the Avengers are young elves who do not want any compromise with shadow elves and will not mind using violence to chase them away from Canolbarth. Ed.*].

Atzanteotl plans to disrupt the peace process, using the Alfheim Avengers to spread terror in the area.

What the PCs Can Do: Corrupted (or simply fanatic) PCs may take great pleasure in destroying or sabotaging shadowelf properties.

Thaumont 20, AC 1016: A Village in Ruins.

Location: Town of Alinquin, Kingdom of Dawnrim, NACE, Bellissaria. AS

Description: King Teskilion is informed of an attack upon a small community near the Surshield border. The bulk of the town has been razed to the ground and many of its inhabitants killed. It is noted that the raiders absconded with all of the villagers' livestock. Teskilion strengthens patrols in the area. (*See Fl. 24, Ya. 6.*)

What This Means: In years past, there were the occasional raids from Surshield and with the bulk of the kingdom an official anarchy, there was very little that the Surshield government could do about it. Since the raids were infrequent and there were rarely fatalities, the people have learned to live with them. This year, the raids have become more brutal and more frequent. This most recent raid appalls Teskilon but he can do little short of invading western Surshield. He hopes that this raid is a one-time event and will pass.

What the PCs Can Do: Villagers may hire the PCs to deal with the raiders, which would take the PCs into Surshield. Likewise, PCs traveling in the area will find themselves challenged at each village; these challenges could be an excellent way to provide an adventure hook to involve the PCs.

Thaumont 20, AC 1016: Talks Stall in Helskir.

Location: City of Helskir, Kingdom of Heldun, Thyatian Empire, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: Negotiations between the Thyatians and Alphatians in Helskir have gone remarkably well up to this point. The Alphatian delegation was much intrigued by Asteriola's proposal, and both parties are looking for a way to prevent further warfare—for now. Neither side is ready yet for another draining war. Even the small Ostlander delegation, which arrived yesterday, is in surprisingly good spirits. But today a member of the NACE delegation raises a new, unexpected issue: the Alatian Isles. The Thyatians quickly express their willingness to cede their claim over Gaita, but both the NACE and Thyatis insist on controlling Aegos. Tempers flare, and when an Ostlander *jarl* spills mead on an Alphatian wizard's fine spider-silk robe, violence almost breaks out. The meeting quickly breaks up, with everyone surly. (*See Th. 14, Th. 18; Th. 23, Fl. 2.*)

What This Means: Previously, after each day's negotiations, the delegations would dine together in a large, friendly banquet, getting to know each other and building trust. This was Asteriola's idea, a way to bridge the cultural gap. Tonight, each delegation dines separately, and old wounds threaten to resurface. The talks, once so promising, teeter on the verge of failure, like so many promising negotiations between the Thyatians and Alphatians in the past.

Thaumont 21, AC 1016: Minrothad Moves In.

Location: Coastal countries of the Sea of Dread. OW

Description: Everywhere along the Coast of Dread, Minrothaddan merchants are adopting more aggressive trading policies, fiercely pushing out the competition. This especially hurts Linton House, as it does not have a new leader yet. It loses enough assets to bring it down to the rank of fourth house, behind Corun. (*See Va. 26, Th. 7; Fl. 8, Fl. 13.*)

What This Means: Minrothad is trying hard to take over as much trade as possible, before Linton House regains strength.

Thaumont 21, AC 1016: Start of Shipping Season Announced.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Amid ceremonial fanfare not seen since before the Great War, Thyatian officials and priests of Protius and other Immortal patrons of the sea proclaim the official beginning of the shipping season. Eusebius himself makes a speech at one of the docks, exhorting victory over the Twaelar and encouraging Thyatians to seek their fortune from the bounty of the seas through commerce.

Due to the dangers of the Twaelar menace, merchant ships set sail under the protection of imperial warships. Steps are also taken towards establishing more secure shipping lanes as well. Eusebius's speech coincides with the treasury issuing a larger number of small denomination coins (copper and silver mainly) into circulation, some of which are distributed to the crowd as part of the ceremony. (*See Th. 3; Fl. 1, Fl. 11.*)

What This Means: Eusebius is trying to raise the morale of his people through pomp and showmanship. He also hopes to encourage a greater mercantile spirit in Thyatis as a way to generate wealth and much needed revenues. The increase in coin minting was done at the advice of Nikephorus Logotharion, who believes it will give a boost to commerce. This costs the empire little, since gold circulation is not increased, but boosts the money economy (and with it trade), since most people (except for adventurers and the government itself) use small denomination coinage for daily exchanges.

Thaumont 21, AC 1016: Sage Leaves Gosluk Lands.

Location: Gosluk Tribal Lands. SC

Description: Despite their inheritor powers, the sage Mazrooth al Yedom and his assistant Hernán Costa have no choice but to leave Gosluk territory, where the goblins have been increasingly aggressive as the warriors are contesting their leader's unwillingness to join the goblin horde that Garok of the Flat Noses has been constituting in the southern Badlands. The archeologists must abandon several months of work searching for evidences that the common division of the Oltec culture into two groups is more than what current theories have it; the fact that they have not progressed during that time is not to cheer them up either. (*See Nu. 9, Va. 17; Fl. 4, Ka. 14.*)

The duo returns to the *Baronia del Grande Carrascal* after passing through Guadalante, and is allowed into the sacred capital of Buenos Viente by *Barón Joffik*. Hernán Costa and Marshall Vupilor Watak spend a lot of time together, which leads Mazrooth to conclude, grumbling, that "this won't help with the Oltec researches."

What the PCs Can Do: If they accompanied Mazrooth in his expedition last year, they now have to play hide and seek with the pushy Gosluk goblins. It is a bad time to cross any goblin territory near the Savage Baronies, anyway.

Fourth Week

Thaumont 22, AC 1016: Views on Elven Future.

Location: Barony of Ironwood, Final Range. NW

Description: Zoltan the Treekeeper agrees to a meeting with Elariantha Blackblade. The elven lord, after his recent discoveries concerning the future of the elven race, hopes that if the two lords can cooperate, it might open the path to that promised future he believes in.

The discussion proves fruitless however, as an intransigent Zoltan profoundly disagrees with Lord Blackblade's vision of the elven pantheon. (*See Va. 14; Fe. 26, Fy. 13.*)

What This Means: Though both lords wish to bring a better tomorrow to all elves of Mystara, they are not able to close the gaps between their visions and work together.

Thaumont 22, AC 1016: Tarthis Almost Falls—a Revelation Ensues.

Location: City of Tarthis, Kingdom of Nithia. HW

Description: For 19 days, battles have raged on and off along Tarthis's outer walls. On several occasions, the Selhomarrians have tried scaling the walls, undermining them, and smashing the main gate—all to no avail. Even their formidable offensive spells were successfully countered by the defenders. The Selhomarrians decide to try one last great offensive, and overwhelm the defenders as best they can.

After assembling reinforcements from other offensives elsewhere in western Nithia, the 9,000-man force approaches the walls with its siege towers and light catapults, bombarding the southern portion of the wall. Though the defenders put up considerable resistance, the sheer force of the assault—over 4,000 men in one region of the wall—is

enough to force the Senkhites to retreat. As they give ground, the Selhomarrians press their advantage, until they enter Tarthis itself, amid the scattered boulders of what remains of a large segment of the southern wall.

Realizing that they have breached the defenses, the invaders yell loudly as they charge into the city, and the streets are a frenzy of melee combat. Selhomarian wizards and priests cast spells against their opponents, and soon almost a quarter of the city is in Selhomarian hands. Some cityfolk, seeing that this may be the one chance for freedom, rise up against the Senkhites as well, and soon other regions are swept clean of her rule. By the end of the day, the Selhomarrians are within sight of the royal palace, but before they can advance in that direction, a loud trumpet call blasts through the air, momentarily silencing the din of battle.

Amid the debris of battle marches a host of heavily-armored Nithian soldiers, accompanied by several priests of senior rank. All eyes are drawn to the leader of that group, none other than Ramose himself! Some Senkhites drop their weapons in shock, others kneel. Speaking clearly to all within earshot, Ramose declares, “No more blood need be shed in sacred Tarthis; the battles are over, and I come to reclaim what is mine.” (*See Th. 16, Th. 19; Th. 23, Th. 24.*)

What This Means: Ramose has spent the past months building a cadre of supporters in the region of Kom-ombar, as well as building covert ties with senior priests of Pflarr, Rathanos, and Horon throughout the Delta Kingdom. When news of the imminent fall of Tarthis reached him, Ramose ordered his army to follow him without delay—not only to prevent unnecessary bloodshed; he wished to take control over the situation before anyone else could fill the power vacuum. He also sent word to the priests to issue public declarations of support for him, so that public opinion would be solidly behind him.

Now that Ramose appears to be in control of the city once more, he will have to work hard to purge the last of Senkha’s influence from the rest of Nithia.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs marching with the Selhomarrians have the chance to take part in an epic battle—the liberation of Tarthis! This is a battle that will become the subject of many songs and tales in the future, and this is an opportunity for them to gain renown, as well as the gratitude of many Nithians. Those who wish to search for Senkha will have no luck; she apparently fled before Tarthis’ fall.

Thaumont 23, AC 1016: Erekarr Passed.

Location: Erekarr Pass, Kingdom of Rockhome. OW

Description: The garrison of Fort Erekarr, backed by Vestlandic forces, marches out of the mountain pass and into the Klintest valley. There they will attempt to assess the current military situation in the lowlands, and do their best to regain dwarven holdings for Rockhome. Messengers are sent northwards around Lake Klintest, hopefully to reach Dengar and inform King Everast of their position. (*See Th. 5, Th. 17; Ei. 27, Ka. 28.*)

What This Means: The dwarven garrison was forced to winter in Fort Erekarr rather than Kurral, due to goblinoid incursions into Rockhome last year. They have been strengthened by the addition of allies from Vestland, and are determined to try and drive the goblinoids out as best they can. For the next several months, they will fight a running battle with goblinoid forces on the eastern side of Lake Klintest. As they are a small force, and cannot rely upon assistance from the dwarven armies on the other side of the Denwarf Spur, they will have to resort to guerrilla warfare and hit-and-run tactics.

Thaumont 23, AC 1016: A Hunting We Will Go.

Location: City of Helskir, Kingdom of Heldun, Thyatian Empire, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: For two days the delegations have had no contact with each other. Then, on the third day the chief Thyatian negotiator, Vivianna Romanes, sends an invitation to the Alphatian delegation... not to meet for official business, but to go on a hunt. The Alphatians suspect a trick, but decide to accept.

What This Means: For the last two days the Thyatians and Alphatians have been in contact with their respective governments—via magical communication—, trying to find a way out of the impasse. Neither side seems willing to

budge. However, the two days apart functioned as a cooling off period, and neither side can afford to see the negotiations fail.

Though the Alphatians suspect the hunt to be some kind of “Thyatian trick,” and prepare themselves as if going into battle, the hunt is exactly what it is advertised as. The day is spent in the countryside, and a good time is had by all, with friendly competition to bag the most game and show off one’s horsemanship and other skills. By the end of the day trust and amity has been restored, and a feast is held in celebration, with the catches of the day as the main course. (*See Th. 18, Th. 20; Fl. 2, Fl. 3.*)

What the PCs Can Do: Though this seems like a spur of the moment occurrence, the way has been carefully prepared to insure that nothing disturbs the day, especially anything that can lead to conflict. Vivianna hired agents to discretely insure that nothing disrupts the fun. The PCs could either be those agents, out foiling an effort to cause mayhem. Or they could see this as an opportunity to finish off the talks once and for all. If the former, they will likely face a determined band seeking to kill one or more of the diplomats, and must prevent that. If the latter, they will be up against an elite team of Thyatians, and then a large group of well armed, spellcasting diplomats.

Thaumont 23, AC 1016: Ramose Issues a Proclamation.

Location: City of Tarthis, Kingdom of Nithia. HW

Description: Sitting once more on the throne, Ramose, *Pharaoh* of Nithia, issues a formal proclamation, to be carried by runners all across Nithia. He states that the power of Senkha has been vanquished, and that, by the will of the Immortals, he is in power once more. All those governors who willingly collaborated with Senkha and her evil regime are guilty of treason, and will each receive a sentence of 30 years in the mines. Those soldiers who knowingly and enthusiastically carried out Senkha’s orders are sentenced to field postings along the Jennite frontier for five years. Furthermore, anyone who was sentenced to slavery under Senkha’s rule will be freed, unless such punishment was in fact merited. Finally, for her crimes against Nithia, and for inflicting undue pain and suffering on its people, Senkha is pronounced guilty of high treason. She is sentenced, in absentia, to eternal banishment from Nithia.

Hearing the judgments of the *pharaoh*, many commoners cheer at the redressing of great wrongs, while the Selhomarrian soldiers, keeping the peace, look silently at the spectacle. (*See Th. 19, Th. 22; Th. 24, Ya. 5.*)

What This Means: Ramose is asserting his power, now that he is back in control. Within the next few weeks, many former Senkhite governors will be brought to justice, while those who suffered under her rule will receive some compensation for knowing that her rule is at an end.

Thaumont 24, AC 1016: A Parting.

Location: City of Tarthis, Kingdom of Nithia. HW

Description: In a secluded portion of the palace at Tarthis, Ramose meets with the highest-ranking Selhomarrian soldiers, and they discuss the logistics of the withdrawal from Nithia. The officers politely inform Ramose that removing over 10,000 soldiers from Nithia without obstructing his efforts to rebuild his nation will be a difficult task, if he wishes it to be done quickly. Ramose offers the services of his own aides in facilitating the withdrawal, as well as the use of some of the larger floating barges. He also offers the services of his runners, so that the order to withdraw may be spread quickly.

Feeling that this offer is reasonable, the officers accept. (*See Th. 22, Th. 23; Ya. 5, Am. 12.*)

What This Means: Ramose knows that Nithia now owes a debt to Selhomarr. Even though the support of the priests was crucial in securing domestic support, without the Selhomarrian intervention, Senkha’s forces could still very well be in power. Although he is grateful for Selhomarr’s aid, Ramose knows he must concentrate on securing support domestically, and consolidating his position politically, if his power is to endure. Only when that is accomplished can he realistically turn his thoughts towards how best to repay the Selhomarians for their deed. As such, it was the least he could do to offer the services of his aides; this way, he no longer has to worry about the problem, and he can focus on more immediate concerns.

News of the Selhomarrian intervention in Nithia will likely spread throughout Iciria, though in the process the story is likely to be distorted in one way or another. Regardless, people will soon become more aware of the empire that has existed quietly, in an isolated corner of the Hollow World, for as long as they can remember.

Thaumont 25, AC 1016: Seminar in Glantri.

Location: City of Glantri, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: During the annual wizard's festival of Arcanium in Glantri City, Professor Emeritus Angus McClintock, recently returned to his position at the Great School of Magic, hosts a seminar. The subject of the seminar is information regarding the city of Aengmor, in the Broken Lands, where Angus spent many years living among its former goblinoid denizens. Scholars from all around flock to hear this seminar—even scholars from other nations. A few shadowelf spies are also present, to listen to Angus's speech.

What This Means: McClintock learned much of the origins of the shadowelf city during his stay there, and has long been hoping to share his information. With the recent rising of the city, it seemed as appropriate a time as any. The information he gives may be disturbing to some, and attempts on his life are not out of the question.

What the PCs Can Do: Angus has a wealth of information to share with prospective adventurers hoping to find their way into the ancient city and do some exploring.

Thaumont 25, AC 1016: Disorder Rises.

Location: Kingdom of Ochalea and Kingdom of the Pearl islands. SD

Description: Ever since becoming independent, the nations of Ochalea and the Pearl Islands have found things to be more difficult than they expected. Their armies have been on full alert almost the entire time, placing a strain on their struggling economies and otherwise pacific people. Their trade has suffered as Thyatian ships come to port less frequently and Thyatian soldiers are not present to spend gold in the islands' markets. Meanwhile, brigandage and piracy has increased considerably, and the kings have had trouble dealing with it, being reluctant to dispatch fleets in search of pirate lairs while they still fear a Thyatian reprisal.

All this strain comes to a crisis point this spring. The common folk, happy enough with a simple life and not much worried about trade, are tired of serving for extended periods in the army. All are troubled by the fact that their nations are more militarized but less secure than they were in "the good old days." Markets collapse as worry spreads, and even people who thought their "simple, happy life" was disconnected to such matters find themselves affected. (*See Fl. 2, Fl. 3.*)

What This Means: Much of this is the natural result of the two peace-loving nations having been on a wartime footing for almost a decade. Unusual exactions above and beyond normal taxes have been required. In addition, both Ochaleans and the Pearl Islanders put on an air of being unconcerned with commercial matters, and were unaware of the extent to which that meant they relied on outsiders to produce common goods they used, in exchange for selling pearls and raw spider silks. With Thyatian traffic directed elsewhere, and no other similar market to replace Thyatis, both nations have suffered badly. Increased swashbuckling piracy in the region is one result.

However, much of the difficulties both nations are experiencing are part of a conscious policy initiated by Eusebius. Eusebius has encouraged a quiet, unofficial trade embargo, and has provided aid and encouragement to pirates and bandits in the area in order to discourage other nations from trading with them.

What the PCs Can Do: They can sing "A pirate's life is a life for me" if they are interested in a swashbuckling campaign. Or they can be hired to chase down outlaws. Enterprising characters could brave the buccaneer-infested seas to trade with the islands, attempting to turn a profit. These ventures should be highly risky, though: it is at least as possible to find buyers who can't afford to pay much for your goods in the troubled islands as it is to find someone with more cash than sense. Fortunes can be lost as easily as they can be made.

Thaumont 26, AC 1016: No Available Mages.

Location: City of Aaslin, Kingdom of Notrion, NACE, Bellissaria. AS

Description: King Corydon sends word to the mages within Aaslin of his need to have them investigate something for him but to his surprise there are no favorable responses to his call: most mages state that they are committed to the construction of the dome for the new city. Discouraged, Corydon mobilizes the troops of 2nd Notrion Army to march to the region to investigate the matter and subdue any forces they meet. Corydon places General Tahort in command of the expedition. (*See Va. 24, Th. 14; Fl. 2, Fl. 11.*)

What This Means: There are few powerful mages in Aaslin to begin with. While it is true that most mages are busily working with the dome project, it would not be too much for one or more to do the task. However, Corydon is not well liked by the mages: as a commoner, they see him as a puppet of the NACE and only in power due to Commander Broderick. Had Corydon been a cleric or even a low-level mage they would have honored his request.

Corydon sees this lack of response from the mage community as further signs that he has rivals within Notrion. He secretly believes that some of the mages are conspirators in a plot to overthrow him; therefore, he must send troops to the region to handle the matter. Fearing a potential coup, he sends only a third of his forces while the balance will remain near Aaslin as a precaution.

There really is no conspiracy to overthrow Corydon. Though a few have considered it, the mages are quite content to ignore Corydon and carry on with their own lives. If the domestic situation does not improve, most feel that the populace will rise up against him. If and when that happens, they will just step in and assume control.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs may find themselves asked to accompany the troops. If the PCs are well known by Corydon, they may be asked to stay in Aaslin to act as bodyguards. PCs arriving in Aaslin may find themselves detained and questioned to make sure that they are not hirelings of some would be usurper.

Thaumont 27, AC 1016: *Tree of Life* Threatened.

Location: Forest of the Curse, Kingdom of Wendar. OW

Description: The keepers of the Grunalfs' *Tree of Life* manage to discover and chase out of their sacred grove a group of humans who were about to damage their relic. Further investigations prove that they tried to set the whole grove ablaze but the tree's own magic stopped them. The Alfheimers report this violation to the king and demand the criminals to be caught and put to trial as soon as possible. They even request permission to take the matter into their own hands, but King Gylharen firmly rejects that last request. (*See Va. 3; Fl. 16, Fl. 19.*)

What This Means: This is yet another Church of Idris scheme. They staged the assault at the sacred elven relic only to cause resentment in the Alfheimers and hoping to provoke the avengers' retaliation. Needless to say, the avengers have no intention of letting this capital offense go unpunished.

Thaumont 27, AC 1016: New Hope for Canolbarth.

Location: Selinar Camp, Colony of Aengmor, Shadow Elves' Territories. OW

Description: After months spent studying the magical plague that stroke Canolbarth Forest during the Great War, Jorodrin Feadiel and his research team decide to call forth a meeting with King Doriath and the other clanmasters currently in Aengmor. The senior treekeeper reports his discoveries to the council and suggest that, in order to save the forest, the *Trees of Life* need to be brought back into Canolbarth. [*According to the Timeline of Alfheim Invasion (Igorov Intitute, Rymskigrad, AC 1012) all Trees of Life were brought to safety in Darokin except the Long Runner and Mealidil ones that were magically concealed and left in Alfheim. Ed.*] (*See Th. 6; Kl. 24.*)

What This Means: In the past months Jorodrin Feadiel and his team learned that the plague is actually a strong entropic spell and that powerful magical forces are needed to counteract that spell. A few weeks ago Jorodrin discovered that the two Trees of Life currently in Aengmor regained some energy lately and set himself to study the strange phenomenon, but found no clear answer to his doubts. The old treekeeper feels that bringing all the Trees of Life back to Canolbarth is the right thing to do, even though this will expose the sacred relics to the "evil" shadow elves.

This is yet another part of the plot devised by Ilsundal and Rafiel to save Canolbarth and strike again at their common enemy Atzanteotl.

What the PCs Can Do: This could be the right time to run CM7 and bring the Feadiels' *Tree of Life* to Canolbarth.

Thaumont 27, AC 1016: He Who Rules the Skies...

Location: City of Andaire, Kingdom of Jafilia, Floating Continent of Alphatia. HW

Description: Empress Eriadna meets with her senior military officers to discuss the empire's defenses. She tells them that the empire cannot afford to lose anymore troops, even if it means subsidizing the kingdoms more. She voices her concerns over the increased production of *skyships*. Without any planned expansions, she sees no reason for a large airborne force. Her commanders respectfully disagree citing that the best way to secure Alphatia's lofty borders is by having complete control of the air. Likewise, a large air fleet will allow ease of transportation to the lands below for diplomatic and exploration purposes. Eriadna agrees to allow *skyship* construction to proceed. She also authorizes a reorganization of the empire's armies. (*See Va. 19, Th. 11; Fy. 15.*)

What This Means: Unlike the NACE, Alphatia has the luxury of being virtually impregnable to the assaults of the indigenous peoples of Hollow World. There really is no need to have a large army to secure the borders for an attack that may never come. Given Eriadna's current doctrines, campaigns of expansion are also in doubt. However, no one wants to see Alphatia caught without a strong fighting force.

Since the reawakening in the Hollow World, Alphatia has gone full steam ahead with *skyship* construction. Given its aerial nature, the tendency is not unfounded. Eriadna herself had initiated the *skyship* boom. However, with numerous *skyships* completed and many others under construction, she sees that the effort has reached its objectives. Her commanders make a valid point about the *skyships* and she agrees to continue their production.

Thaumont 28: A Mysterious Visitor.

Location: Sierra Borgosa. SC

Description: A man wearing a dark cloak and a hood is ushered before Don Esteban, refusing to give his name or reveal his face. He claims to represent a "certain interested person" who is willing to assist Don Esteban to retake Almarrón. At first Don Esteban scoffs at this unexpected offer—but he soon changes his demeanor when the hooded man produces a large sack of gems. This he says is merely a goodwill gesture to allow Don Esteban to hire some mercenaries. The master of the hooded emissary will send more assistance when the time is right.

What This Means: Don Esteban was removed from power as *Barón* of Almarrón in AC 1008 by an uprising led by Don Maximiliano. Ever since he has been scheming to recover his position, without success. His cause took a further blow on Ambyrmont 27 last year when some of his supporters in Sierra del Plata were killed. Don Esteban is now so desperate to get Almarrón back that he is even prepared to accept support from an unknown party, no doubt with some hidden agenda, in order to get back his barony.

Thaumont 28 AC 1016: Death of the Master?

Location: Temple of Greatrealm, The Dark Wood, Hulean Empire. SC

Description: A group of adventurers of unknown origin have been able to penetrate deep in the religious compound from which the Master has overseen most of Hule's military operations. These adventurers have defeated the Master's personal guards and have been able to reach the Master's quarters. Since then, nobody has seen the Master. The hagiarchy is astonished by what has always been unthinkable. (*See Fl. 3, Fl. 5.*)

What This Means: The Master has been defeated but he is not dead. He only has reincorporated his original form and needs to rest until he is able to rebuilt a new alternate self (*magic jar* into a new corpse). However, his defeat comes as a serious blow to the infrastructure of power in Hule as this event has revealed that Hosadus is not invulnerable. Also, the Master's absence totally disrupts the line of command in an empire that has been accustomed

to being ruled by a sole man for more than 400 years. Finally, when he will come back, the Master risks to seek vengeance before running the state's affairs. For the Master, it also means that Immortality needs to be attained soon or else, the odds might become even thinner.

Topic of the Month: The Kastelios-Thyatis Accord

[Excerpt from a recently-released Darokinian document. Ed.]

The meetings between the Empire of Thyatis and the City-State of Kastelios, regarding the free movement of shipping through the Sea of Dread, will prove in time to be a ground-breaking example of skillful diplomacy. Both parties had their own interests coming to the table, and it is clear, from all available reports, that both acted in the best manner possible to protect them.

Thyatis, for its own part, was in the throes of its war against the Twaelar, which, it will be remembered, greatly hindered its capacity to continue its colonization efforts in the Hinterlands, currently considered to be an important imperial policy. With no safe route in the Eastern Sea of Dread, by which to ship its goods, soldiers, and colonists to Davania, Thyatis had to seek an alternative. Ochalea and the Pearl Islands, though not hostile to the empire, were still sovereign states, and thus Thyatian shipping could not pass through their waters with impunity. Fortunately, not all avenues had been exhausted—the Thyatians had knowledge of Kastelios, though it was considered too distant to maintain regular contact. Sending ships to Kastelios would be a considerable journey, but by no means impossible, as the difficulty was navigating the northern shore of Davania, known to be festooned with treacherous shallows, reefs, and worse.

Kastelios, it would seem, has known of the Old World for several years, though its information appears to have been based largely on hearsay and rumor. What is known of the city-state's history is available in other documents *[also in the Mystaran Almanac. Ed.]*, so there is no need to repeat it here. Suffice it to say that, as the rumored remnant of a long-dead empire, Kastelios has been fighting for its existence for a long time. It is only relatively recently, within the past decade according to Kastelian contacts, that the city-state has started to explore its surroundings and venture farther afield.

So it was that Thyatis approached Kastelios, in the hopes of securing an arrangement by which the city-state could aid it in securing access to the Hinterlands once more, knowing full well that, as a local nation, Kastelios might know of a route by which the treacherous northern coast of Davania could be navigated, thereby bypassing the Twaelar realms entirely. The negotiations were of course tense, with each side trying to advance its own interests as much as possible. Thyatis, for its own part, appeared to be seeking a safe route to the Hinterlands, and little more. Kastelios, on the other hand, apparently saw an opportunity to reach the Old World, through an agreement with Thyatis; the trade agreements they wished to secure, had they been accepted, would have provided the city-state with a stepping stone to establishing firm contacts with the nations of southeastern Brun.

Regardless, the outcome appears to benefit both parties. Thyatis has gained a route to the Hinterlands, as well as a Kastelian guarantee of safe shipping, so long as Thyatian vessels are under escort by its navy. Kastelios has gained revenue from the deal, as well as the likelihood of expanding its diplomatic network, though perhaps not in the manner it had hoped. This deal is an historic one, in that it represents the first official, diplomatic contact between a nation of Davania, and one of Brun, in a civilized context.

What sort of consequences could one speculate from this encounter? It is difficult to say at this point, though in all likelihood the current trading ties that are being forged could very well evolve into a more comprehensive agreement, perhaps covering such diverse areas as cultural exchanges, cooperation in the Sea of Dread region, and perhaps military agreements in the southwest. Regardless, the development of ties between Thyatis and Kastelios, no matter how tenuous at the moment, could signify the beginning of a new era of exploration in the south. How events actually shape remains to be seen, but this region of the world certainly merits further attention, with the revelation that other cities exist further inland.

EVENTS: FLAURMONT

First Week

Flaumont 1, AC 1016: Punitive Expedition Disembarks.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: A large armada, assembled to fight the Twaelar, sets sail from Thyatis City. Among it are volunteer contingents from Karameikos and Ierendi, equipped with magic items created in those nations over the last several months to fight the Twaelar. (*See Th.3, Th. 21; Fl. 11, Fl. 15.*)

What This Means: Originally the fleet was scheduled to sail at the announcement of the opening of the shipping season. Getting the various contingents organized delayed things, however. For the Thyatian Empire, this armada, disembarking with great fanfare, is little more than a reconnaissance force. While the empire received support from the spellcasters of its neighboring nations, its own powerful wizards (especially the Sclari) and clerical orders are working on a stronger response. This fleet is to test out tactics, and the losses it takes will not hurt the empire much, since the Ierendis and Karameikans were enlisted for the purpose of absorbing casualties. Many of the ships are fitted with curious bronze tubes connected to a large bellows.

What the PCs Can Do: Ierendis and Karameikans interested in fighting an undersea foe can go along for the ride.

Flaumont 1, AC 1016: Treachery Discovered.

Location: Idris Tower, Forest of Lothenar, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: A messenger reaches the Temple of Idris in the Dead Forest of Lothenar bearing strange news about the Shadow Army's retreat in Geffron. When the high priestess of Idris tries to magically contact the Shadow Lord to hear a report on the military campaign, she finds out the Shadow Lord does not answer. After a few vain attempts, she deduces the Shadow Lord is either dead or is on another plane. A quick spell provides her with the information she desires: the Shadow Lord is no more on Mystara. The high priestess curses the Shadow Lord's treachery and immediately contacts the Onyx Ring, instructing them to take care of the military campaign against the elven crusaders in Geffron. (*See Va. 9, Th. 19; Fl 6, Fl. 10.*)

What This Means: The high priestess did not expect the Shadow Lord to outright disobey her and abandon the quest she gave him. This is a major setback in his plans regarding the intruders in Denagoth and will have to be dealt with immediately, before it becomes serious. As for the Shadow Lord's punishment, she will assign one the undead vassalich will not forget for the next centuries to come.

Flaumont 1, AC 1016: Elections in Esterhold.

Location: Republic of Esterhold, NACE. AS

Description: Elections are held today throughout the Republic of Esterhold. The theoretical procedure is the following:

Towns and cities of more than 500 elect one magistrate per 1,000 inhabitants, rounded up.

The capital has one more magistrate than a normal city of its size.

Villages under 500 or scattered families and communities elect 10 magistrates total.

In most instances the elections take place without any real trouble, and despite their obvious impracticality surprising few frauds or other problems are reported except maybe in the wildest and farthest edges of Blackrock and

Anchorage. In Blackrock, Anchorage, Marlin and Southrock most magistrates are either Alphatians or Jennites who are supporters of Favian Vern, with only a minority of extremist Alphatians who favor the old ways and secessionist Jennites.

In Verdan, however, and to a lesser extent in the countryside of the other provinces, the situation is not as rosy: fraud seems to be massive, and yet worse, the results contrast alarmingly with those of the rest of the republic. Actually, the moderate Alphatians and Jennites are in the minority and many magistrates are secessionist Jennites of varied background, from the rare peaceful one to the ones aligned with former governor—now rebel leader—Talin. (*See Va. 1; Fl. 3, Fl. 11.*)

What the PCs Can Do: If PCs are well-known figures in Esterhold, maybe friends of Favian Vern's or part of the underground Jennite movement back then, they may make a try at becoming magistrates, and who knows, governors.

Flaumont 1, AC 1016: Alphatia Claims the Sea.

Location: Confederate Capital of Ionace, NACE. AS

Description: Prompted by the various attempts of other nations to explore the sunken continent, the Alphatian Council adopts a resolution stating that the entirety of the Alphatian Sea is the property of the NACE and that further explorations will be regarded as trespassing, unless they are approved by the NACE first. (*See Nu. 3; Kl. 11.*)

What This Means: The NACE, which has already laid claim to the various land masses, no matter how small, that dot the Alphatian Sea—remains of the sunken continent—, and to the sunken continent itself—where they are exploring and constructing a new domed city—, has decided to extend its claim to the very sea. Since the descendants of the Followers of Air also regard the aerial zone as theirs, it thus means they claim everything in the Alphatian Sea whatever the element (air, water, land). However, the claim over the Alphatian Sea is more wish than fact.

Flaumont 2, AC 1016: Council Baffled.

Location: City of Darokin, Republic of Darokin. OW

Description: The ruling Council of Darokin receives a surprise during their regular session; two goblinoids suddenly appear out of thin air!

After a brief moment of confusion, one of the goblinoids, a red-skinned orc, reveals peaceful intent. Addressing the council (via magicks worked by his hobgoblin companion), he claims to be a representative of Governor-General Tlatepetl of Orcland. Tlatepetl wishes to open diplomatic relations with the republic on behalf of his people.

The council is not sure what to make of this, and breaks for the day. They put the diplomats up for the night, and send out for representatives of the Darokin Diplomatic Corps to aid in the situation. (*See Fl. 4, Ya. 13.*)

What This Means: Tlatepetl has spent the better part of 1015 building his forces, and scouting nearby nations. His research has shown that his land is technically claimed by Darokin, and after consulting with his ally Khordarg, the pair decided that they might do well to open diplomatic ties to the nation.

Flaumont 2, AC 1016: Lagrius Acts.

Location: City of Blueside, Kingdom of Lagrius, NACE, Bellissaria. AS

Description: Queen Elenitsa mobilizes the troops of 2nd and 3rd Lagrius Banners and has them march to the Notrion border. General Fredrix, commander of 2nd Banner, is appointed overall commander of the two divisions. Officially the matter is explained as a training exercise.

Siaron then contacts Corydon to inform him of the Lagrius troop deployment. She urges him to have his own troops rendezvous with her troops at the border and combine their forces to confront the mysterious troops. Though

a bit surprised that Elenitsa knew of his deployment, Corydon agrees and dispatches riders to convey the change of orders to his troops. (See Th. 14, Th. 26; Fl. 11, Fl. 28.)

What This Means: Both Elenitsa and Siaron had become impatient at the lack of action from King Corydon. They were about to dispatch adventurers to the region, but an associate in Aaslin told them of Corydon's own deployment. Elenitsa sees this as an excellent opportunity to establish military relations with her neighbors. Likewise, Corydon sees this as the means to establish closer relations with Lagrius, hopefully to encourage future trade agreements.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs may find themselves hired to act as guides to the Lagrius troops.

Flaumont 2, AC 1016: Treaty of Helskir Concluded.

Location: City of Helskir, Kingdom of Heldun, Thyatian Empire and NACE, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: After a week of tough negotiations to hammer out the details, the diplomats at Helskir finally reach an agreement.

Asteriola gets her wish—Helskir and Dunadale become members of both the NACE and the Thyatian Empire, under her and Zaar's rule. Heldun will have a small self-defense force commanded by King Zaar, but is otherwise to be a demilitarized area with no Thyatian or Alphatian garrisons. The Ostlanders gain the right to settle in Thyatian territories on the Isle of Dawn, becoming Thyatian citizens, or in Heldun, with the status of a “distinct society.”

The trickiest issue was the eastern and southern Sea of Dawn. Thyatis agreed that the Alatian Islands could be “voluntarily incorporated” into the NACE, but demanded that the NACE allow Thyatis to “voluntarily re-incorporate” the Pearl Islands and Ochalea into the Thyatian Empire in exchange plus the right to a “Thyatian Quarter” in Aegopoli, Aegos. Thyatis also gained an exemption of import and export taxes in and out of NACE’s territories for the next 5 years (renewable beyond that), as long as the goods transit through one of their common territories, either Heldun or the Aegopoli franchise *[goods travel with no tax throughout the NACE anyway, so this is just the NACE discarding import/export tax on Thyatian goods at those ports. Ed.]*. The border on the Isle of Dawn is fixed “for all time;” both Helskir and the NACE give up all claim to the disputed areas at the head of the island and the border of Heldun remains as shown on the maps for Helskir and Dunadale; the Thyatian emperor is granted control over the disputed territories to dispose of as he wishes. (See Th. 23, Th. 25; Fl. 3, Fl. 5.)

What This Means: Both sides believe they have gotten the better part of the deal. While on the surface the deal sounds better for Thyatis, the NACE gets Helskir and Dunadale neutralized and regains the Alatians without having to go to war for them. Though they gave some trading rights to Thyatis and accepted limits on the rights to tax that trade, the NACE needs someone to transport goods between their far-flung domains, and the Alphatians are too busy building their nation to undertake that themselves. They figure that within five years, they should be stronger economically and politically. They also believe it will be easier for them to “voluntarily incorporate” the Alatians into the NACE than it will be for Thyatis to regain control over the Pearl Islands and Ochalea—who are out of the area of effect of the Alphatian Artifacts thus not worth fighting over.

For Thyatis, Eusebius hopes to make the NACE economically dependent on Thyatian merchants and strengthen his nation economically, while maintaining territorial expansion on the southern continent. He believes the Alphatians are unlikely to interest themselves in trade anyhow, since they are likely to be distracted by the latest magical gizmo even five years from now. He has five years to make them rely on Thyatian shipping, and plans to make the most of it. Furthermore, the empire will corner the lucrative trade between the Alphatian Sea region and the Old World. And the Alphatians have underestimated Thyatian craftiness yet again, because Eusebius does have a plan to regain Ochalea and the Pearl Islands.

Flaumont 3, AC 1016: Great Migration Amok!

Location: Mumlyket of Jhengal, Kingdom of Sind. OW

Description: The Great Migration of Hool begins an epidemic of raiding and looting in the western regions of Sind. Their attacks are rather strategically coordinated upon towns and villages known to be sympathetic to Sindhi rebels.

The forces of Jhengal, overseen by agents of the Master of Hule, are prevented from assisting the inhabitants of the region from fighting back. (*See Fe. 8, Am. 4.*)

What This Means: The Master has found a use for the Great Migration, which loosely allied itself to Hule late last year. By carefully coordinating their raids on rebel outposts, he is able to free his own troops for use suppressing the revolt elsewhere in Sind.

The Great Migration happily raids the region, although Hool is quickly beginning to question his mission here in Sind.

Flaumont 3, AC 1016: Governors Elected.

Location: Republic of Esterhold, NACE. AS

Description: The governors of the provinces of Blackrock, Anchorage, Marlin and Southrock are quickly reinstated into their functions by the assembled magistrates.

In Verdan however, though all the secessionist agree that they don't want to reinstate Governor Tristilia in her job, they are split as to who they should give her seat to, and the name of Talin does not rally a majority in the heated vote. After some magistrates actually start up a fight over the matter, the session is dismissed by Tristilia.

Favian Vern is startled by the results in Verdan and the subsequent inability of the magistrates to select a new governor, but, though worried, concludes that such is democracy. (*See Va. 1, Fl. 1; Fl. 11, Fe. 13.*)

Flaumont 3, AC 1016: Ball in Helskir.

Location: City of Helskir, Kingdom of Heldun, Thyatian Empire and NACE, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: The day after the treaty is signed, the delegations celebrate with a lavish ball sponsored by King Zaar and Queen Asteriola. Thyatians and Alphatians dance together, and all seems well with the world. The festive mood is somewhat spoiled by unannounced guests, when two Heldannic Knights storm into the room announcing "you will pay for your disregard of our claims." Guards attempt to throw the knights out of the ballroom and detain them, but they immediately disappear. (*See Th. 25, Fl. 2; Fl. 17, Fl. 21.*)

What This Means: The goodwill between the Thyatian and Alphatian delegations is unlikely to spread throughout either empire, but Queen Asteriola and the diplomats involved have built strong ties of trust. In future conflicts—and nobody doubts there will be some—, this will be important in preventing either side from over-reacting.

The knights, on the other hand, showed up to assert their own claim to a piece of the Isle of Dawn pie. As followers of Vanya they were not exactly interested in diplomatic discussions (where is the glory in getting what you want by words?) but they don't want to be left out or forgotten. Their announcement done they vanished, returning to Freiburg via magic [*the priestly spell succor. Ed.*].

Flaumont 3, AC 1016: When the Cat Isn't There...

Location: Fortress of Khuzey Hisar, Kingdom of Karsile, Hulean Empire. SC

Description: Understanding that the Huleans are totally disoriented by the Master's disappearance, Ustalam Banshybek and his nomadic troops launch a full-fledged attack against the empire. They run into the core of the Hulean military stationed in northern Karsile. The battle rages for days, but, in the end, the Huleans are forced to leave the ground to the nomads. (*See Th. 28; Fl. 5, Fl. 7.*)

What This Means: This is the first time that the Hulean territory is invaded in four centuries of the Master's rule. It tells how dependent on the Master the hagiarchy now is. It is also a good indication of the power held by Ustalam Banshybek and his nomads. They now control an empire stretching across the steppes of central Brun from the foothills of the Endworld Line to the northern limits of the Hulean Basin and from the forest of the Borean Valley to the Yalu River mid-valley.

Flaumont 4, AC 1016: Celebrations in Littonia.

Location: Kingdom of Littonia, Arctic Plains. NW

Description: People all over Littonia celebrate the 1,144th anniversary of the founding of the modern kingdom of Littonia. Every town and city hosts parades by marching bands, and folk dancers put on shows for all to enjoy. Actors re-enact historical battles, and King Uldis VI makes a public speech in Gaudavpils, thanking the heroes of the nation throughout history for their efforts, and the Immortals for Their goodwill.

What This Means: This celebration happens every year on this date, and it commemorates the day Karlis the Unifier was crowned in Gaudavpils as first king of the reunified Kingdom of Littonia. The Littonians had a long history beforehand of being a divided people, and as a result the deeds of Karlis, including his victories in battle, are legendary among the people of this nation.

Flaumont 4, AC 1016: Diplomatic Accords.

Location: City of Darokin, Republic of Darokin. OW

Description: The Darokin Council meets again with the ambassadors from Orcland. It is decided that before they are able to come to an accord on Orcland's status, a diplomatic mission should be sent to the humanoid region. The orcish ambassadors rail against the idea at first, but finally agree. A date is set for two months from today. With that, the ambassadors *teleport* away once more. (*See Fl. 2; Ya. 13, Kl. 4.*)

What This Means: The council is very unsure what to do with the Orcland situation. On the one hand, the region technically belongs to the republic. On the other hand, they have never been able to fully cleanse the region of its humanoid inhabitants, and it is not particularly wanted territory in any case. If this Tlatepetl turns out to be as sophisticated and organized as he appears, it might do the republic well to recognize his authority over the region, to be able to keep some sort of hand in things.

Flaumont 4, AC 1016: The Knights Mobilize.

Location: City of Freiburg, Heldann, Heldannic Territories. OW

Description: *Herr* Wulf von Klagendorf, standing in the town square, issues a proclamation that from this day forward, the armies of Her Glorious Lady Vanya will mobilize to reconquer the lost territory of Oceansend, as well as suppress any rebel activities in the northern regions of Heldland. He gives orders to the *landmeister* to mobilize his troops, and issue a general call to arms. (*See Fl. 19.*)

What This Means: *Herr* Wulf is still strengthening his influence on the Heldannic Order since the return of the knights' clerical abilities in late 1015, with the successful conquest of the Milenian city-state of Polakatsikes in Davania. Now that the honor of the knights has been restored, *Herr* Wulf wishes to reclaim all lands lost since the loss of the knights' powers, including the city-state of Oceansend.

Flaumont 4, AC 1016: First Horde Skirmishes.

Location: Border with the Badlands, *Baronia del Grande Carrascal*. SC

Description: The goblin horde from the Badlands, united under Garok of the Flat Noses with the help of Birkko, a shaman of Karaash from the Black Bellies, is making forays into the gnollish barony and to a lesser degree into Cimarron. Long leg officers lead the gnolls into orderly, if ferocious, battles, but the more numerous goblins are also well-organized and break into smaller groups that get past the gnollish lines. (*See Nu. 9, Va. 17; Ya. 16, Kl. 25.*)

What This Means: Though Garok considers the Cimarrons as his main foes, Birkko managed to convince him that the gnolls, their former occasional allies against the humans, had to yield and join the horde first, and if Karaash wanted it, the way to rich plunders into human lands would stand wide open before them.

Flaumont 5, AC 1016: Thyatians Prepare to Evacuate Aegos.

Location: Province of Aegos, Thyatian Empire, Alatian Islands. SD

Description: Following the Treaty of Helskir (which ceded Aegos to the NACE), the Thyatians begin emptying the island of the most important assets they have on Aegos. Of their bases, by far the most important (save perhaps for The Pit, which is unmovable) are the *skyship* yards located at Aegopolis. The most important components are dismantled and then packed into the last *skyships* built at these yards, and shipped back towards the Thyatian mainland, along with the engineers, mages, and workers. Installations not considered worth moving (mainly barracks and warehouses) are burned to ash to prevent the Alphatians from using them. Other bases are likewise abandoned, and Thyatian settlers who would prefer not to live under Alphatian rule, and possibly be enslaved, pack up to move elsewhere. (See Fl. 2; Fl. 12, Fl. 13.)

What This Means: The Thyatians have no desire to let key assets fall into the hands of the Alphatians. Particular attention will be paid to undoing recent efforts to repair The Pit, and Pittston itself will be treated just like the *skyship* construction yards.

What the PCs Can Do: Trusted Thyatians (only the exceptionally loyal need apply) might be hired to help escort the ships carrying the *skyship* construction installations to Thyatis. Other adventurers might find work helping Thyatian colonists settle elsewhere (most will be directed to the Isle of Dawn by the Ministry of Colonization). Sticky-fingered types might try to find ways to profit from the chaos of evacuation.

Flaumont 5, AC 1016: Temple Destroyed.

Location: City of Edairo, Kingdom of Thothia, NACE, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: In the city of Edairo, a lesser temple dedicated to the Immortal Rathanos partially collapses unexpectedly during a ceremony. There are dozens of casualties, and the structure sustains serious damage. Investigations reveal that sabotage was involved—the mystic order of Thothia is suspected. (See Th. 12; Kl. 4, Fe. 5.)

What This Means: This was not the work of the mystics, but of the werespiders who have infiltrated the mystic order. This is yet another event that is intended to drive a wedge between the peoples of Thothia.

Flaumont 5, AC 1016: More Mice to Dance.

Location: Fortress of Yüksek Hisar and Town of Gölayan, Kingdoms of Karsile and Birgidir, Hulean Empire. SC

Description: Surprised by Ustalam's bold move into the Hulean territory, Rehmin has no choice but to slam in the arena too, even if some of his important troops are still held in southern Azardjian and Sardjikjian. Pouring out of southern Dvinzina and from the Chengouch's lands, hordes of mountaineers flood the Hulean defenders of the mining city of Gölayan, but are held in check around the Yüksek Fortress. (See Th. 28, Fl. 3; Fl. 7, Ya. 11.)

What This Means: Rehmin cannot leave the initiative to Ustalam in the race against Hule. He needs to penetrate as fast as his competitor into Hulean territory and if possible, impede the northern nomads' progression. This is yet another stage of the competition between Ustalam and Rehmin.

Flaumont 6, AC 1016: Race for the Crown: Won and Lost.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: After a search lasting several years, Thyatian scholar Flavius Nucius Justinus uncovers the lost imperial treasure vault today [see *Race for the Crown* in Joshuan's Almanac. Ed.], beating out his rival Grimm, who has yet to announce any discoveries. The lost vault was found beneath a disused imperial palace structure in the Zendrolium quarter of Thyatis City. A large amount of ancient gold and platinum bars are unearthed, along with

statuary, jewelry, gemstones worth a fortune, arcane swords and other relics, some of strong enchantment. But no Imperial Crown. (*See Fl 10, Am. 18.*)

What This Means: The site is heavily guarded, more so as it lies within the city's military district. The government claims the discovered treasure, because it is imperial property (simply "misplaced"); the money will help improve Thyatian finances somewhat. Justinius will put the best face possible on his achievement, but in fact he is proven wrong: the crown was not where he expected to find it. Kept secret are the presence of a series of catacombs and chambers hidden behind secret (and warded) valves connected to the lost vault. These facilities honeycomb the earth under the Zendrolium, and were used for a variety of purposes during earlier centuries before being forgotten.

What the PCs Can Do: Stalwart, loyal Thyatians might be hired to explore the newly discovered chambers.

Flaumont 6, AC 1016: The Onyx Ring Reports.

Location: Idris Tower, Forest of Lothenar, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: The Onyx Ring informs the high priestess about the current situation in Geffron after interviewing the survivors and seeing the situation firsthand in the past days. The treachery of Sylarion becomes obvious and the high priestess reckons that the elves have gained a great advantage by swaying the Shadow Lord's undead legions. The Onyx Ring proposes to solve the problem as quickly as possible before the snow thaws and the elves start securing their hold on the forest and advise the high priestess to use Idris's Children to resolve the matter. The high priestess acknowledges and gives order to awaken the slumbering children. (*See Th. 19, Fl. 1; Fl 10, Fl. 20.*)

What This Means: The high priestess wants the situation back in check before spring's end and the Onyx Ring has had the right idea. Idris's Children have not been used in a mass combat up to now, and the unlucky elves will have the opportunity to test their awesome powers really soon. So far, nobody knows about their existence except for the high priestess and the Onyx Ring, so they will be a total (and nasty) surprise for everyone.

Flaumont 6, AC 1016: Ambassadors from the North.

Location: City of Freiburg, Heldann, Heldannic Territories. OW

Description: A small group of three emissaries arrive in Freiburg and demand an audience with *Herr Wulf*. They hail from the distant nation of Qeodhar and have a military proposal for the high priest. The audience is held in a private meeting room where the emissaries negotiate a military alliance with the knights for the upcoming conquest of Norwold. While the knights are conquering the southern lands, they will march on the northern edge of Norwold and raid its countryside, blocking the Great Bay to stop Ericall's fleet. Later they will join forces to crush the Norwold Barons once and for all. The Qeodharans assure *Herr Wulf* that their leader, *Kjavik Norlan*, has some secret aces up his sleeve and he will play them to cause the downfall of Ericall and his loyalists. After that, they will take the lands touching the Great Bay, while the knights will hold power over the whole southern Norwold. *Herr Wulf* demands a day to think on the proposal. (*See Fl. 7.*)

What This Means: This is but the first step in an Immortal plan that will cause great turmoil in Norwold. Talitha, the Alphatian Immortal of Mischief and Treachery, is behind these ambassadors. Seeing the knights are about to march on Norwold again, She seeks the opportunity to give Alphaks a chance to get a revenge on those Norwold Barons and heroes who have so far hindered His plans of destruction. She has thus sent Her followers masquerading as Norlan's ambassadors to get the knights and the Qeodharans involved in the war on the same side. But there is more behind this that She has not yet revealed.

Flaumont 7, AC 1016: Clash in Farend.

Location: Town of Farend, Kingdom of Qeodhar, NACE. AS

Description: Small groups of youths run about the city streets today, angrily calling for Baron Norlan's abdication, and more autonomy for the northern and eastern communities of Qeodhar. Some of them overturn merchants' stands

in the main market, while others skirmish with the city watch. Several hoodlums are arrested, and the remainder are scattered by shows of force. (*See Ya. 19, Ya. 23.*)

What This Means: While Baron Norlan has been posturing in the international arena, he has been ruling his domain with an iron fist. While the Alphatian residents in the larger towns have been largely unaffected, Norlan's policies have been very hard on the Antalian-descended communities on the northern and eastern coasts. Many of them are taxed heavily, on top of being treated as inferiors. A sense of frustration and anger has been building for years, and now things are reaching a breaking point.

The Antalian inhabitants of Qeodhar once ruled the island, which they named "Ystmarhavn." Centuries ago, the Alphatians conquered the island, and many Ystmarhavners were scattered throughout the empire to work as slaves and as conscripts in the growing Alphatian armies. Through all of this, they have never forgotten that they once ruled the island, and many still hope that one day they may do so again. This situation is made worse by the attitudes each side has—the Alphatians see the Antalians as inferiors, while the Antalians view the Alphatians as oppressors.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are working for Norlan, the PCs may find themselves trying to subdue the rioting Antalian youths, or investigating what is going on. This could lead them to discover the history of Ystmarhavn—which is largely unknown to most people today—and possibly to see their employer in a different light.

Flaurmont 7, AC 1016: Heldannic-Qeodharan Alliance.

Location: City of Freiburg, Heldann, Heldannic Territories. OW

Description: *Herr* Wulf von Klagendorf, High Priest of the Heldannic Knights, formally signs a treaty of alliance with Baron Norlan of Qeodhar for the upcoming Norwold War. However, both parts agree to keep their alliance secret in order not to give away their battle plans and catch the enemy by surprise. *Herr* Wulf immediately begins to assemble the army and the navy for retaking Norwold. (*See Fl. 6; Fl. 8, Fl. 19.*)

What This Means: *Herr* Wulf has reasoned that even if the Qeodharans do not have a great army to put on the battlefield, they can be an annoying pain in the rear for Norwold and they could cause Ericall's forces to split up to fight on two fronts. This could only be beneficial for the knights, so he deemed the Qeodharan proposal worth and signed the treaty. Unfortunately, *Herr* Wulf didn't commune with Vanya to ask Her opinion on this matter before taking this decision, and Lady Vanya, unaware of Talitha's plan, didn't warn Wulf either.

Flaurmont 7, AC 1016: Die Hard with a Vengeance.

Location: Temple of Greatrealm, The Dark Wood, Hulean Empire. SC

Description: The Master reappears in Greatrealm after a week of absence. He is however not fully aware of the deteriorating situation in northern Hule, and does not accept to receive his advisors. At the opposite, he boards his flying barge and commands its undead crew to set sail west. Advisors and high-ranking military cannot but look with astonishment to the departure of their leader. (*See Th. 28; Fe. 13.*)

What This Means: The Master has decided to get rid of the adventurers who destroyed his earlier corporeal manifestation. He strongly suspect the Zuyevan *Czar* as being the sponsor of the adventuring party, and he has decided to settle the question personally. This also means that the Huleans won't be able to reorganize soon; in fact, many will grow desperate as they see the Master's perceived desertion as one of the worst omen for the empire.

Second Week

Flaurmont 8, AC 1016: Corwyn Linton Speaks.

Location: City of Athenos, Republic of Darokin. OW

Description: After several weeks of unconsciousness, the priests tending Corwyn Linton finally manage to bring him around. Although he is still very weak, he wishes nothing more but to extract revenge on his attackers. He tells to the assembled merchant lords, priests, and members of the DDC that the criminals were unmistakably assassins. They struck the Lintons first, trying to kill them, rather than being caught in the act. It seems they only wanted to make it look like a botched robbery to throw off the investigation. Furthermore, at least one of them seems to have been from Minrothad, as he gave instructions to the others in the patois of that nation. The council withdraws to ponder this revelation. (*See Th. 7, Th. 21; Fl. 13, Fl. 22.*)

Flaumont 8, AC 1016: Norlan Receives a Visit.

Location: Town of Farend, Kingdom of Qeodhar, NACE. AS

Description: A group of three Heldannic Knights arrive in Farend aboard an anonymous sailing ship and demand an audience with Baron Norlan. They offer him a military alliance with the Army of Vanya in the following conquest of Norwold. The baron is asked to bring in his best men and raiders to terrorize northern Norwold and to block the Great Bay while the Heldannic Knights will march on the southern provinces. If the war goes as planned, the Qeodharans will be given the northern part of Norwold while the knights will claim the southern holdings. The ambassadors also assure Norlan that he will be receiving help from unexpected allies when the time will be right. Norlan immediately accepts and signs the alliance with the knights, beginning to organize an invasion troop. (*See Fl. 6, Fl. 7; Fy. 16, Fy. 26.*)

What This Means: Baron Norlan has been fooled by other false ambassadors sent by Talitha. He was blinded by the promises of power, honor and great conquests made by the false Knights and immediately agreed, wanting to show all the northern barons, but especially the NACE, how powerful Qeodhar can be. He dreams of freeing Norwold from Ericall's yoke and to establish himself as the new High Lord of the North. All the future preparative work to assemble the army will be made secretly to avoid arousing the NACE's suspicion and having it spoil his war plan.

Meanwhile in Doomgard, Alphaks and Talitha feast for the great success of the first stage of Their plan.

Flaumont 8, AC 1016: The Elven Crusade Begins.

Location: Lands of the Gentle Folk. HW

Description: Elves of Shiye-Lawr and Foresthorne arrive in Gentle Folk territory. Accompanying them are clerics of Alphatia and Koryis. The group is greeted casually by the Gentle Folk. (*See Fe. 28, Sv. 12.*)

What This Means: The arrival of the elves is part of the perceived need to make the Gentle Folk more like normal elves. The clerics are present to keep the Alphatian elves from overstepping the restrictions of the Gentle Folk's patron Immortals.

Flaumont 9, AC 1016: Heldannic Spies Report.

Location: Dominion of Polakatsikes, Heldannic Territories, Meghala Kimata Plains. DV

Description: The first reports from the spies Wolfgang Stummel dispatched to Mivosia arrive today. They provide an overview of the city-state's layout, the apparent size of its army, the state of its defenses, and a rough overview of the political situation. They also note that Mivosia appears to be bolstering its defenses even more. Wolfgang is intrigued that Mivosia is apparently ruled by a triumvirate, two of whom serve in the military. He sends quick notes to all of his spies, urging them to find out more, and he issues orders to his officers to increase the number of drills for the troops. (*See Va. 15, Va. 21; Fl. 26, Am. 7.*)

What This Means: Wolfgang realizes that Mivosia, with a very large army and formidable defenses, would be a very difficult opponent on the battlefield, but he also knows that, if the knights defeat them, they could win even more glory for Vanya. With its repressive regime, Mivosia is bound to have discontented people within its borders, and these people could perhaps be used to the knights' advantage at some future date. Knowing that conflict is likely, Wolfgang has decided that his knights could benefit from some extra training.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are trusted advisors to Wolfgang, then they should be present when he receives the messages. If they are spies in Mivosia, the PCs could very well have sent the notes themselves.

Flaumont 10, AC 1016: Reward and Punishment.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: In a ceremony in the imperial palace, Flavius Nucius Justinus is honored for his discovery of the treasury relics and rewarded by the emperor who places Justinus in charge of an expedition to study ruins in the Hinterlands. The senate grants the University of Tel Akbir several of the non-magical artifacts, along with an imperial endowment and charter [*see Joshuan's Almanac, p.232, Swiftmont 1. Ed.*] . The university establishes a department of antiquities. (*See Fl. 6, Am. 18, Am. 22.*)

What This Means: Being sent to study ruins in the Hinterlands is more a punishment for failing to recover the crown than a reward, at least in the eyes of an ivory tower academic like Justinus. But it is also an opportunity for Justinus to redeem himself.

What the PCs Can Do: Digging around in old ruins in the Hinterlands is guaranteed to be a dangerous job. Scavenging in old ruins is what PCs do best. Characters interested in the intellectual side of dungeon looting would make good additions to Justinus's team.

Flaumont 10, AC 1016: The Awakening.

Location: Forest of Lothenar, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: Deep inside secret underground compounds in the heart of the Dead Forest of Lothenar, the Onyx Ring begins the magical process of awakening the Children of Idris, a race of powerful beings that are the pride and joy of the Church of Idris. The creatures rise from their crystal alcoves with renewed strengths and ready to receive orders from the holy messengers of their Great Mother Idris. (*See Fl. 1, Fl. 6; Fl. 20, Fl. 22.*)

What This Means: The Children of Idris is a secret project the Church of Idris and the Onyx Ring have been conducting since the conquest of Essuria. The destruction of the Forest of Lothenar and the extermination of their elven inhabitants have been two important steps in the creation of these beings. In their veins runs draconic and elven blood which makes them a new dangerous species on Mystara. The Onyx Ring is literally "manufacturing" these beings using the blood of the dead Lothenar elves and dragon eggs as the two primary ingredients. Currently only some two hundred children exist in Denagoth, but they are created at the rate of five individuals per year (the process is highly magical and very difficult, and the Day of Dread's aftereffects do not help). The Church of Idris is convinced that they resemble the utmost perfection in the eyes of their deity and will soon start to preach the conquest of the known world under the children's guidance when the time is right.

For now these incredibly tough, intelligent and quick predators have the task to defend Denagoth against its enemies, and so now they have been called to duty. The dragon-knights (as the Onyx Ring has nicknamed them) will soon teach the elves not to underestimate the power of Idris.

Flaumont 11, AC 1016: Successor to the Khan?

Location: Plain of Grass, Ethengar Khanates. OW

Description: Kadan, *Khan* of the Kiyats, requests to meet with his son-in-law, and heir to the leadership of the Kiyats, Manghai *Khan*. No one is present for their private meeting, but when Manghai exits Kadan's *yurt*, he announces his father-in-law's death. The news comes as no surprise to anyone, as Kadan's health had been failing him recently, and he was not expected to live out the winter.

Manghai announces that the Kiyat tribe is no more; they are all to be united forevermore as Murkits. This news is met with mixed greetings by the assembled clan leaders. (*See Nu. I, Th. 8; Fl. 16, Am. 11.*)

What This Means: Manghai appears to be consolidating his rule over the tribes, but in actuality, he is no longer Manghai *Khan*. Jaku the Render, an evil spirit who formerly possessed the body of Kadan *Khan*, is now in control of Manghai (whose soul is trapped on the Spirit World). Jaku has been plotting for many years to take over the Ethengars, and is finally in a position to succeed. If his plans go through as he wishes, he will unleash chaos upon the Old World.

Flaumont 11, AC 1016: Armada Clashes with Twaelar.

Location: Sea of Dread, near Thanegioth Archipelago. OW

Description: After sailing south and establishing a series of bases on some of the smaller islands in the Sea of Dread (now claimed for the Thyatian Empire), the imperial armada battles with the Twaelar. The Twaelar strike at night and initially things go well for them. However, they are surprised by their opponents' ability to fight, strengthened as they are with *water breathing* apparatus and spells, and fortified with weapons specially made for undersea combat. Among the weapons used by the Thyatians is a caustic, viscous substance that sticks to what it hits and is ignited by contact with water, burning even when submerged. This substance, *water fire*, is the creation of imperial alchemists (who keep the formula secret from even the empire's allies). *Water fire* is expelled through bronze tubes mounted on the ships using a system of siphons. Smaller, hand-held versions are fueled by tanks worn on the backs of individual warriors. Though the Twaelar sink many ships, the humans don't simply founder around in the water and drown: they fight back, and do so effectively. By dawn the battle has ended, with the fleet sailing away from the Twaelar, who decide not to pursue. Some Twaelar equipment is captured. (See *Fl. 1; Fl. 15, Ya. 3.*)

What This Means: Both sides have taken heavy casualties, but this is the first time that is true for the Twaelar. While the battle is a qualified victory for them, the costly victory comes as a shock to them, accustomed as they are to easy wins. *Water fire* is a substance similar to Greek Fire, but less volatile and more caustic. Though not a magical substance, protections like *fire resistance* provide only a partial defense rather than full immunity. It is less prone to accidental ignition than Greek Fire.

The hand-held *water fire* projectors prove to be a mixed blessing at best, igniting several of the users accidentally; in the future the armada will only use them in desperate situations. Thyatis will stop making them, but will try to find ways to improve them and make the device reliable—not all experimental weapons live up to expectations.

Flaumont 11, AC 1016: Governor of Verdan.

Location: City of Faraway, Province of Verdan, Republic of Esterhold, NACE. AS

Description: After a week of unsuccessful meetings and altercation, Tristilia of Gaita is restored into her position of governor of Verdan when three secessionist Jennites finally cast their vote in her favor. (See *Fl. 1, Fl. 3; Fe. 13, Fy. 18.*)

What This Means: Though the moderate magistrates rejoice at their comrades' wisdom in rallying their view, the other secessionists are furious at their brethren's betrayal. Rebel leader Talin especially vows to not quit the field until the Jennites have ousted every last Alphatian from their ancestral lands, and violence soon resumes.

Flaumont 11, AC 1016: Troops Converge.

Location: Kingdom of Notrion, NACE, Bellissaria. AS

Description: After days of riding, the troops of Lagrius and Notrion meet well within Notrion lands. The troops make camp for the day before heading west into the area that the mysterious troops are believed to be. As they camp, the two kingdoms' commanders discuss the operation and establish who is in overall command. Neither Tahort nor Fredrix will submit their troops to the authority of the other, so it is finally agreed that the two military forces will remain under their own command but will act in unison. (See *Th. 26, Fl. 2; Fl. 28, Ya. 1.*)

What This Means: The two bodies of troops meet remarkably close to where they had planned thanks to constant magical communication of the forces' mages. With his larger force, Fredrix feels that he should be in overall command

but since the operation is taking place within Notrion, Tahort feels it is only right that he be in overall command. Not wishing to cause unneeded problems they decide against an overall commander.

Flaumont 11, AC 1016: Rogue Commanders.

Location: Randel/Bettellyn Border, Floating Continent of Alphatia. HW

Description: Three Bettellyn border towns are raided by Randel soldiers billeted at the series of border forts known as the Randel Line. Though a variety of goods and property is pillaged and damaged, there are few casualties. (*See Kl. 9, Sv. 4.*)

What This Means: After assuming her father's throne, Queen Junna decreed that the raids into Bettellyn were to stop. Like many of her "weak and pacifist" decrees, this one has done little to endear her to her militarist populace. Frustrated, several of her commanders have taken their own initiative and organized the first raids into Bettellyn in over a decade. Despite an absence of them in the last ten years or so, the Bettellyn living along the border are used to such raids. Word is sent abroad that the raids have begun anew and the border towns strengthen their defenses.

Flaumont 12, AC 1016: Sablestone Bandits.

Location: Village of Estin, Principality of Sablestone, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: A horde of bandits pours out of the Kurish Massif today, raiding the village of Estin. The town militia is hurriedly assembled, but seems at a loss to deal with the more organized raiders. Suddenly, a lone rider, clad in black armor, manages to rally a few capable men to fight back. The rest of the militia quickly forms around these warriors, and under the direction of the black rider, the bandits are driven off into the mountains.

In the aftermath of battle, the rider is revealed to be none other than Ludwig von Hendriks, the Black Eagle and hero of the war with Ethengar. He is heralded by the villagers, who throw a celebration in his honor. A few days later, he meets with Prince Harald Haaskinz, who personally thanks him for his efforts. Rumors abound that the vindictive Pieter Vandehaar, Baron of Oxhill, may have been behind the bandits. (*See Nu. 15; Fe. 9, Am. 10.*)

What This Means: In truth, the bandits were hired (indirectly) by the Black Eagle and his allies among the Followers of the Claymore. The whole event was staged in order to make the Black Eagle look good. The "few capable men" were actually members of the followers who "conveniently" happened to be in the area to take orders from von Hendriks.

Flaumont 12, AC 1016: Death in Aengmor.

Location: Canolbarth Forest, Colony of Aengmor, Shadow Elves' Territories. OW

Description: Ranalfir, youngest son to Halfanel of Halfanel's Haulage Co., is found dead under mysterious circumstances in south-western Canolbarth. Ranalfir and his guards arrived in Rafielton a few days ago from the City of the Stars escorting a shadowelf merchant.

There are no clear clues to who may have killed Ranalfir. Shadowelf officers suspect the many monsters that still haunt Canolbarth, but they do not discard the hypothesis of some business rival, for example Raffainfar of "Pilots & Guides," hiring a killer to dispose of Ranalfir. (*See Th. 20; Ya. 7, Kl. 3.*)

What This Means: Actually this has nothing to do either with monsters or business. It was the Alfheim Avengers that ambushed and murdered Ranalfir while he was taking a tour of the forest. The avengers took care not to use slashing or piercing weapons, in order to disguise the murder as a monster attack. This is the first of a series of murders aimed at spreading terror in Aengmor. In the following months more shadowelf merchants, businessman and government people will be subject to similar attacks.

Flaumont 12, AC 1016: Burrower on the Loose.

Location: Kingdom of Aegos, NACE, Alatian Islands. SD

Description: Violent tremors are felt throughout the island of Aegos, further increasing in intensity as the day advances. Those tremors seem to be coming from The Pit, despite the fact that all work on it has ceased since the signature of the agreements between Thyatis and the NACE earlier this year, which transfers control of Aegos back to the Alphatians. Governor Francesca Egidio orders her remaining troops to leave the area of The Pit and head for the ships awaiting them to depart a bit earlier than expected. Late in the afternoon, a dreadful beast emerges at The Pit, which collapses just after its passage. (*See Fl. 2, Fl. 5; Fl. 13, Fl. 16.*)

What This Means: Wastoure, the evil Antalian wizard who has been trying for years to free a powerful burrower from its slumbering state, decided to put the transition between the Thyatian presence to the Alphatians' to good use. But he didn't take into account the new Floating Continent of Alphatia's effect on the Spell of Preservation, and was not aware of the new tunnels dug out by the Schattenalfen last year to mount their assault on the City of the Stars. He quickly understood that he had not freed his burrower, but some other entity, possibly another burrower, and promptly left the island.

The beast is indeed a great annelid. It is not as powerful and intelligent as the one Wastoure was aiming at, but with burrowers even the least dangerous kind is still terribly deadly. Anyway, after millennia of magical sleep it is very hungry and furious, longing for destruction and killings.

Governor Egidio, sensing trouble, wisely decided to speed up the withdrawal from Aegos. The Thyatians are not aware of the level of danger they are facing, though.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs were working on The Pit—with or without official sanction—they may witness Wastoure's attempt at freeing the burrower. In that case they will probably be the only ones to know who really summoned the fiend—a knowledge that both Thyatians and Alphatians will be seeking. Unless the PCs quickly understand the upcoming danger from Wastoure's swift departure, they may well be on the first line when the burrower emerges. They will likely be forced to flee like the Thyatians, even if they are high-level heroes, though this may become a quest for Master-level PCs on their road to immortality.

Flaumont 13, AC 1016: Unlikely Savior.

Location: City of Latehar, *Mumlyket* of Kadesh, Kingdom of Sind. OW

Description: *Maharajah* Hara Rudraksha frees Sitara Rohini and her daughter from the clutches of his father, *Maharajah* Kabir Rudraksha of Kadesh. He manages to escape his father's clutches and take her back to his *mumlyket* of Peshmir, where his own forces have risen up against the Hulean regime. (He had disappeared from the palace lockdown mysteriously not long ago.) (*See Th. 14, Th. 19; Fl. 21, Ei. 3.*)

What This Means: Kabir Rudraksha, patron of the *buraiya* cult that kidnapped Sitara, had been keeping the prophetess captive in his palace. His son Hara was aware of this due to connections he maintains with his father's organization. Ever since Sitara brought his daughter back to life in AC 1012, Hara has felt benevolently disposed towards her and the followers of Gareth. Rescuing her from his father's clutches was the least he could do for her.

Flaumont 13, AC 1016: Fence Arrested.

Location: City of Corunglain, Republic of Darokin. OW

Description: The Corunglain city guard arrest Quint Bostitch [*see GAZ11. Ed.*], a burglar and fence who tried to sell jewelry belonging to Linton House. Authorities in Corunglain send a message to the Inner Council. Natalie Kalimi, head of Corun House (headquartered in Corunglain) personally visits the arrested fence and promises him a reduced sentence if he describes in detail where and from whom he got the Linton jewelry. Quint tells that he fenced it from a dark-haired elf only a week ago and gives the seller's detailed description. Immediately, search parties are dispatched in various parts of the country in an attempt to catch the elf. (*See Th. 21, Fl. 8; Fl. 22, Ya. 2.*)

What This Means: The elf, Authrael, was one of the assassins from Minrothad. He is a freelance thief, hired by the assassins due to his knowledge of the area (the fact that he knew the layout of Linton Manor from time spent there

while running a previous scam was also important). A professional thief rather than assassin, he followed his usual method of selling off the jewelry in other cities where the Linton House is not as well known.

What the PCs Can Do: Darokinian characters may be involved in the arrest and questioning. Conversely, Minrothaddan characters would have an interest in thwarting the investigation (especially if they were involved in the assassination), and may be sent to make sure that Quint and Authrael are silenced... permanently.

Flaumont 13, AC 1016: Burrower Pursues Withdrawing Thyatians.

Location: Kingdom of Aegos, NACE, Alatian Islands. SD

Description: The Thyatian military in Aegos are attacked by the burrower while heading for the ships that will carry them back to the mainland. Not anticipating an attack, the Thyatians suffer heavy casualties before they regroup and make a fighting withdrawal. Before two days, all will have taken to the sea. Fortunately, the great annelid does not follow. (*See Fl. 5, Fl. 12; Fl. 16, Fl. 17.*)

What This Means: When the powerful tremors announcing the arrival of the burrower Governor Francesca Egidio wisely decided to hasten the evacuation of the island. The burrower caught up with the withdrawing Thyatians anyway, but fortunately most of them can escape the beast's new island-lair unscathed.

Third Week

Flaumont 15, AC 1016: Armada Anchors off Isle of Dread.

Location: Isle of Dread, Thanegioth Archipelago, Sea of Dread. OW

Description: The Thyatian Armada limps into anchorage at the village of Mora, making contact with the islanders to reprovision, recover from the battle with the Twaelar, and establish a base. The fleet's personnel outnumber the islanders, so there is no resistance. The Thyatians lay claim to the Thanegioth Archipelago and establish a base for battling the Twaelar. This base, and others like it, will be resupplied and supported via air and magic for now, while the seas are still unsafe. (*See Fl. 1, Fl. 11; Ya. 3, Ya. 17.*)

What This Means: The Thyatian presence on the islands will be peaceful and diplomatic, but they will leave no illusions about who is in charge. Eventually, the bases (especially on the larger islands) may grow into full-fledged colonies. For now, Thyatis does not explore or attempt to occupy the entire Isle of Dread, just the settled peninsula, centering their administration around the base at Mora. For the most part they leave the islanders alone, and no one on official duty ventures beyond the wall at Tanaroa.

What the PCs Can Do: This is an opportunity to dig out the old module, X1 *Isle of Dread*, and play it through if you haven't already. After all, adventurers are not always on official duty...

Flaumont 16, AC 1016: Old Dunbar Inn Burnt Down.

Location: Town of Woodgate, Kingdom of Wendar. OW

Description: Many citizens of Woodgate are suddenly awakened in the middle of the night by a big explosion coming from their town's square. When the guards arrive, they see the Old Dunbar Inn completely ablaze and immediately start trying to extinguish the flames, helped by the local firefighters and by many citizens. At dawn, after hours of hard working, all that remains of the *bürgermeister*'s inn is a blackened series of trunks and walls. Nobody was injured since the inn was a historic monument, but the guards suspect arson at the hands of the Alfheim Avengers. (*See Th. 27; Fl. 19*)

What This Means: The Old Dunbar Inn was the common meeting place of the Human Rights Movement and its historic importance derived from the fact that it had been the residence of Dunbar Anvaldsen, first *bürgermeister* of

Woodgate and local hero (and also founder of the movement). The Alfheim Avengers clearly wanted to hit the humans in their most sensitive spot, much like they tried to do with their assault at the Tree of Life, and it seems they succeeded.

Flaumont 16, AC 1016: Tribal Split.

Location: Plain of Grass, Ethengar *Khanates*. OW

Description: Manghai's news of the merger of Kiyat to Murkit has not gone over well. Finally, a clan *khan*, Dutta, has gathered to him enough Kiyats of like mind that he stages a rebellion. Kiyats are pitted against Kiyat and Murkit alike, as they attempt to overthrow Manghai *Khan*.

Manghai was prepared for this, and the *Keshak* (Manghai's personal bodyguard) turns on the rebel Kiyats with deadly intent. Dutta and a few hundred Kiyats manage to escape onto the plains, where they will surely cause trouble in the future. (*See Th. 8, Fl. 11; Am. 11, Ka. 28.*)

What This Means: More unrest in the *khanates*, as the tribes are squabbling for leadership.

Flaumont 16, AC 1016: Alphatians Land On Aegos.

Location: Kingdom of Aegos, NACE, Alatian Islands. SD

Description: The Thyatian fleet leaving Aegos spots the Alphatian fleet approaching the shores of the island at the port of Aegopoli, ready to move in as per the Helskir agreement. The Thyatian commander is surprised by the size of the Alphatian armada, which includes ships, *skyships* and *submersibles*. (*See Fl. 12, Fl. 13; Fl. 17, Fl. 20.*)

What This Means: The Alphatians have used the opportunity to show off a bit to the Thyatians, assembling as many troops as they could and then using Broderick's artifact to make them appear twice as numerous as they really are. Broderick prefers to give the Thyatians that kind of subtle message rather than just relying on peace treaties.

Flaumont 17, AC 1016: Royal Meal.

Location: Confederate Capital of Ionace, NACE. AS

Description: While on their first official visit to Ionace since the application of the Treaty of Helskir, King Eruul Zaar and Queen Asteriela Torion are savagely attacked by a party of monsters. Before they can react, their bodyguards are lying dead from a half-dozen bugbears in ambush, and the monsters creep toward the royal couple, claws and teeth ready to strike. Zaar draws out his sword but before he can slash at the approaching monstrosities he is hit by an as-yet hidden enemy, and two trolls quickly close in and bite at his flesh, feeding off the helpless king. Queen Asteriela fires a deadly spell, but a bugbear picks up Zaar's sword and barely misses her, while two others rush forth and topple her down. As the bugbear raises his sword to deliver a lethal blow, Asteriela has no other choice but activate her *ring of gaseous form* and flee, leaving her already partially devoured husband behind. (*See Fl. 2, Fl. 3; Ka. 2, Ka. 3.*)

What This Means: This event was orchestrated by Baron Norlan, though it was only half successful. Norlan despises the agreements signed between the two empires, and thought it would be a good idea to kill the rulers of the united kingdom of Helskir and Dunadale. Not only would this leave the newly-forged dominion headless and prone to chaos, but it may pit the two empires at odds, and maybe at war, as Thyatis would blame the Alphatians for the death of the rulers, especially since one of them is of the imperial family. Besides, he reasons this will also prove helpful to the Heldannic Knights, his powerful allies in Norwold, though he does not publicize to them that he is behind the assassination.

It remains to be seen if his plan will work anyway, or whether Asteriela alone can handle the ramifications of the peace agreement.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are adventuring in the “biggest dungeon of the world” they may stumble upon the royal couple being attacked. If they act swift enough they may utterly change the outcome of the battle, with all

diplomatic consequences it implies. If they succeed, they will gain the gratitude of the rulers of Heldun and the enmity of Baron Norlan. Alternatively, the PCs can be hired as investigators by Asteriela, by the NACE Council or by a Thyatian spy to determine who organized the assassination.

Flaumont 17, AC 1016: Fake Pouch.

Location: Eadrin Island, NACE. AS

Description: After weeks spent trying to uncover the secrets of the legendary *Pouch of Winds* captured from the Monster's lair, the power researchers of the Alphatian Artifact Agency finally figure out why they couldn't muster the artifact's power while a mere lowlife could: the pouch is a fake! (*See Nu. 16, Th. 8; Ka. 16.*)

What This Means: The Monster of the Low NACE, when he was forced out of his lair during the latest Alphatian campaign, left a prize behind for the Alphatians: the *Pouch of Winds*. However, it was actually a mundane pouch with a permanent magical aura, purposely left behind to put the Alphatians on false tracks, while the real pouch remained in the Monster's possession.

The trick worked even better than expected as the Alphatians had created an agency for that very purpose, and they gleefully fell to it. This incident not only encourages the agency to be more careful in its researches, but also leads to the creation of a new branch, the Retrievers, whose goal is to retrieve lost or stolen Alphatian Artifacts. This branch is a secret one, and most retrievers are always out on their mission to find clues about the whereabouts of artifacts.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs can become retrievers for the agency, and go artifact hunting. Alternatively, only one PC in a group can be a retriever, and use the group as a cover for his true mission, maybe even using them as muscle in an attempt at retrieving an artifact. The PCs may also be hired by retrievers to retrieve an artifact from a dangerous location for them, though it is unlikely they will ever find out who their employers really are or what the item they brought back really was.

Flaumont 17, AC 1016: Burrower Attacks Alphatians.

Location: Kingdom of Aegos, NACE, Alatian Islands. SD

Description: The Alphatians have barely disembarked on the soil of Aegos that they have to cope with the attack of a huge monster. Thanks to the already-activated artifact they are able to stand their ground, but using its *fear* power proves futile. After some losses the Alphatians are able to fully disembark and dig in, and the beast retreats further inland. (*See Fl. 13, Fl. 16; Fl. 20, Fl. 27.*)

What This Mean: The Alphatians were attacked by the burrower, recently set loose by Wastoure.

Commander Broderick is concerned that the beast seems oblivious to the power of his artifact and to the enhanced blades of his best men. He suspects the Thyatians of having summoned an extra-planar monstrosity from the Pits [or Abyss. Ed.] before leaving the island, an unpleasant departure gift indeed.

Flaumont 17, AC 1016: Helena Returns to Thyatis.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Helena Delanarius returns to Thyatis today, and is greeted by several senators. In a private meeting, also attended by the emperor, she outlines the details of the Thyatis-Kastelios Accord of AC 1016. Several senators voice their discontent concerning the outcome, saying that such a small nation as Kastelios should have been cowed by Thyatis, and it certainly should not have got the better deal. Throughout this meeting, Eusebius remains silent, speaking only to request clarifications of the details of the treaty. Once the meeting ends, Eusebius departs, but not before thanking Helena for her efforts. (*See Th. 4, Th. 14; Fl. 18, Kl. 20.*)

What This Means: Eusebius realizes that the Kastelians are far more adept at negotiating than previously thought. He knows that Helena is among the best Thyatian negotiators, but clearly the Kastelians are even better. Although

he is not happy with the outcome, it is far better than losing more colonists on the Sea of Dread. Thyatis will accept the treaty, but it is clear, judging from the reactions of some of the senators, that the empire may try to renegotiate at a later date.

Flaumont 17: The Queen is Dead... Long Live the King!

Location: City of Lemminster, Kingdom of Bellayne. SC

Description: Queen Catherine dies of an unspecified ailment. The court clerics are at a loss to explain her death, but her illness has been long suspected. A number of recent royal functions have been canceled and the excuses that the palace attachés have made have not been widely believed. The funeral is set down for Flaumont 22 and the crowning of Queen Catherine's first born son, Prince James, as King James II is set down by tradition for two weeks after the death of the former monarch. (See Va. 2; Fl. 22, Ya. 3.)

What This Means: Queen Catherine was a just and capable ruler who did much to advance Bellayne as a nation. High aspirations are also held for James II but palace insiders are not sure that he is ready to rule.

Flaumont 18, AC 1016: Thyatis Accepts the Treaty.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Proclamations are read throughout the city that the Senate has ratified the Thyatis-Kastelios Accord of AC 1016 and Emperor Eusebius has granted Imperial assent to it. A secure route to the Hinterlands has been established. The public's attitude towards the announcement is neutral, but supportive. (See Th. 14, Fl. 17; Kl. 20, Fe. 18.)

What This Means: This is a calculated move by Eusebius to show the public that Thyatis will triumph over its adversaries, hopefully boosting morale. Rumors have been spreading for weeks about the losses at sea to the Twaelar, and he knows that something must be done to combat them. Few people know where Kastelios is, though anything that sounds like a solution to the Twaelar problem is bound to divert people's attention from the problem. This will also allow Eusebius to boost flagging enthusiasm for colonization.

The more imperialistic elements of Thyatian society will not be pleased with the outcome, and the Kastelian embassy will receive a few anonymous threats because of this.

Flaumont 19, AC 1016: The Bounty.

Location: Town of Woodgate, Kingdom of Wendar. OW

Description: Thoric Anvaldsen, current human *bürgermeister* of Woodgate, puts a "dead or alive" bounty on the heads of all Alfheim Avengers in the territory of Woodgate. This causes Ledyriel, the elven *bürgermeister*, to protest his indignation first to Anvaldsen and then to King Gylharen, commenting the bounty as "a cheap way to mistreat all elves in this nation." King Gylharen promptly replies that the bounty is perfectly legal and that the avengers shall be prosecuted in the whole Wendar territory from now on. However, he adds, the avengers will have to be captured alive. (See Th. 27, Fl. 16; Fl. 26.)

What This Means: The Human Rights Movement obtained a major success with Gylharen's approval of the bounty. Now they have the opportunity to closely check and abuse all Alfheimers with the only excuse of suspecting them to be in league with the avengers. The Alfheimers and the Genalleth elves are ashamed at this decision and will surely react badly. King Gylharen on his part, fed up with the Alfheimers' incapacity to stop the avengers, decided to give the humans an opportunity to solve this matter by themselves. He still thinks the situation is not desperate and can be kept in check if he acts quickly.

Flaumont 19, AC 1016: Trouble Ahead

Location: Kingdom of Notrion, NACE, Bellissaria. AS

Description: Mounted scouts return to the main body of Notrion and Lagrius troops to inform General Tahort and General Fredrix that they had seen a walled settlement two days march away. When asked about the particulars, they respond that they had not gotten close enough for detailed information due to the settlement being surrounded by open farmland but they estimate that the settlement holds about 500 people. Both generals agree to march to this settlement to carry out their orders. (*See Fl. 2, Fl. 11; Fl. 28, Ya. 1.*)

What This Means: After several weeks of hard marching, the troops have drawn within striking distance of the forces that slew the mage Tarkoman and his entourage. The scouts' report confuses both Tahort and Fredrix as they had expected an encampment with pickets, not walled battlements surrounding a settlement. That the settlement boasts crops growing about it also puzzles them. Regardless, they decide to continue: with a small population the inhabitants should be easily subdued.

Flaumont 19, AC 1016: Knights Arrive in Landfall.

Location: City of Landfall, Heldland, Heldannic Territories. NW

Description: The soldiers on duty atop Landfall's walls are heartened today to see a great fleet of ships, bearing the black lion of the Heldannic Knights, sail up the coast towards the city. As the hours pass, no less than twenty ships are counted, each apparently loaded with battle-ready knights. Onlookers stop to stare at the spectacle, as the first ships dock at Landfall's harbor and the troops disembark. Soon, a great host of knights, numbering about 4,000 in all, is gathered outside the north gate of Landfall, after triumphantly parading through the streets of the city.

In a rousing speech to the gathered throng, *Herr Wulf* exhorts the knights to be fearless in battle, and to avenge the disgraces heaped upon the Heldannic Order by the string of recent defeats at the hands of Oceansend and rebels in the north. Promising them no less than complete victory against all who would defy Heldannic rule within Heldland, *Herr Wulf* directs his gaze northwards, and shouts the command to march. (*See Fl. 4, Fl. 7; Fe. 2, Fe. 8.*)

What This Means: *Herr Wulf* has assembled a formidable force of knights, all of whom have been told on the way to Landfall that they are about to participate in a great drive to reassert Heldannic dominance in the north of Heldland. By the time they arrived in Landfall, many knights have already become strongly devoted to this latest military excursion.

Herr Wulf has made this last speech to bolster morale even more.

Flaumont 20, AC 1016: White Wolf Outed?

Location: Village of Galadyl, Principality of Erewan, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: Wolves attack an elven village along the Red River in Glantri. Though suffering heavy losses, the village militia manages to drive off or slay most of the wolves, through a combination of arms and elven magic. When tallying the dead, afterwards, it is discovered that a number of the attacking wolves were, in fact, lycanthropes. Moreover, one of the dead lycanthropes is identified as Gerard Deguerrand, seneschal to Prince Malachie du Marais. (*See Va. 13, Th. 17; Ya. 1.*)

What This Means: Gerard was the brother of Claude Deguerrand, a former spy in the employ of Prince Malachie. A werewolf like his brother, Claude died in service to Malachie years ago, due to slow silver poisoning. Viewing Malachie as being responsible for Claude's death, Gerard vowed revenge. His plans were assisted when Malachie appointed him his seneschal as a placating gesture. Gerard eventually came into contact with Les Loups de la Guerre, and joined their ranks; thus it was that he attracted the attentions of Synn.

Synn carefully plotted this latest maneuver, making sure that Deguerrand was slain during the attack. She hopes to draw even more attention to Malachie du Marais and his lycanthropic principality.

It seems to work, too. Within days, rumors that Prince Malachie may indeed be the legendary White Wolf abound throughout Glantri. More and more, the lycanthrope problems are being laid at his doorstep. Even worse, Princess

Carlotta Erewan and her elves will be looking for someone to blame for their latest problems. It seems du Marais has achieved yet another enemy on the Council of Princes.

Flaumont 20, AC 1016: A Clash in the Woods.

Location: Keep of Drax Tallen, Forest of Geffron, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: A small warband of elven crusaders perlustrating the area surrounding Drax Tallen is suddenly attacked by a group of strangers wielding swords and shields without any armor. The skirmish is a fierce one and the strangers prove to be skilled swordsmen as well as incredibly quick and resistant to the elves' blows and magic. The commander of the warband orders retreat when more than half of the squadron has succumbed to the strangers' attacks. The attackers do not pursue the fleeing elves.

Once inside Drax Tallen, they immediately report to the generals, telling them the only distinctive symbol they saw on the strangers' garments was a black dragon with open wings—the symbol of Idris. Generals Durfern and Beasthunter order a whole squadron of elves to go outside to look for the intruders. Beasthunter will lead them inside the forest of Geffron, and a few lesser undead will also come along. The squadron not only is incapable of tracking down the mysterious attackers, but they also are not able to recover the elves who fell in the skirmish. It seems they all vanished as if *teleported* away. Beasthunter concludes they must be facing some kind of skilled warmages and returns to the keep to plan countermeasures. (*See Fl. 6, Fl. 10; Fl. 22, Fl. 23.*)

What This Means: The dragon-knights (a.k.a. Idris's Children) wanted to test the elves' might, so they staged a small ambush to force them into close combat. They discovered the crusaders are not that difficult to beat, and thus retreated once the surviving elves fled for Drax Tallen, taking along with them the corpses of the fallen elves. They are fully aware, however, of the undead creatures lurking inside Drax Tallen, and their battle plan will have to take those into consideration as well.

What the PCs Can Do: Meet the dragon-knights in duel and maybe manage to take down one or two to study them and ruin the surprise factor the knights are counting on.

Flaumont 20, AC 1016: Pit Investigation.

Location: Kingdom of Aegos, NACE, Alatian Islands. SD

Description: The Alphatian military fight their way to The Pit of Aegos, only to find it collapsed. Surveys reveal that it is destroyed beyond repair. (*See Fl. 16, Fl. 17; Fl. 27, Ya. 8.*)

What This Means: Commander Broderick's suspicion that the Thyatians left but a poisoned gift is becoming obvious to him.

Flaumont 21, AC 1016: Father and Son.

Location: *Mumlykets* of Kadesh and Peshmir, Kingdom of Sind. OW

Description: *Maharajah* Kabir Rudraksha declares war on the *mumlyket* of Peshmir, and mobilizes his forces for an assault on the neighboring region. Responding in kind, Hara Rudraksha begins fortifying his *mumlyket* for the attack, and continues to root out any remaining Huleans in Peshmir. (*See Th. 19, Fl. 13; Ei. 3.*)

What This Means: The battle between father and son has a long history. The elder Rudraksha wanted to use his son merely as a means by which he could expand his *mumlyket* of Kadesh to include Peshmir. The younger Rudraksha formerly wanted the same, but his cold heart has been touched in the past few years and his ambitions seem to have been curbed somewhat.

The rescue of Sitara Rohini was the last straw for the elder Rudraksha, and he now seeks to destroy his son and take his territory by force. Ultimately, this comes as a loss to Hule, as their greatest northern ally Kadesh is now involved in a personal vendetta, and will not assist the battle against the other northern *mumlykets*.

Flaumont 21, AC 1016: Envoys in Westrourke.

Location: City of Newkirk, Archduchy of Westrourke, Thyatian Empire, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: Following the conclusion of the Treaty of Helskir the Thyatian diplomatic team makes a stopover in Westrourke to meet with Archduke Firestorm. Over the next several days Vivianna Romanones and the archduke discuss Westrourke's relationship with the empire. The meetings are held mainly in private between the Thyatian diplomats, Firestorm, and his advisors. After the first meeting ends Thrainkell is seen stalking off to his private quarters, his face a mask of purple rage, while the Thyatian emissary remains the picture of calm confidence. Following the second meeting the next day, the archduke is pale and shaking with shock, the Thyatian envoys again untroubled. The third such meeting finds both parties in seemingly happy agreement, and it is announced that a public statement will be made the next day.

The following day, in a ceremony held in the audience chamber of the archduke's palace, Thrainkell Firestorm surprises everyone present by announcing his immediate abdication as archduke, presenting the lands of Westrourke to the Thyatian Empire as sovereign. The court is further shocked when Vivianna Romanones, speaking in the name of the emperor, appoints Thrainkell Lord of the Exarchate of Westrourke which will consist of all the lands of the former archduchy, plus the disputed areas at the northern head of the island. (*See Fl. 2, Fl. 3; Fl. 25, Fy. 11.*)

What This Means: When the Thyatian envoys arrived, Firestorm was not happy to greet them, as he was enraged that the emperor had claimed for himself the disputed territories which he coveted. When Romanones presented a plan to formalize and cement the ties between the empire and Westrourke, which would limit the independence of the archduchy, Firestorm left in a rage. Romanones called a meeting the next day to explain and smooth over differences, which the archduke attended with smug self-assurance. His composure crumbled as she made a stunning presentation, outlining in brutal detail, all the schemes of the archduke and his father, all their ambitious plotting to betray the empire and gain independence over many years, and all his secrets up to the present. Though the details themselves were irrelevant now, Firestorm was astonished at the fact that an imperial agent knew all his dirty secrets. It was what she said next that broke his will however, as she described in careful, calm terms how the emperor's agents had control over key sectors of the archduchy's economy and government. When Thrainkell left the meeting, he quickly confirmed that what Romanones said was true: over the last couple years, Eusebius had infiltrated Westrourke so completely that Thrainkell was archduke in name only.

The last meeting was merely a formality: Thrainkell was at the emperor's mercy, and he knew it. The emperor, on the other hand, was in a position to be generous. The empire's authority over Westrourke would be strengthened but it would be given special status within the empire, as an exarchate [*outside realm. Ed.*], similar to Heldun, with Firestorm appointed to administer it (though in a non-hereditary office). As the new exarch Firestorm will have wide latitude in administering the internal affairs of his lands, but be compelled to follow Thyatis's foreign policy. The exarchate will collect all land and head [*income. Ed.*] taxes, but all trade taxes and commerce will be regulated and controlled by the empire, as well as 20% of the total gross taxes collected by Firestorm. The exarch retains a policing and defense force, but the military of the region (imperial legions and auxiliaries raised in Westrourke) ultimately falls under the command of the imperial government. All Thyatian citizens within Westrourke were guaranteed their rights, and Westrourke continues to receive representation in the senate. Ostlanders can settle within Westrourke if they become Thyatian citizens, giving up their Ostland citizenship. Finally, to soothe his pride, the exarch was also given the right to administer the former disputed territories.

What the PCs Can Do: Thrainkell will certainly be hiring people to find out how the imperial agents infiltrated his government so thoroughly and found out so much that they should not know.

Flaumont 21, AC 1016: Black Dreams.

Location: Town of Schwarztal, Duchy of Ossian, Southern Bay Marches. NW

Descriptions: The Black Duke of Ossian tonight receives strange visions from his patron Alphaks, telling him to assemble his troops and minions and prepare for an imminent war. The duke is also told that he will be given a special weapon to use in this war, although Alphaks makes no reference to its exact nature. The duke immediately arranges

for his troops and new conscripts to be called to arms. He also begins to send minions to the other nations of Norwold to hinder them or to buy their loyalty when the time will be right. (*See Fy. 8, Fy. 9.*)

What This Means: In his rush to put Norwold in complete chaos, Alphaks informed His most important minion in Norwold to prepare for the coming war. He has thereby started His own plan to cause chaos inside the enemy's lines and to make things easier for the invading force. However this could be a faux pas, since the spies Ericall placed in this shady dominion south of Alpha could report the duke's sudden moves to the king thus arousing suspicions, provided they are able to escape the well-patrolled domain.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are loyal to Ericall, he could ask them to spy on the Black Duke and his troops to discover the real strengths he can muster and possibly his real intentions.

Fourth Week

Flaumont 22, AC 1016: The Heroes' Challenge.

Location: Keep of Drax Tallen, Forest of Geffron, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: In the middle of the night, an individual donning the same garments as the strangers who attacked the elven crusaders only a few days before is spotted a few hundred yards in front of Drax Tallen's main gate. He seems to be carrying a white flag and demands to talk to the elves' highest-ranking official. General Beasthunter answers him from the keep's battlements and orders him to surrender. The stranger merely laughs back and issues his challenge:

"Hear ye, foreign invaders of the Holy Land of the Great Mother, that we will not leave you unpunished for your crimes. I am here to announce your fate has been decided by the Great Mother, and that you will soon meet your doom at the hands of Her children."

"However, we are fair and honor the daring ones, so we want to give you one chance to prove your worthiness and live on. We thereby challenge you to meet in a champions' duel that will decide your fate: the winner will live and stay and the loser will go away, not to return until next winter. Five of you against five of us, this is our challenge. We shall meet on the morrow at this very place."

"I, Mekisander of Dulas, have spoken."

After ending his statement, the stranger slowly turns his back to the keep and walks away inside the forest. General Beasthunter immediately stops the few elves who are ready to throw a volley of arrows in the enemy's back with a gesture of his hand. He stays quiet for a few seconds, then smiles and turns to his men saying:

"I think we will have a pleasant stay here, don't you think?" (*See Fl. 10, Fl. 20; Fl. 23, Fl. 25.*)

What This Means: The dragon-knights thought this to be the only way to beat the elves without losing too many of them. They know the crusaders and their undead allies are more numerous (at least ten times their number); even though the elven soldiers are no match for them, they could lose half their members if a full-scale battle would be staged. Also they do not know exactly how the more powerful undead's powers would affect them, and so they preferred not to run many risks. By issuing a challenge they were fairly sure the elves would not refuse, since they are a proud and stubborn lot. The dragon-knights are clearly superior to them in one-to-one combat, as they have shown in their first encounter, and so now want to exploit this situation to the most profit. Also, by placing the duel at dawn, they avoid the risk of having to fight against the undead.

The elves on their part reacted as predicted: Beasthunter could not let the challenge fall, it would be a matter of honor. And besides, seeing how the strangers butchered his men in the previous skirmish, he thought to take the best decision by accepting the challenge, since an open battle could have cost them the keep and the whole mission. Also, not knowing exactly their foes' number, he thought wise to accept a not-so-dreadful term (the loser will leave the forest). Beasthunter is sure the other high-ranking commanders and the keepers will back his decision. Now he must only select the other brave fighters that will join him in the challenge.

What the PCs Can Do: Volunteer for the final duel with the dragon-knights by showing Beasthunter their bravery and skills. This is a vital battle, so only high-level or exceptionally-skilled characters will be selected.

Flaumont 22, AC 1016: Assassin Captured.

Location: City of Selenica, Republic of Darokin. OW

Description: The elf Authrael is arrested at the city gates of Selenica when he tries to join a caravan heading to Karameikos. He is immediately transported to the capital and securely locked in prison, to await interrogation. (*See Fl. 8, Fl. 13; Ya. 2, Ya. 5.*)

What This Means: Communications work fast in Darokin, and policing is efficient when it comes to crimes against the merchant lords. The guards in Selenica arrested Authrael soon after they got his description.

What the PCs Can Do: Players might be involved in tracking down Authrael, which should involve cleverness. Authrael is an expert thief, and gifted in the arts of disguise and evasion and escape. Just bringing Authrael to Darokin City without mishap can be an adventure.

Flaumont 22, AC 1016: A Theatric Disaster.

Location: City of Starpoint, Kingdom of Ambur, Floating Continent of Alphatia. HW

Description: It is a sad night at the opera for patrons of the Drigallia Theater. During a performance of the play "My Old Flaem," the theater's balcony gives a shudder and collapses. Though there are numerous injuries, there are few fatalities. Rumors persist of sabotage. (*See Ka. 13.*)

What This Means: The theater had suffered some severe "earthquake damage." The theater owners and work crews had cut corners in their repairs. These structural deficiencies are the reason that the balcony collapses. Realizing their folly, the owners quickly devise a rumor about sabotage to placate the injured patrons.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs may find themselves hired to investigate the collapse. Seedier PCs may be hired by the theater owners to insure that the hired workers will not, or can not, divulge the construction shortcuts.

Flaumont 22: Funeral.

Location: City of Lemminster, Kingdom of Bellayne. SC

Description: In Lemminster, the royal funeral procession proceeds through the streets of the Bellaynish capital. Huge crowds attend the procession—some 100,000 people line the streets to pay their respects (almost a quarter of the entire Bellaynish population and more than 3 times the population of the city). After the procession, a lavish service is held for the nobility in the Cathedral of Belbion (Vanya) in the center of the city. (*See Va. 2, Fl. 17; Ya. 3, Kl. 17.*)

What This Means: The huge crowds demonstrate that Queen Catherine was a much-loved ruler.

Flaumont 23, AC 1016: The Dragon Knights' Fury.

Location: Keep of Drax Tallen, Forest of Geffron, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: Shortly after dawn, the challengers' group arrives in front of Drax Tallen emerging from the thick forest. The elves see a band of 20 dragon-knights in parade cloth stationed in front of the main gate, waiting for the crusaders' champions to enter the field. The gate opens a few minutes after, and another group of a dozen people meets the strangers outside the keep. The battlements are crowded with elves anxiously waiting for the outcome of the battle. On the challengers' side, five people step ahead and introduce themselves as Idris's champions, the dragon-knights. On the elves' side, Beasthunter, Sylarion and three other powerful-looking elves return the greeting. The dragon-knights seem a bit taken aback when they see the vampire elf smiling under the sun, but they proceed

with the duel. The champions will fight one against one all together, without help from the outside; the five ones who remain alive are the winners. The side who has more winners has won the challenge.

The duel begins with powerful magics being cast by the elves on themselves (since the previous encounter with the dragon-knights showed their high resistance to magic), while the dragon-knights charge their enemies. In close melee the Children of Idris seem to match the elves' champions, and the duel goes on for quite some time. Suddenly however, all knights sprout wings from their backs and fly overhead much to the elves' amazement. Greater is their awe when the five enemies unleash upon them their fiery and acid breath. The elves manage to survive thanks to their natural resistance to magical assaults, but they are clearly debilitated.

The battle rages on, but when the fifth victim falls dead to the ground, the outcome of the challenge is clear to everyone: three dragon-knights and two elves remain alive. The crusaders stare stunned at the scene while the dragon-knights seize their comrades' dead bodies and take them away.

"You have two days to pack your belongings and leave this place. If you do not honor your word, we will make you remember this as the greatest mistake in your race's history. And as you have seen, we have the means to keep our word." That said, the last of the Children of Idris quits the field. (*See Fl. 20, Fl. 22; Fl. 25, Fl. 27.*)

What This Means: The dragon-knights played their cards well and earned their victory. The elves do not have their stamina or their quickness and without their offensive spells to use against the knights, the odds were against them. Unfortunately Beasthunter and his peers overestimated their strengths, and this cost them their campaign.

However, the news coming from the Old World regarding Alfheim and the peace with the Shadow Elves make some of them view this defeat more like a boon than a bane. This way they will finally have the chance to abandon this accursed place and return to Canolbarth, forgetting the crazy idea of taking over Denagoth from the Shadow Lord's minions.

What the PCs Can Do: Fight side by side with the most famous and powerful elven heroes and teach the dragon-knights their place in the world. However, it will be highly unlikely that the PCs will win, since the Onyx Ring members (who are secretly overseeing the event) will do everything to insure their champions' victory.

Flaumont 24, AC 1016: Enough Is Enough.

Location: Town of Alinquin, Kingdom of Dawnrim, NACE, Bellissaria. AS

Description: Receiving word of yet another sacking of a Dawnrim village, King Teskilion sends messages to both the NACE Council and Queen Gratia of Surshield to report a series of recent raids upon his people from bordering Surshield. Teskilion demands action or he will be forced to take matters into his own hands. (*See Th. 20; Ya. 6, Ya. 13.*)

What This Means: Teskilion is extremely angered by the two brutal raids and he plans to do something about them. Not wishing to be rash, he sends the dispatches to the NACE and Queen Gratia with hopes that the message will cause Gratia to take care of the matter. If she does not, or can not, he has given them ample warning should he march troops into the border regions.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs loyal to Dawnrim may find themselves hired to perform some reconnaissance in western Surshield. Such a reconnaissance force will be advised not to engage the raiders unless it is absolutely necessary: Teskilion just wants to be prepared, not actually start a conflict between the kingdoms.

Flaumont 25, AC 1016: Elven Crusaders Leave.

Location: Keep of Drax Tallen, Forest of Geffron, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: The elven crusaders exit Drax Tallen after sunset, marching slowly southwards. The morale is incredibly low and nobody dares to speak. The exodus leaves behind an empty keep that lurks in the shadows like a giggling white skull. The undead legions led by Sylarion accompany the crusaders silently, and their vampire leader seems to be lost in his thoughts, much like Durifern and the elven keepers. Beasthunter is also speechless, but his face shows only contempt and shame, and Coolhands's attempts to comfort him are utterly vain.

From the shadows of the trees, the Children of Idris look at the grim procession leaving their woods with cold eyes, while a couple of squadrons of the Shadow Army proceed to take possession of Drax Tallen once again. (*See Fl. 22, Fl. 23; Fl. 27, Ya. 3.*)

What This Means: The crusaders are finally coming back to Wendar after a year of military campaign in Denagoth that led them to conquer Drax Tallen and nominally all of Geffron. This defeat will probably make the elves' ambitions to found a new realm in this part of the world collapse forever. But somebody has not yet renounced to his personal plans...

Flaumont 25, AC 1016: Firestorm's Proclamation.

Location: City of Newkirk, Exarchate of Westrourke, Thyatian Empire, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: So far the newly minted Exarch of Westrourke has not found his new status too disagreeable. He has, in fact, come upon a plan to make it work for him. Firestorm announces a land grant policy: he will give away parcels of up to 160 acres in size in the former disputed territories to families of settlers, under several conditions. First, that the settlers come from outside Westrourke itself, but agree to become citizens [*i.e. he is looking for new colonists, not transplanting current Westrourkites. Ed.*]. Secondly, that they live on the land that is granted (no absentee ownership) for at least 5 years (they do not have full title to it until after that, and thus cannot sell it), thirdly that they make improvements to the land, consisting of at least one permanent structure (presumably, the settler's house) and put at least half the land to use (either farming it, or as grazing land, etc.). (*See Fl. 3, Fl. 21; Fy. 11, Fy. 17.*)

What This Means: Firestorm is looking to strengthen his nation, taking advantage of his freedom with regard to internal administration. Large areas of Westrourke are almost completely uninhabited, including his northern territories. Giving away unused lands costs him nothing, while the new settlers will pay taxes and develop economic resources to strengthen his land. Firestorm also finds himself strangely less ambitious than before and seems more content in his new role than those who know him would have expected. He turns his energies to building instead of plotting for independence and power.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs can either try to claim some of the land grants themselves or, more likely, be approached by a family that needs help in undertaking the dangerous journey from its current home to the Isle of Dawn. Players familiar with the area might be hired to survey it. Also, the area is uncleared wilderness: settlers will need help from adventurers in clearing it of monsters before Firestorm's generosity can be successful. Inquisitive players may want to investigate Firestorm's sudden personality change: ambitious people don't usually give up so easily, or change so completely. Is he really a changed man? If so, why? Or is he just hiding his ambitions and schemes better?

Flaumont 26, AC 1016: The Peacekeepers.

Location: City of Wendar, Kingdom of Wendar. OW

Description: King Gylharen gives to a few selected and trusted officers the task of tracing and capturing all avengers currently hiding inside Wendar. He gives them full powers to enforce this law and calls this secret task force "the peacekeepers." They will report directly to General Grumman, who will then debrief him monthly of their discoveries. (*See Fl. 16, Fl. 19; Ya. 21.*)

What This Means: Gylharen took the matter of the avengers into his own hands by forming this secret police force devoted to this single task. He thinks the avengers are one of the major causes of the current unrest in his nation, and if he manages to eradicate it, he will probably have a better time putting things back in order.

What he does not know is that General Grumman, the appointed chief of this police force and the one who suggested this whole idea to the king, is in fact a member of the Church of Idris, and he will use this opportunity to break the Alfheimers' backbone.

What the PCs Can Do: They could be enlisted in this secret group to uncover the Alfheim Avengers' hideout. However, they will soon start to realize that their actions are becoming increasingly pushy and despotic with each

passing day, and that this behavior is authorized (and encouraged) by their chief. This could lead them to suspect him, maybe contacting Bensarian or Gylharen to inform them.

Flaumont 26, AC 1016: A Grisly Warning.

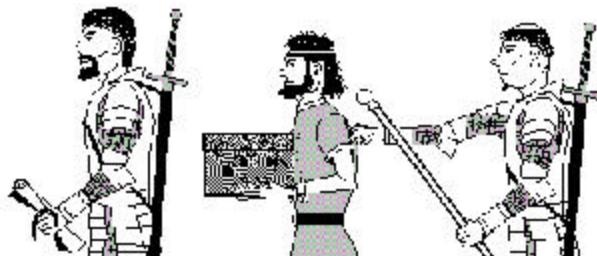
Location: Dominion of Polakatsikes, Heldannic Territories, Meghala Kimata Plains. DV

Description: A cloaked messenger, carrying a small, sealed box, arrives at the town's gates today, saying that he has a message for the rulers of Polakatsikes. Intrigued, the Heldannic Knights guarding the entrance allow him to enter after searching him for weapons, and he is escorted to the Town Forum. Once in the presence of Wolfgang Stummel, the figure presents him with the box, saying that it is "a gift from the illustrious triumvirate of the great city-state of Mivosia, as well as a personal message to you, ruler of Polakatsikes."

Wolfgang opens the box, which reveals the severed head of one of his spies in Mivosia. As Wolfgang orders those near him to detain the messenger, he tells the ruling knight in a pained voice that Mivosia will not tolerate the presence of foreign powers within its sphere of interest, and that one day the knights will be driven from the Meghala Kimata Plains. Sneering with contempt, Wolfgang tells him that no power save the will of Vanya will keep the Heldannic Knights from their appointed quest for conquest and the spread of their faith. With that, he orders his knights to kill the messenger at sunset. (*See Va. 21, Fl. 9; Am. 7, Ka. 12.*)

What This Means: One of the Heldannic spies in Mivosia was captured by the authorities, tortured for information, and executed. His head was sent back to Polakatsikes as a warning to the knights that the same fate awaits them if they stand in Mivosia's way. They realized that their messenger would likely be killed, so they had a political dissident, under a *geas*, deliver the head and the message to Wolfgang. The knights and the Mivosians are now in a state of war.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs, if they are present, could assist Wolfgang in planning for the conflict that is to come. Polakatsikes will need increased stocks of food to withstand sieges, bolstered defenses, and it will likely need a defensive militia composed of locals, among other things. They will have their work cut out for them.



Flaumont 27, AC 1016: Crusaders Ambushed!

Location: Forest of Geffron, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: On their way to the southern border of the Denagothian plateau, the elves are suddenly ambushed by the Children of Idris, the remnants of the Shadow Army, and the Elf Skull Units. The fierce battle that ensues is terrible as the attackers seem intent on killing every last elf. In the midst of the battle, Sylarion orders his minions to cover them while he convinces a fraction of the crusaders to follow him into the nearby Aeleris Pits, where they will get more cover from the enemy's attacks. A thousand elves manage to flee with him, with the lesser undead protecting them to their own death. The remaining elves realize they are losing the battle, and those who can (mostly Long Runners) *teleport* away to Wendar. Those who remain either flee deeper into the woods or stay and fight valiantly, but to no avail. The surviving elves on the battlefield (some 2,000) must finally surrender to the Shadow Army and Idris's Children, but they are not slain. They are chained and split into two groups: some are taken back to Drax Tallen and secured in the dungeons, while others are escorted north and then westwards (through the Avien Plains) by Idris's Children and a few Onyx Ring cultists. (*See Fl. 23, Fl. 25; Ya. 3, Ya. 13.*)

What This Means: The Onyx Ring could not let the elves escape Denagoth unscathed and planned this ambush to kill the most dangerous and enslave the others. The dragon-knights simply obeyed their orders, since they believe they came from Idris. The surviving elves will now experience the fate of the long forgotten Lothenar and Geffronell elves.

As for Sylarion, he took this opportunity to lure away from the main body of the army many elves, hoping to make them his new followers and organize an armed resistance inside Geffron to oppose Idris and the Shadow Lord.

What the PCs Can Do: Fight or run for their life!

Flaumont 27, AC 1016: Aegos Thyatian Quarter Closed.

Location: Confederate Capital of Ionace, NACE. AS

Description: Upon learning of the events on Aegos, the NACE Council votes to postpone the creation of a Thyatian Quarter on Aegos as was agreed upon when the Treaty of Helskir was signed. This interdiction will last until the conditions on Aegos permit a thorough investigation that will prove or disprove the Thyatian treachery. (See Fl. 17, Fl. 20; Ya. 8, Ya. 16.)

Flaumont 27, AC 1016: Nova Svoga Is Free!

Location: City-State of Nova Svoga. SC

Description: Thanks to the help of the Dark Fangs orcs and to the current strategic situation of the Hulean empire, the rebels led by Stephan Karvich are able to take control over the entire territory of Nova Svoga. The heiress to the throne, Anya, is crowned at the head of the city-state under the tutelage of Stephan Karvich. The Dark Fangs orcs are welcomed as friends by the population.

What This Means: The Hulean retreat was decided more from strategic purposes than from the threat formed by the rebels. The hagiarchy desperately needs all the troops available to stop the progression of the northern nomads in Karsile, and Nova Svoga is not worth the amount of troops needed to fight the rebels. Also, the fact that Anya, a follower of Gareth, is at the head of a state will do much to promote this worship throughout the city-states.

Flaumont 28, AC 1016: A New Kind of Souls?

Location: City of the Stars, Shadow Elves' Territories. OW

Description: Rafiel appears, in His incorporeal form, to the Radiant Shaman Porphyriel in the *Chamber of the Spheres*. He instructs her to remove from the special compartment in the *Chamber of the Sphere* the *soul crystal* that she put there two months ago, and tells her that today is a great day for shadow elves, because the first *radiant soul crystal* is finally ready. An awed Porphyriel asks her Immortal Patron what does this means. Rafiel explains her that this new kind of *soul crystal* is stronger than the standard ones that can be harvested in the shadow elves' mines, and it can also be used above ground; then He disappears leaving the radiant shaman with many unanswered questions.

Porphyriel arranges for a white shaman, her second in command Randafien, to go to Rafielton and test the new crystal, but she does not tell him anything about her vision. (See Va. 8; Ya. 18, Ka. 28.)

What This Means: The *radiant soul crystals* are a new kind of *soul crystals*, created by the *Chamber of the Spheres*. These new crystals are tougher and more brilliant than the standard ones and they are also sun-resistant, but they retain their magical properties. To create a *radiant soul crystal* the shamans have to put a standard *soul crystal* in the special compartment of the Chambers of the Spheres built a couple of months ago and keep it there for at least three shadow elves' months (72 days). Actually only those crystals of level 5+ (no more than 10% of the total number of *soul crystals*) will resist the "mutation" without shattering under the force of the *Radiance*, but the shamans do not know about this yet. The *radiant crystals* will allow the shamans to use their magic above ground.

Anyway the protection against sunlight wears down after 48 days of being exposed to the sun and has to be renewed by putting the crystals back into the Chamber of the Spheres.

Only the higher level shamans (white shamans and beyond) are to be entrusted with this new kind of *soul crystals*, because they already know that *soul crystals* are not just what they are believed to be: receptacles of shadow elves' souls. Imagine the stunning of younger shamans if they were granted use of those strengthened crystals: "What? There are two sorts of *soul crystals*, one more powerful than the other? Are there then two kinds of shadow elves' souls?"

Now Shamans will be able to cast their spells on the surface too, and this will allow Rafiel to regain many followers in Aengmor, where there have been many religious problems in the past years. Moreover the *radiant crystals* could also be useful in saving Canolbarth Forest.

Flaumont 28, AC 1016: The War Banners Unfurl.

Location: Southern Kingdom of Notrion, NACE, Bellissaria. AS

Description: The Notrion and Lagrius troops arrive at the sighted settlement. Instead of a couple of hundred defenders facing them, there are rank after rank of armed troops, perhaps numbering 2,000. A spyglass reveals that the troops are well armed and are fighting under the banners of Randel.

Seeing this, Fredrix states that he is ordering his troops to withdraw. He encourages Tahort to do likewise and return with a larger body of troops. Tahort is furious but can do little to dissuade the Lagrius general. With two-thirds of his forces gone Tahort gives up any thought of waging a pitched battle; Tahort has the Notrion standard lowered.

Riders from the Randel ranks deliver a message to Tahort, requesting his presence the following morning; until morning, there is to be a cease-fire between the two forces. "General Gverfrifar" signed the message; recognizing the name, Tahort agrees. (*See Fl. 11, Fl. 19; Ya. 1, Kl. 1.*)

What This Means: General Fredrix had entered into this venture with the notion that it would be an amusing adventure, thinking he would be fighting against ruffian brigands. Facing professional Randel troops, in superior numbers, the general has had a change of heart as he sees no reason why he and his troops should shed their blood for Notrion. Likewise, Tahort sees little reason to stay around with the Lagrius pullout.

Normally Tahort would have been hesitant at such a meeting but General Gverfrifar signed the message. The name is easily identifiable, as he was a prominent military commander during the Great War. Since it was generally presumed that he had perished during the war, Tahort is curious about him; as he thinks about it more, he is becoming curious about the Randel troops in general.

What the PCs Can Do: First, the PCs will have to decide whether they will stay with Tahort or return with Fredrix. Those who began the expedition with the Lagrius troops will be more likely to leave with him. PCs remaining with the Notrion troops may find themselves asked to accompany Tahort to meet with Gverfrifar.

Flaumont 28, AC 1016: Time Is Up.

Location: City of Haldemar, Kingdom of Alphatian Neatharum. HW

Description: One of Ezreilla's aides announces that the condemned Alphatians will be executed the following morning. The announcement carries a plea for civil obedience in the matter. (*See Nu. 13, Nu. 14; Ya. 1, Kl. 20.*)

What This Means: Since her verdict, Ezreilla has been presented with several investigation findings that tend to shed some light upon the cause of the attack. Despite this, she still remains firm in her verdict and the death sentence she has decreed. She feels that she has allotted the condemned more than enough time and is ready to have their sentence carried out.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are investigating the incident, then they are rapidly running out of time. If they are not, then they may be hired to supplement security for the execution.

Topic of the Month: The Heroes' Challenge

By Christopher Dove.

I am here to write and testify what I have seen happening on the 23rd of Flaumont AC 1016, in the region known as the Great Forest of Geffron, on the Denagothian Plateau. I am writing this to tale how the brave champions of the elven crusaders fought valiantly for a good cause... and woe to us all, they lost.

The duel was called upon by the evil forces of the Shadow Lord just the day before, and the elves had no real time to prepare themselves for the battle. Nevertheless they accepted the challenge, for the elven General Durifern Widelfarer knew that this was perhaps the only way to end an otherwise never-ending war without losing more troops. General Widelfarer solemnly addressed the crusaders calling upon their loyalty, braveness and trust in the power of the Elven Immortals, and I must admit that his words touched my heart as well, even though I am neither warrior nor believer at all. General Beasthunter himself volunteered in front of his troops as the first among the elven heroes, who would have confronted the enemy's champions the day after. His deed immediately caused many elves to volunteer as well to be part of the chosen few, then the highest officers of the army scrutinized the volunteers for the whole night, choosing only the best five before the break of dawn.

The enemies arrived timely and took place in the opening in front of the gates of Drax Tallen, and the elven champions entered the arena a few minutes after them. The air was as still as in an ancient mausoleum, with chilling tendrils of fog bathing the woods in an eerie aura of death. The sounds appeared muffled, almost distant, as if we were watching at something that was happening miles and miles away. Yet we all knew in our hearts that down there, in that clearing in front of our keep, the fate of all our lives was being decided.

The enemy champions showed no trace of fear, rage or any other emotion. It was like staring at white marble statues made by an unskilled sculptor: their pale visages conveyed no feelings, only a wearing feeling of alienation. It was as if they were not risking their lives, as if they were only performing some dull duty they couldn't care for. Clad in blue and red shining, spiked armors, with a blue tabard and a green cloak bearing the crest of their lord, a black dragon-like beast (Idris's symbol, without doubts), they were an imposing and frightening sight to behold. Their weapons, edged and piercing tools of pain and death, were a perfect match: just as deadly, cold and unforgiving as their wielders.

Our champions never trembled in front of their adversaries. They donned shining magical armors that were the pride and joy of the best elven smiths. Their weapons were works of art more than tools of destruction, and each of the elven champions wielded them with such a grace and mastery that few can attain in their whole life. Their colors were gold and green, except for the black suit of the vampire lord Sylarion, who had lastly chosen to enter the fray with his living allies. Our champions were not frightened by the challenge, either by their enemies or by death. They showed their courage from the beginning to the end of the contest, and I must say each of them, even the creature of the night that bears the name of Sylarion, fought to the last drop of his blood and with the utmost dedication to our cause. Unfortunately, this didn't suffice to beat the minions of Evil, for it seems that Evil is far more powerful here, in the Denagothian Plateau.

The Dragon Knights, so they call themselves, revealed unknown and unsuspected abilities that put our heroes to test. Besides being accomplished butchers with their weapons, deadly swift in melee combat and incredibly resistant to the elves' blows, these knights showed powers that no human has ever mastered. They are no spellcasters, this was quite obvious by their fighting prowess and by their appearance, but they exhibited powers that are commonly associated only with magic users. They are able to fly using bat-like wings that sprout from their backs, and with this tactic they kept the elves to distance when the fight began to take the wrong side. Then they all unleashed a long breath of fire and acid upon the unsuspecting elves, who managed to survive but were severely hindered by this trick. Their claws and their teeth rent the elves' skin and armors, as if these knights were real dragons, yet we know they were no *polymorphed* wyrms, because the spells used to *dispel* any possible magic upon them didn't turn them into dragons. Some of them even began regenerating their wounds at an alarming speed, much like Sylarion's ability, and this clearly showed us that we were battling an hitherto unknown kind of enemy.

And so they won. Three of them remained alive at the end of the duel, while only two of our champions stood there still breathing. We lost, and we had to respect the agreements taken by the elven generals before the duel. We were then forced to leave Drax Tallen to the Shadow Army and to trace back our steps to Wendar, abandoning the quest forever. I am writing this on our trip back to the valley of Genalleth, hoping we get there alive. Our morale has never been so low, our souls have been broken by these Dragon Knights come from Idris's Hell. We mourn for the lost companions who sacrificed their lives for the good cause. We mourn for all those souls we promised to save, and for all those souls we lost trying. But what else can be done when everything seems against you and when the same land where you dwell generates living nightmares that will never leave us? If I believed in Immortals, I could beg them to lend us a hand now. Unfortunately, I don't believe in higher powers; but then, would that really be so different if I did?

EVENTS: YARTHMONT

First Week

Yarthmont 1, AC 1016: A Day of Discoveries.

Location: Southern Kingdom of Notrion, NACE, Bellissaria. AS

Description: Shortly after dawn, Tahort and a few hand-picked officers are escorted to meet with General Gverfrifar, the Randel commander. After an exchange of customary gifts and pleasantries, Tahort and Gverfrifar begin a surprisingly friendly conversation. They talk in between sips of wine and foods served to them by what appears to be Thyatian nationals. Eventually the talks turn to the matters at hand.

Gverfrifar tells him that the mage, Tarkoman, had trespassed into their lands; to make matters worse, he was a manufacturer and peddler of zzonga, a substance utterly despised by the people of Randel. Therefore, the mage and his underlings were slain. Tahort is told that following Thyatis's defeat his battle group was withdrawn from the continent of Brun and billeted here in Notrion at the behest of King Lodrig II to rest, reorganize, and be reinforced for the expected assault on Glantri the following spring. Gverfrifar tells him that the troops had also been assigned to watch guard over several thousand Thyatian prisoners of war. As testament to prove these claims, he shows Tahort a copy of the written orders bearing a multitude of official Alphatian seals.

The Randel officer goes on to tell Tahort that with the perceived loss of Alphatia, the Randel troops in Notrion had decided to remain here and establish a new Randel. Since the land was essentially a wilderness, they saw nothing wrong with claiming it as their own. The settlers re-designated the Thyatians as slaves and used them to build a new kingdom. Too sizable to remain together, the troops spread out and established several settlements, one of which is the village of Stalwart, the very one Tahort and Fredrix had planned on assaulting.

Tahort praises their resourcefulness. He comments that even though he was sent here to subdue any inhabitants, he sees little reason why King Corydon would not welcome them as a part of Notrion. Gverfrifar strongly opposes this by saying that his people would not follow a king that is not of Randel heritage, especially a non-spellcaster. The only way that they would swear allegiance to a king of Notrion is if they storm Aaslin and place one of their own upon the throne.

With this statement, the conversation begins to wane. Soon after, Tahort returns to his men and has them form up to march back to Aaslin. While this is being done, it is reported that several troops have disappeared. Further investigation proves that these troops are of Eadrin and Randel heritage and were commissioned into Notrion's armies after the war. Tahort attributes their absence to desertion, assuming the Eadrin nationals followed suit since Randel and Eadrin had very close ties before the war. (*See Fl. 19, Fl. 28; Kl. 1, Kl. 8.*)

What This Means: Gverfrifar basically speaks the truth on the reasons his people are here in Notrion. He is careful to omit certain things for security reasons, including the population size of the Randel troops and that they are not entirely from Randel. In truth, there are some 14,000 Randel nationals, 2,000 Eadrin nationals, and 5,000 Thyatian slaves.

Since the Great War the Randel settlers have debated when to reveal themselves to the rest of the Alphatians. With the appearance of Tarkoman and the troops, the settlers have decided that the time is right. Exhausted from years of war, they are more intent on building their nation and wish only to guarantee their sovereignty and status with the NACE. Though they are hesitant to wage a war of aggression, they are quite content at waging a war of defense.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are accompanying Tahort to the meeting, PCs will have an excellent forum to role-play. The Randel soldiers are almost legendary for their war-making abilities and staunch militarism. Following an uncanny loyalty to their homeland, PCs native to Randel may desert Tahort to rejoin their comrades.

Yarthmont 1, AC 1016: Here Comes the Judge!

Location: City of Glantri, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: The Council of Princes meets today to vote on who is to become the new supreme judge. Following a few words by the two candidates, Malachie du Marais and Dolores Hillsbury, the measure is given to the princes to decide upon.

When all the votes are tallied, Princess Dolores ends up with the title by a narrow margin. Arrangements are made for her to be publicly sworn in on the coming day. With the acquisition of her new title, the role of treasurer is opened to any interested princes. Voting for the vacant position will take place in three months' time. (*See Th. 17, Fl. 20; Am. I.*)

What This Means: Both Malachie and Dolores engaged in some massive mudslinging and politicking for their role, but Dolores's recent manipulations appear to have swung the pendulum in her favor this time. As supreme judge, she not only has increased power with the council, but she will also gain veritable control of the city of Glantri itself.

Malachie and Jaggar have lost this round, but the secret wars of politics will continue.

Yarthmont 1, AC 1016: The Execution.

Location: City of Haldemar, Kingdom of Alphatian Neatharum. HW

Description: Under heavy guard, the three condemned Alphatians are brought before the executioner. As they are blindfolded, a group of folks burst through the ring of guards and cite that this execution is a travesty to justice. As guards push them back into the mass of spectators, they cry out their discoveries of what really transpired that night. Bolstered by their display the spectators protest the execution; several even attempt to free the condemned, but are halted by guards. Despite the outcry, the execution continues and the three men are put to death. (*See Nu. 14, Fl. 28; Kl. 20, Fy. 8.*)

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs may be the group that disrupts the execution. Or the PCs may be off investigating the matter, only to arrive too late. Regardless, the condemned will die. Even attempting a rescue should fail, as security is tight and guards have orders to shoot the condemned if necessary.

Yarthmont 2, AC 1016: Assassin Talks.

Location: City of Darokin, Republic of Darokin. OW

Description: Corwyn Linton identifies Authrael as one of the assassins. However, the elf is offered a prison sentence (rather than the normal death penalty) if he identifies his employers and accomplices. He does so, naming several very prominent guild masters of Minrothad as the ones who employed him and his friends to assassinate Linton. (*See Fl. 8, Fl. 13; Fl. 22, Ya. 5.*)

What This Means: Darokin now has proof of Minrothad's treacherous dealings. The council will try to reach a decision about further course of action.

What the PCs Can Do: Intimidating PCs are always good at getting people to talk. Or, conversely, making sure they don't. Regardless, Darokin will shortly figure out who is to blame for the assassination of Linton. Nothing can really prevent these powerful merchants from getting that information.

Yarthmont 2, AC 1016: Under Siege.

Location: City of Smaggeft, Kingdom of Rockhome. OW

Description: The city of Smaggeft has been under siege by the army of Rockhome for almost a week. Duric, Bifia, and Psa'gh have their hands full defending both the upper city and the lower from the determined dwarves. Messengers are once more sent to the town of Kurald to request assistance from Thar, who has seemingly abandoned his allies. (*See Va. 4, Th. 17; Ya. 7, Ya. 14.*)

What This Means: Psa'gh's kobolds could not hold out long against the dwarves, and were forced to retreat to Smaggeft. Here, the dwarves settled in for a long siege, determined to recapture the city from their hated enemies. The goblinoids are in danger of losing Smaggeft, unless Thar sends aid.

Yarthmont 3, AC 1016: Armada Raises Anchor.

Location: Mora Base, Isle of Dread, Thanegioth Archipelago, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Having stood at anchor for over two weeks, recovering from the battle and patrolling the region (with a few skirmishes with Twaelar strike forces), the imperial armada once again sets sail, heading east along the coasts of the Thanegioth islands, then turning north again. (*See Fl. 11, Fl. 15; Ya. 17, Ya. 26.*)

Yarthmont 3, AC 1016: Southern Legion of Vanya Formed.

Location: Dominion of Polakatsikes, Heldannic Territories, Meghala Kimata Plains. DV

Description: Wolfgang Stummel, Governor of Polakatsikes, issues an order to his advisors to create a new division in the forces of the Heldannic Knights stationed in the city-state. Asked what this new division will be, he says that it will be called the Southern Legion of Vanya, and it will be composed primarily of locals, commanded by knights. Work begins at once, designing standards, uniforms, and an organizational structure. (*See Va. 10, Th. 4.*)

What This Means: Since Thaumont of this year, interest in the knights has been growing among the people of Polakatsikes, especially among the youth. The knights have been strict rulers, but they have also been fair. So long as people conform to the laws declared by the knights last year, pay their taxes on time, and pledge to assist in defending the city-state in times of need, no trouble will befall them. In exchange for this loyalty, the knights have provided their healing services to those in dire need, given instruction in the Thyatian and Heldannic languages to those who wish it, and used their more advanced engineering skills to improve Polakatsikes's defenses. Already, over 100 youth have expressed interest in joining the knights, and Wolfgang has decided that it would be beneficial for the knights to have an auxiliary force, as they are still short-handed.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are employed by Wolfgang, the PCs can help create the legion, and possibly be among its commanding officers. Otherwise, they could either be involved in recruitment efforts, or be recruited themselves—if they are locals.

Yarthmont 3, AC 1016: Sylarion's Proposal.

Location: Aeleris Pits, Forest of Geffron, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: Realizing the situation is a grim one and the elves are becoming more and more distressed by living side by side with the undead, Sylarion finally shows his real intentions and addresses the thousand elves gathered in the Aeleris Pits with a dramatic speech. He tells them that the fate of their comrades fallen to the Shadow Lord's forces is sealed and that horrible tortures await them. His brother Delharis, one of the Geffronell survivors of Drax Tallen, confirms his statement by telling the incredible stories of the Shadow Lord's torture and experiments with his captives. Sylarion then puts forth an incredible proposal to the angry and horrified crusaders: in order to fight the powerful minions of the evil necromancer, he will help all those who want it undertake the turning ceremony to embrace undeath. Only this way will they be able to stand against the Shadow Army and the dragon-knights and reclaim the Great Forest of Geffron, their long lost home. The startled elves start to ponder the vampire's proposal knowing that the Shadow Army is on their track. (*See Fl. 25, Fl. 27; Ya. 5, Ya. 10.*)

What This Means: Sylarion has made his move. He knows they have not many days before the forces of the Shadow Lord discover them, and wants to get ready for battle as soon as possible. He hoped to gain a bit more time to convince and *charm* the most prominent leaders of the crusaders into embracing undeath, but fate played against him once more. He expects to face the Shadow Lord in a matter of days, and doesn't know that the Onyx Ring is leading the Shadow Army at the moment, nor that the Shadow Lord has betrayed the high priestess of Idris. Had he known these facts, he probably would have allied with the Onyx Ring to take the Shadow Lord's position!

What the PCs Can Do: If they have followed Sylarion until now, they must take the most important decision of all their life (or unlife).

Yarthmont 3: Coronation.

Location: City of Lemminster, Kingdom of Bellayne. SC

Description: During the coronation ceremony, James II takes the unprecedented step of crowning himself. Normally, the high priest of Belbion crowns the new ruler of Bellayne, but instead James II takes the crown from the high priest's grasp and puts it on his head. After the ceremony James II parades through the streets on a felquine mount with Bellaynish handmaidens throwing flowers before its feet. After the lavish procession, James retires to his palace to celebrate his coronation long into the night. (*See Fl. 17, Fl. 22; Kl. 17, Fy. 7.*)

What This Means: James is a proud and rash rakasta. He has very little idea of how to govern and has long been used to throwing debauched parties for his friends. His decision to crown himself has put some of the nobility and the church offside. His gaudy and lavish parade through the streets after his coronation is held to be in very poor taste by many people, coming so soon after the death of his mother. It remains to be seen whether James will be able to continue the peace and prosperity that marked Queen Catherine's reign.

Yarthmont 5, AC 1016: Darokin Makes a Proclamation.

Location: All over the Old World. OW

Description: The Chancellor of Darokin makes a public proclamation revealing that agents of Minrothad assassinated Lucius Linton. Corwyn Linton, now fully recovered, is revealed as being alive and he assumes control of Linton House. Darokin's ambassadors in other countries repeat this proclamation in the rulers' courts. Some countries are disinterested; others are enraged; yet others are doubtful of the existing evidence. (*See Fl. 22, Ya. 2; Ya. 11.*)

What This Means: The murder of a major merchant lord is serious business; the Inner Council has decided that enough is enough. Their proclamation is aimed at turning the public opinion against Minrothad, hopefully denying them trade opportunities and damaging their political relations. However, only Karameikos, Ierendi, and the Five Shires are sympathetic to Darokin; Thyatis and Vestland are trying to obtain more information before deciding either way, while the NACE and other countries are too far away to be involved.

Yarthmont 5, AC 1016: The Turning.

Location: Aeleris Pits, Forest of Geffron, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: The crusaders have finally reached a decision regarding Sylarion's proposal of becoming undead: half of them will join his ranks and fight to retake Geffron and free their brethren, while the others will help them remaining alive. A minority (about two hundred souls) choose not to stay at all with Sylarion and brave the trip back to Wendar to rejoin their families and clans. Sylarion accepts the decision and begins the mass ceremony that turns all the volunteers within the following three days. Some of them become wyrds or wights under Aeleris's supervision, and the majority becomes vampires loyal to Sylarion and his elders. (*See Fl. 27, Ya. 3; Ya. 10.*)

What This Means: Sylarion has finally achieved the first of his major goals: to create a whole clan of vampire elves. His patron Immortal, Nyx, helped him in this ceremony and is now hoping to gain a little more influence in the affairs of the Denagothian region. The next step will be to remove the Shadow Lord's minions from the Forest of Geffron and obtain enough food supply for the coming months.

Yarthmont 5, AC 1016: The Final Pullout.

Location: City of Menkara, Kingdom of Nithia. HW

Description: The last Selhomarrian ship, loaded with soldiers, mounts, and equipment, leaves the docks of Menkara today, heading northeast for the open seas, and Selhomarr. A small crowd of onlookers watches the spectacle, and some say enthusiastic farewells to the departing soldiers. (See Th. 23, Th. 24; Am. 12.)

What This Means: The Selhomarrian pullout from Nithia is now complete. Some Nithians who spent time with the soldiers during their stay in the kingdom learned a great deal about them, and some friendships were formed as a result.

Yarthmont 6, AC 1016: Allied Forces Arrive.

Location: Fort Hobart, Republic of Darokin. OW

Description: One *fang* unit and two bands of *strikers* from the Five Shires, along with the Darokinian IV Legion (from Ft. Cruth), arrive in Ft. Hobart today [*a fang is a sanctioned militia unit; strikers are bands of adventurers. Ed.*]. There, they join with four companies of the Karameikan Fifth Division who arrived just days ago.

The three armies make preparations to march on the Darokin Tunnel, where they will go to the assistance of the dwarves of Rockhome. The Xth Legion from Ft. Hobart will be joining the expedition, which is set to leave in two days. (See Th. 5, Ya. 2; Ya. 13, Kl. 4.)

Yarthmont 6, AC 1016: The NACE Ponders the Surshield Matter.

Location: Confederate Capital of Ionace, NACE. AS

Description: Since receiving Teskilion's report of raids upon his kingdom, the council has discussed the matter to little resolution. Not wishing to further burden the entire council with the matter, it has since been passed down to a committee of representatives, which so far has been extremely quiet about any progress on the matter. (See Th. 20, Fl. 24; Ya. 13, Kl. 3.)

What This Means: The council has bigger concerns than what they perceive as a minor series of border skirmishes. Without an immediate resolution, the matter has been relegated to a committee that has become stalled with the matter and has turned its attentions to creating a unified Surshield. In their opinion, the current size and attitude of the kingdom makes this difficult. An unorthodox solution is to split the kingdom in half and make the Spearpoint portion the Kingdom of Surshield; the balance would remain an anarchy. This would secure Gratia's hold on the populace, but it does little to quell the raids. It is mentioned that these wild lands could be established as a new kingdom at a later time.

Yarthmont 7, AC 1016: Here Comes the Cavalry.

Location: City of Smaggeft, Kingdom of Rockhome. OW

Description: Duric and Bifia's army in Smaggeft receives much awaited assistance from Thar, as goblinoid reinforcements arrive on the battlefield.

The Rockhome army prepares for battle, but half of its forces are committed to an underground assault. Further, they are unprepared for a charge by gnollish cavalry. The dwarves take a beating before finally withdrawing from conflict and setting their lines in closer to the city of Smaggeft. Reinforcements are called in from the belowground siege. (See Th. 17, Ya. 2; Ya. 14, Fe. 22.)

What This Means: Thar finally relented and sent aid to his "allies" in Smaggeft. Better to smash the dwarven offensive in that city than to let them get nearer to his stronghold in Tharia (Kurdal). He sent his lieutenant Mokamet-Qadi and his gnolls, hoping that the dwarves would be unused to dealing with cavalry in their own homeland. His gamble paid off, but it will still take some doing to drive the dwarves out of the valley.

Yarthmont 7, AC 1016: Falanen Fights for Life.

Location: City of Rafielton, Colony of Aengmor, Shadow Elves' Territories. OW

Description: The old Falanen, key member of the shadowelf diplomatic team and advisor to Princess Tanadaleyo, is almost killed by an *invisible stalker* when he gets back home at night. Falanen is heavily wounded by the monster, but manages to kill it before fainting. (See Fl. 12; Ya. 13, Kl. 3.)

What This Means: This time the Alfheim Avengers tried their luck aiming at one of the key members of the peace process, but they underestimated old Falanen's skills and thus failed.

Shadowelf officers have no clear clues yet, except that the *invisible stalker* has clearly been summoned by someone and Alfheimers are at the top of the suspects' list.

What the PCs Can Do: Shadowelf PCs may be hired by Princess Tanadaleyo (or one of her advisors) to privately investigate on the long series of murders.

Second Week

Yarthmont 8, AC 1016: News Reach Doriath.

Location: City of Rafielton, Colony of Aengmor, Shadow Elves' Territories. OW

Description: News of the crusaders' defeat reach King Doriath of Alfheim while attending the peace talks in Rafielton. He expresses his deep shock hearing that Durifern Widefarer of clan Grunalf did not make it to Wendar and wants to be immediately informed of the precise state of affairs by the surviving clanmasters, Coolhands and Beasthunter. He summons an immediate clanmasters' meeting in Selenica (somewhat in the middle between all current locations of the Alfheim clanmasters) to discuss the future of the elven crusade in Denagoth. (See Fl. 25, Fl. 27; Ya. 22, Kl. 27.)

What This Means: Doriath is busy with the current peace treaty and with restoring Canolbarth to its former beauty, but he could not ignore his former partners' state of disgrace. He hopes the meeting will be useful in finding a clear way of action on behalf of the Alfheimers who are still in Denagoth and suffer at the hands of the Shadow Lord, possibly without beginning another military campaign.

Yarthmont 8, AC 1016: Burrower Hit-and-Run.

Location: Kingdom of Aegos, NACE, Alatian Islands. SD

Description: After numerous deadly raids on small squads by the burrower, Commander Broderick regroups his men to hold onto Pittston and Aegopoli, then only Aegopoli, as maintaining a supply line to The Pit proves impossible. (See Fl. 20, Fl. 27; Ya. 16; Ya. 23.)

What This Means: Commander Broderick is very worried by his role as the mouse opposing a very powerful cat, even if the mouse can bark like a dog thanks to the artifact. He has had to retreat all the way to Aegopoli and abandon the rest of the island to the burrower, and fears he will soon have no choice but to abandon Aegopoli as well, as the beast isn't afraid of making forays into the fortified town. Besides, soldiers are growing restless and most suffer from terrible nightmare, or worse.

Yarthmont 8: Charter Granted.

Location: Village of Las Guajacas, *Baronia de Torreón*. SC

Description: For the last five months the afflicted of Las Guajacas and intolerant "normal" from surrounding regions have been at each others' throats at every opportunity. Baronesa Isabel has had little success in keeping the two warring factions apart. If she is ever going to be able to free up enough resources and troops to take Terra Vermelha she has to resolve the problem, so she requests a meeting with the leaders of Las Guajacas. The request is

granted and by the end of it both sides have come to an agreement. The *baronesa* agrees to cede the northern portion of Torreón to the afflicted; everything north of Las Guajacas will become their territory and the normal people of the region (including the village of Pueblo Real) will be relocated to the southern part of Torreón. In return, this chartered province will provide taxes and a small but elite force of afflicted troops to the *baronesa*. (See *Fe. I.*)

What This Means: The *baronesa* has finally solved the afflicted problem. Although the peons of the north are not going to be happy about it, there are plenty of farms and houses vacated by the afflicted in the south for them to resettle in. Also, the *baronesa* will gain much-needed tax revenues from the afflicted, which she has not been able to collect of late due to the recent “unpleasantness.” Also, she has now created a buffer zone of afflicted for Torreón should the master of Hule decide to send his forces south against the baronies. And finally, the *baronesa* has secured a small group of powerful afflicted soldiers who can use their legacies to help her take Terra Vermelha.

Yarthmont 9, AC 1016: Taijits Versus Yakkas.

Location: Plain of Grass, Ethengar *Khanates*. OW

Description: A *dagam* (100 warriors) of Taijits cross tribal territories and attack a tribe of Yakkas. The attack is little more than a raid, and there are few fatalities, but it provokes a response from Jemugu *Khan* of the Yakkas. Within days, Yakka forces are mobilized to strike against their hated Taijit neighbors. A bloody feud ensues. (See *Fl. 11, Fl. 16.*)

What This Means: Yet more unrest in the *khanates*. The Taijit and Yakka clans have a long-standing blood feud that was held in check only by the strength of leadership of Moglai *Khan*. With him dead, the blood feud has once more erupted. The attack by the Taijits was deliberate, and intended to provoke a Yakka response.

Yarthmont 10, AC 1016: The Night Terror.

Location: Forest of Geffron, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: During this dark spring night, some squadrons of the Elf Skull Units patrolling the Forest of Geffron are attacked by vicious elven undead that leave them bled dry after the encounter. In the following nights the ambushes become a recurring obsession for those same humanoids, who just last year were considered the bane of all nightly travelers inside Geffron. Darmak, member of the Onyx Ring in charge of the operations in Geffron, starts to investigate into the matter, suspecting the undead legions of the Shadow Lord being the cause of the problem. (See *Ya. 3, Ya. 5; Ya. 25.*)

What This Means: Sylarion decided not to lose time and hit the enemy before they hit him. This way he has found a temporary solution for the primary feeding problem (three hundred vampires are not easy to satiate each night), but understands he must teach his minions self-control or they will have bled dry all the forest dwellers before the end of the year.

Darmak thinks the undead legion is responsible for the attacks, but has not yet understood who is behind it. He still thinks the Shadow Lord is manipulating them following some unknown agenda he is resolute to discover before it's too late.

Yarthmont 11, AC 1016: Thyatis Asks for Investigation.

Location: City of Darokin, Republic of Darokin. OW

Description: The Thyatian ambassador in Darokin announces that Thyatis shall need further investigation by neutral parties before committing to action. Meanwhile, as Minrothad is still loosely allied to Thyatis (since the Aegos affair), the ambassador states that Thyatian ships shall protect Minrothad against “rash and unthinking actions by certain parties.” Part of the Thyatian navy is dispatched to patrol the northern waters of Minrothad. (See *Ya. 2, Ya. 5; Ya. 25, Kl. 2.*)

What This Means: Eusebius sees this as an opportunity to increase his country's importance in Minrothad's eyes. At the moment, Minrothad cannot refuse the help of Thyatian navy, because its own navy could not stand against the combined forces of the Western Defense League should Darokin push them to war.

What the PCs Can Do: International intrigue is always a plus for world-class sneaks.

Yarthmont 11, AC 1016: A Castle Falls.

Location: Fortress of Yüksek Hisar, Kingdom of Karsile, Hulean Empire. SC

Description: After more than a month of siege, the garrison of Yüksek Hisar finally surrenders to the troops of Rehmin. Most of the fort's soldiers are spared by Rehmin, in fact they are asked to leave in arm at the sole condition that they join the Hulean forces fighting the northern nomads in northern Karsile. Yüksek Hisar taken, the way along the Gree River leading toward Hule's center is widely open for Rehmin's armies. His armies also evacuate the land held in southern Dvinzina. (See Fl. 3, Fl. 5; Ya. 23, Ya. 25.)

What This Means: The victory of Rehmin's forces over the main fortified structure of northern Hule opens up the way toward Hule's biggest cities. As most of the Hulean troops are engaged against Ustalam's nomads way north, Rehmin's armies are much or less free to progress toward their goal. Also, by sending the garrison of the fort northward, Rehmin slows down the progression of the nomads.

Yarthmont 12, AC 1016: Battle on the Beaches.

Location: City of Bluenose, Kingdom of Arogansa, Floating Continent of Alphatia. HW

Description: While solemnly walking Bluenose's beaches, Karyndra is attacked by a group of Alphatians. She is able to hold them off with her spells until bystanders intervene and kill the attackers. Slightly wounded in the attack, Karyndra is quickly carried to a temple of Alphatia. The attack is briefly investigated and declared an attempted mugging. Since the attackers display little signs of being spellcasters, the matter is not pursued. (See Nu. 7, Th. 17; Kl. 3, Fy. 22.)

What This Means: Since her return to Arogansa, Karyndra has wisely withheld any comments on Floating Alphatia. It did not take her long to uncover who knows of Alphatia's true history and why it is being kept from the general public. Fearing retribution from more powerful mages, she has decided to keep her mouth shut. This has enraged Alphaks, who decided to send some of His hoodlums to give her a not so gentle reminder of her part of the deal. This ploy backfires as Karyndra discloses Alphaks's involvement in getting her to Alphatia as well as what He wants her to do.

Yarthmont 13, AC 1016: Heldanners and Ethengars Clash.

Location: Sudbergen Hills, Heldann, Heldannic Territories. OW

Description: A raiding force of Ethengar warriors clashes with a group of Heldannic Knights in the hills south of Grauenberg. Heldannic patrols spotted the enemy horsemen two days ago and a contingent of knights was sent to deal with them. Neither side is severely wounded during the encounter, but the Ethengar horsemen, discouraged by the quick Heldannic response, retreat back to their home territory. Heldannic patrols along the Ethengar border will be strengthened, and word is sent to Freiburg that the Heldann/Ethengar treaty seems to no longer be operable, following the death of Moglai Khan. (See Th. 8, Fl. 11; Kl. 15, Kl. 17.)

What This Means: The raiding party was a mix of Kaeruts and Uighurs, both anxious to test their might against the hated Heldanners to the north. Few are surprised that the hotheaded Hulagu Khan of the Uighurs is involved, as his hatred of the Heldanners is well documented. Odder is the participation of Huaji Khan of the Kaeruts, whose anti-Heldann sentiment was thought to have died long ago. What is known to very few is that Huaji Khan was for years a puppet of Moglai Khan's, controlled by the *hakomon* known as Bakalgu the Destroyer. Bakalgu's mind was shattered while battling the late Master of Nightmares, Prince Jherek Virayana, in the Glantri/Ethengar war. Now that

he is free of the *hakomon*'s control, Huaji's true nature has resurfaced, and he readily agreed to join Hulagu in a raid on Heldann.

Yarthmont 13, AC 1016: Strange Bedfellows.

Location: Fort Hobart, Republic of Darokin. OW

Description: The allied forces of the Western Defense League are greeted with a strange sight: a band of goblinoids has arrived from the north.

The goblinoids march under the banner of General Tlatepetl of Oenkmar (known to humans as Orcland), and claim to have come to join the campaign against the raiding goblinoids of Rockhome. They are met with mixed emotion by the allied troops, but are finally allowed to join the expedition. They are kept under close watch by the Xth Legion. (*See Th. 5, Ya. 6; Kl. 4, Fe. 7.*)

What This Means: Patrols from Ft. Hobart spotted a small but strong band of goblinoids marching south from Xorg days ago. They attempted to engage them, thinking it to be yet another raiding party, but were surprised when the orcs offered to parley. The orcish band revealed itself to be under the command of General Tlatepetl, and was escorted to Ft. Hobart. Their arrival has delayed the departure of the allied forces for a few days.

Tlatepetl has been in contact with the government of Darokin in recent months, attempting to legitimize his claim on Orcland. This gesture is meant to demonstrate his peaceful intentions on behalf of his neighbors. Despite strong protests by the shires' representatives, Darokin officers have been instructed to accept the band, so as not to offend Tlatepetl.

Though a small force (about 100 orcs and goblins), it is commanded by Oenkmarian officers, and should prove to be a useful addition to the allied army.

Yarthmont 13, AC 1016: Caught in the Act.

Location: Sump and Weir, Colony of Aengmor, Shadow Elves' Territories. OW

Description: General Sputafiel, one of the 14 shadowelf generals in Aengmor, is saved from drowning by his soldiers after being pushed down the Weir and into Monster River by a member of the Alfheim Avengers.

While the general was inspecting the troops patrolling the top of the wall, a *flying* elf appeared out of nowhere [*probably* invisible. *Ed.*] and pushed him down the wall. The elf tried to fly away in the ensuing chaos, but was immediately intercepted and shot down by skinwing riders of the Celebryl Air Force. It was a surface elf. (*See Ya. 7; Kl. 3, Kl. 18.*)

What This Means: Another failed attempt by Alfheim Avengers, but this time the shadow elves do have evidence against surface elves and will certainly react as necessary.

Ironically, even if they've failed to kill both Falanen and Sputafiel, the Alfheim Avengers may well have succeeded in stopping, or at least slowing down, the peace process.

Yarthmont 13, AC 1016: A Dove in Cage.

Location: Idris Tower, Forest of Lothenar, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: The caravan escorting the crusaders taken prisoner in Geffron during the previous month reach Idris Tower, located inside the Dead Forest of Lothenar. During the interrogations of the prisoners, the Onyx Ring discovers that one of them is a Darokinian archeologist who corresponds with the famous *Mystaran Almanac*. Once informed, the Most High Priestess of Idris demands to see the archeologist Christopher Dove. During a private conversation, the high priestess manifests her will for Dove to travel throughout the land of Denagoth and write back to his editors about the wonders and dangers of the plateau. She gives him the task to show every reader of the Old

World the might and power of Idris and Denagoth. Facing death as an alternative, Dove reluctantly accepts and starts his tour of Denagoth escorted by a team of shadow soldiers and a dragon-knight. (*See Fl. 25, Fl. 27.*)

What This Means: The high priestess wants to exploit Dove's correspondence to give the Old World's nations the image of a strong and deadly nation ruled with iron fist. This way they will start fearing Denagoth and give it due respect. She also wants to lure the rulers of those nations into making alliances with Denagoth in order to get a foot inside the Known World's policies and economy as well.

Yarthmont 13, AC 1016: Surshield Responds.

Location: Town of Alinquin, Kingdom of Dawnrim, NACE, Bellissaria. AS

Description: King Teskilion receives a response from the queen of Surshield regarding the raids. Queen Gratia expresses her sorrow at the loss of life and property, however there is little that she can do. She admits that aside from the city of Spearpoint and its surrounding countryside, she has little control of what goes on in Surshield. She tells Teskilion that she has spoken of the matter with the NACE Council and a solution is being evaluated. Teskilion orders a further strengthening of patrols. (*See Fl. 24, Ya. 6; Kl. 3, Am. 18.*)

What This Means: Gratia's response does not surprise Teskilion who is well aware of the anarchist nature of Surshield. He is intrigued at this solution that Gratia mentions, however, he is loath to wait for action by the NACE to resolve things. He strengthens the patrols in preparation of a military operation into Surshield should it be needed.

What the PCs Can Do: There is now a more pressing need for reconnaissance. If PCs are already in this role, they will be hastened to gather raider locations and present them to Teskilion. Restrictions against engaging the raiders may be lessened.

Yarthmont 14, AC 1016: Retreat.

Location: City of Smaggeft, Kingdom of Rockhome. OW

Description: The army of Rockhome pulls all its forces to the surface to deal with the threat of the gnollish cavalry before they can return to the siege of the city. The advancing dwarves form their army into squares to prevent the cavalry from charging, while their crossbowmen fire on the enemy.

Unfortunately, the massed groups of dwarves provide perfect targets for a barrage of boulders thrown by giants that are allied to the cavalry. The dwarven squares are broken, and the gnollish cavalry charges, creating further chaos. As the dwarves retreat towards Smaggeft, the gates of the city are thrown wide and Psa'gh leads a horde of goblinoids out onto the plains to aid the cavalry assault. The ranks of the Rockhome army are compromised, and the dwarven forces are routed. They retreat northwards along the Smaggeft Road, even while being pursued by the goblinoid army. (*See Ya. 2, Ya. 7; Fe. 22, Fy. 6.*)

What This Means: Mokamet-Qadi was trained in the tactics of warfare by Thyatians (who hoped he would plague their enemies in Ylaruam), and was prepared for the dwarven square formation. He borrowed a group of giants from Thar to use as artillery in such a scenario. Together with the army of Psa'gh, the goblinoids have broken the first assault by Rockhome on the Klintest Lowlands. The dwarves will retreat back up the road and attempt to regroup by the village of Murgar. For now, the goblinoids remain in control of the lowlands.

Third Week

Yarthmont 16, AC 1016: Bearer of the *Fiendslayer*.

Location: Eadrin Island, NACE. AS

Description: The power researchers of the Alphatian Artifact Agency puzzle out the last power of an artifact that was brought to their study last year (before the agency was created). They name the artifact *Fiendslayer*, and the agency puts it into the custody of the former king of Aegos, Dromedon. (See Fl. 27, Ya. 8; Ya. 23, Ya. 26.)

What This Means: *Fiendslayer* is a powerful Alphatian Artifact with the following powers:

Sword +2, +5 vs. servants of Entropy (+1, +3 at half-strength).

The wielder of the sword gains AM80 and -4 to AC against magical powers or physical attacks by a servant of Entropy (AM40 and -2 to AC at half-strength).

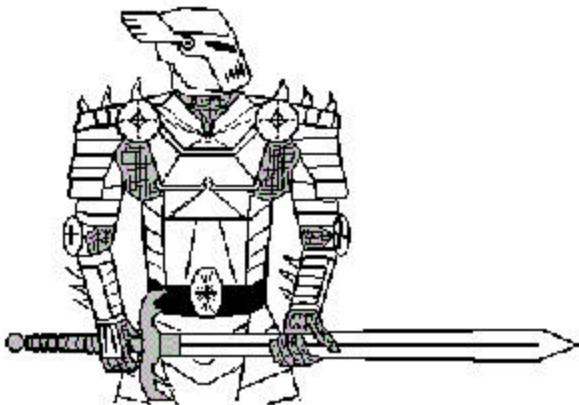
If a servant of Entropy is hit with this sword the wielder may activate a *cause serious wounds* effect (no additional to hit roll required) that can only be healed by Immortal magic (*cause minor wound* at half-strength).

If a servant of Entropy is hit with this sword or by the sword's first power to less than half its maximum hit points the wielder may *banish* it to its home plane where it will take 10 years to reform a body. If this power is activated, the wielder must *save vs. death* or die; if the wielder dies as a result of activating this power, *Fiendslayer teleports* itself to a random location within 1,000 miles of the Sundsvall Maelstrom (the *save* is made at -5 when the weapon is at half-strength).

The power researchers have established a list of all the powers, but they failed to discover the dangers associated with activating the *banishing* power.

King Dromedon is entrusted with *Fiendslayer*, becoming the first of the agency's new branch: the Bearers. (Commander Broderick is not a bearer, although the agency also entrusted him with an Alphatian Artifact on direct request by the council: the agency has not finished researching its powers and plans to before giving it to a permanent bearer.)

What the PCs Can Do: If the agency has reasons to give *Fiendslayer* to a PC, then Dromedon is replaced in this event and the following ones by the PC and his "retainers."



Yarthmont 16, AC 1016: Goblins Advance, Gnolls Withdraw.

Location: Border with the Badlands, *Baronia del Grande Carrascal*. SC

Description: Despite the unexpected reinforcements of a few dozens of gaucho lupins, the gnolls are unable to hold off the goblin onslaught, and start retreating toward Buenos Viente. Some bold goblin warbands attack the retreating (but also regrouped) gnolls, and generally end up wiped out. The goblin receive even more reinforcements, as many that did not submit to Garok before rejoin the successful horde now. (See Va. 17, Fl. 4; Kl. 25, Fy. 9.)

What This Means: The lupins are from Nouvelle Renardie, a Renardois colony of Pflarr-worshipping outcasts located in the bayou. Hearing from the latest batch of exiles that the gnolls of El Grande Carrascal also worshipped the Immortal Pflarr, the clergy arranged for some trusted wheellock-wielding lupins to travel to the possibly friendly—but still assumed hostile—lands of the gnolls and make contact with the local followers of Pflarr, if they do exist, and report.

Yarthmont 17, AC 1016: Construction Begins for Real.

Location: Sunken Arogansa, Sunken Alphatia, NACE. AS

Description: With their underwater barracks and construction facilities completed, workers begin preparing the sea bottom to hold the dome being constructed in Aaslin. The building of the barracks and facilities has been greatly aided by the workers' use of some nearly intact ruins near the site.

To commemorate the occasion, a party of prominent mages stages a ceremony to celebrate the ground breaking. They dub the settlement the City of Torenal, in honor of the late imperial general. The event is broadcast via magic all throughout the NACE to boost the Alphatians' morale. However it is also detrimental, as other nations, such as Thyatis and Glantri, will surely hear of the venture. (*See Va. 7, Va. 18; Ya. 22, Kl. 17.*)

What the PCs Can Do: PCs can act as armed escorts to add to the security of the ceremony. After the ceremony, the PCs may be recruited to stay and supplement the guarding force.

Yarthmont 17, AC 1016: End of the Armada.

Location: Sea of Dread. OW

Description: The Twaelar have spent the weeks following the first battle with the armada gathering their forces; the largest merrow army ever assembled on Mystara is the result. Twaelar patrols have shadowed the imperial armada since it left the Isle of Dread. The Twaelar army now attacks, striking from all sides in seemingly endless waves of merrow. The Thyatians spring yet another surprise, though, unleashing *depth bombs* against the merrow soldiers. This weapon was not perfected in time for the previous battle, but Thyatian alchemists worked overtime on it while the fleet anchored at Mora. The *depth bomb* consists of a small barrel with a hole drilled in one end. Inside it is an explosive mixture and at the bottom a small amount of *water fire*. The barrel is thrown over the side of a ship (either by hand or propelled by a mangonel), and begins to sink. It slowly fills with water, and when the water reaches the *water fire* at the bottom, the barrel explodes with a sharp snap. The explosion itself reaches only 5' radius from the barrel (doing 6d6 damage), but unleashes a concussive wave into the surrounding water, stunning anything it strikes within a 30' radius. (*See Fl. 15, Ya. 3; Ya. 26, Fe. 3.*)

What This Means: Both sides are in for an unexpectedly difficult fight. The armada is badly outnumbered by the Twaelar, but the Twaelar are unprepared for yet another surprising new weapon. Neither side shows any mercy; merrow butchering the wounded and Thyatians killing stunned merrow. Thousands of merrow die as armada warriors, clerics, and mages repel wave after wave of attacks. But the Twaelar are unrelenting and persistent, rallying after each setback. Finally, the armada begins to run low on *water fire*, *depth bombs*, *water breathing potions* and other magics, so the Twaelar close in and overrun the armada. Surviving vessels scatter and attempt to return to port. *Weather control* type magics are used to prevent pursuit. This is a Pyrrhic victory for the Twaelar, however, having taken even larger casualties than in the last battle.

What the PCs Can Do: Fight or die. Crafty or powerful characters might turn the tide of the battle and keep the armada from being overrun. Diabolical DMs might arrange for the characters to be captured by the Twaelar, and run them through a few adventures as the "guests" of the Merrow Empire.

Yarthmont 17, AC 1016: Mivosia Attacks Ilioloosti.

Location: Village of Thyrae, City-State of Ilioloosti, Meghala Kimata Plains. DV

Description: A force of 500 men from Mivosia arrive at the line of towers that marks Ilioloosti's eastern border today, and, shielding themselves from the hail of arrows and crossbow bolts, surge westwards, breaking up into small groups and ignoring the defenses. They lose a small number of their men, and they form up into a full unit again once out of arrow range. The Mivosians continue westwards, quickly nearing the village of Thyrae, one of Ilioloosti's satellite villages.

The soldiers immediately descend upon the village of 130, wantonly killing and burning as they go. After most of the village's defenders have been killed, the soldiers methodically loot the village, taking with them everything of value, including food. Before Ilioloostian forces can close in on them, the Mivosians flee northwards. (See Ya. 19, Ya. 24.)

What This Means: Mivosia and Ilioloosti have been rivals for centuries, each fighting in their own way for local domination. While Ilioloosti seeks to rule through knowledge, Mivosia tries to do so by the sword. This is just the latest in a long line of skirmishes fought between the two city-states. What makes this attack different is that, instead of trying to overwhelm Ilioloosti's defenses, the Mivosian soldiers instead rushed through. The Mivosians had been marching for weeks, and were given instructions to do as much damage to their enemy as possible. They will run rampant inside Ilioloosti's borders for the next few days.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are with the Ilioloostians, they could help track down the raiders (500 men leave an easy trail to follow) and try to minimize the damage they do. They could also help the people of Thyrae restore order in their village, or assist in the mammoth task of reconstruction.

Yarthmont 18, AC 1016: Crystal Tested.

Location: City of Rafielton, Colony of Aengmor, Shadow Elves' Territories. OW

Description: Randafien arrives in Rafielton and quickly reaches an out-of-the-way spot in the forest to test the new *radiant soul crystal*. Surprisingly it does not shatter when exposed to sunlight and allows the experienced shaman to cast both standard spells and *Radiance* ones.

An excited Randafien immediately heads back to the City of the Stars to bring the good news to the radiant shaman. (See Fl. 28; Kl. 10, Fy. 1.)

What This Means: Rafiel was, obviously, right: these new crystals will allow shamans to cast their spells above ground.

Yarthmont 18, AC 1016: Eusebius Makes an Offer.

Location: City of Minrothad, Minrothad Guilds, Sea of Dread. OW

Description: The Thyatian ambassador in Minrothad tells the assembled guild masters that Thyatis is perfectly aware of Minrothad's assassination attempt, and cannot continue to protect it... unless, of course, Thyatis were protecting its own territory. The guild masters, understanding the hint, are outraged at the suggestion... until a messenger comes in and tells them that the people of the city are rioting in opposition to the guild masters' treacherous policies. The guild masters withdraw to discuss the situation. (See Ya. 5, Ya. 11; Ya. 25, Kl. 2.)

What This Means: Eusebius is pursuing this opportunity above and beyond what he originally intended. Now he sees his chance to add Minrothad to the empire. To this end, his agents in Minrothad have been fomenting unrest and opposition to the guild masters' policies, as well as spreading fear of a possible attack by Western Defense League nations. His ambassador has made a thinly disguised hint about Minrothad joining Thyatis, and even mentioned that Thyatis might be obligated to "join the forces which will rightfully punish the wrongdoers." The guild masters now have a choice of tying themselves to Thyatis, or likely seeing their country devastated by a war.

What the PCs Can Do: Thyatian characters could be among the agents agitating in Minrothad.

Yarthmont 18, AC 1016: Durifern Lives!

Location: Forest of Geffron, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: The group of crusaders heading westwards after leaving Sylarion at the Aeleris Pits stumbles into an Elf Skull Units squadron who assaults them. The battle is fierce, but unexpected help comes when another larger group of elves leaps out of the trees' branches and confronts the unit. The humanoids are quickly dispatched by the numerous elves, who recognize each other. Clanmaster Durifern then makes his entrance and greets the small elven

band, offering them to join his group. The elves tell him and their brethren what happened in Aeleris Pits and their intention to return to Wendar. Durifern states that he will not go home until all the living elves held prisoners in Denagoth will be freed. Through a passionate speech, he manages to convince the smaller group of crusaders to stay with his army and together they march westwards towards their new secret hideout. (*See Fl. 25, Fl. 27; Ya. 25, Am. 20.*)

What This Means: Durifern has no intention to go home for now. His deep sense of honor and the need to protect his soldiers led him to stay in Denagoth instead of retreating, and try to save as many elves as possible. He helped hundreds of crusaders escape the ambush when things started to get really bad and now leads them to free their captive brethren. His motto is now: "We will not let it happen again!"

What the PCs Can Do: If they have followed Durifern or left Sylarion, they have the opportunity to act as a rescue team for their unfortunate brethren. Otherwise they can choose to brave the pathways of Geffron alone and head back to Wendar or maybe Heldann.

Yarthmont 18, AC 1016: Out of Retirement.

Location: City-State of Trikelios, NACE, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: Queen Stillian, ruler of Trikelios, assembles an honor guard to greet a new arrival in the city. The newcomer is General William Hazard, and his crack team of crossbowmen. Hazard and his men are best known for their capture of a Thyatian Eagle [*Thyatian army standard. Ed.*] during the Great War nearly a decade ago. They have been brought out of retirement by a special request from Commander Broderick, in order to put a halt to the rampages of Mario's Marauders. (*See Va. 22.*)

What This Means: Now that Mario's Marauders have turned their sights on Alphatian territory, the NACE is determined to bring them down with more rapidity than the Thyatians demonstrated in the past.

What the PCs Can Do: General Hazard will certainly be looking for new troops to conscript into his fighting force. Interested PCs will have ample opportunity to become soldiers or perhaps even officers in the new army.

Yarthmont 19, AC 1016: Tezparn in Flames.

Location: Town of Tezparn, Kingdom of Qeodhar, NACE. AS

Description: The small southern town of Tezparn is in flames today, as local Alphatians and Antalians clash, after heated debates over the right of the Antalians to protest Baron Norlan's rule. The Alphatians began to attack the minority Antalians, and violence ensued. Many shops and houses are looted and burned, and dozens of people lie injured in the streets once the town guard manages to restore order. In the aftermath, the mayor promises each group that the persons responsible for starting the fighting will be arrested. (*See Fl. 7; Ya. 23, Ya. 25.*)

What This Means: This is another event to show the PCs that all is not well in Qeodhar. While the rioting in Farend was started by the Antalians, the Alphatians started the fighting here. Although the mayor, an Alphatian, promised to look into the matter, many of the Antalians living here doubt that justice will be served.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are present, the PCs could try to help end the violence, but they will have a tough time doing so. If they were also present in Farend when the rioting occurred, then they may have the chance to learn more about Qeodhar's history, and its troubles.

Yarthmont 19, AC 1016: Ellipidemos Raided.

Location: Village of Ellipidemos, City-State of Ilioloosti, Meghala Kimata Plains. DV

Description: The Mivosian soldiers descend on the village of Ellipidemos today, slaughtering livestock and killing all who stand in their way. The village of 650 alerts the local detachment of the Ilioloostian army, who then enters the village to engage the enemy. Although outnumbered by more than five to one, the defenders fight ferociously, and

manage to kill a number of Mivosians before being driven away. Having lost 47 men in this raid, the Mivosians grab what they can and head towards the northeast. (*See Ya. 17; Ya. 24.*)

What This Means: This is the second raid conducted by the Mivosians against Ilioloosti within its own territory. By now word of the first assault has spread all over Ilioloosti, and it has responded by increasing the number of patrols within its borders. As a result of this, Ellipidemos was somewhat prepared for the assault, and was able to do some damage to the raiders.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are on the side of Ilioloosti, they can help track down the fleeing Mivosians, who number roughly 440 now. They could also stay behind and help repair the damage done by the attackers, which, although not as serious as that done to Thyrae, is still considerable.

Yarthmont 19, AC 1016: An Emperor for one Half of an Empire.

Location: City of Huitlaktima, Azcan Empire. HW

Description: The Azcan Empire is wrenched apart in revolution. The fighting is bloody and savage, because of the Azcan character. Chupicuaro's fanaticism, being a stark contrast with the self-indulgence of the late emperor and his brothers, becomes the rallying point for followers of Atzanteotl. Huitlaktima becomes the chief base of opposition to the New Way, with the support of Yuzihuapac and Atacoatli, and generally the central region of the empire. With no heir to the throne, Chupicuaro declares himself the new *tlatoani*, chosen by Atzanteotl Himself to restore order to the empire (the day is *Tlatoani Coatl* [Emperor Serpent. Ed.] according to the Azcan calendar).

The opposition is led by Otziltipac and Malinalxoch from Titlapoca. Many cities have seen the temples of Atzanteotl desecrated and replaced by the worship of Quetzalcoatl and the ancient Immortals; Chitlacan and all lands north of it, and various towns of southern and southeastern Azcan lands are now on the side of the New Way and the leaders of these cities (rebels in the eyes of Chupicuaro) generally follow the leadership of Otziltipac even if they rank higher in the New Way hierarchy. (*See Va. 12, Th. 10; Kl. 7, Kl. 25.*)

Yarthmont 21, AC 1016: Bensarian Informed of the Peacekeepers.

Location: Village of Kevar, Kingdom of Wendar. OW

Description: Bensarian of Kevar is informed by some Genalleth elves of the strange interrogations and beatings that many elves (especially Alfheimers) experienced in the last month. He also receives word of elves being abducted by human guards and dragged away in unknown prisons for further interrogations merely because they are suspected of being in league with the Alfheim Avengers. Bensarian and his close team of investigators start looking inside this matter as well. (*See Fl. 26; Kl. 11.*)

What This Means: Bensarian already knew of the peacekeepers' existence (he was informed by the Church of Idris), but waited for news to come to him via the usual network before investigating on the matter, in order to avoid suspicion from his partners. His master plan is now reaching the crucial point and he must act carefully to avoid mistakes.

Fourth Week

Yarthmont 22, AC 1016: Clanmasters Meet in Selenica.

Location: City of Selenica, Republic of Darokin. OW

Description: Doriath and six of the major Alfheim clanmasters gather in the renowned Solace Inn in Selenica for a private meeting. Coolhands attends the meeting as representative of his husband and exposes the facts that led to the crusaders' demise in Geffron. When questioned about the fate of Durifern, Coolhands admits she and Beasthunter *teleported* away without waiting for the end of the battle, due to the fact that they were bleeding

severely. This prompts Carlisan's [*the Chossum clanmaster. Ed.*] critics about bad conduct and inability to lead the army, a sharp speech that ends with the condemnation of Beasthunter and a request to remove him from his position.

Redsword, from whom Coolhands tries to get some support, is surprisingly very silent and seems to nod at each of Carlisan's words. Mealidan Mealidil only intervenes to state that "albeit I'm sorry for the situation, the crusaders are no more a problem of Alfheim's, since they acted of their own and must then be left on their own. The primary goal is now to restore the welfare of the Forest of Canolbarth, so that all Alfheimers will be able to relocate in their former homeland."

The only person who talks to defend Beasthunter's position is old Dyradyl, who simply affirms that Beasthunter fought valiantly and was not guilty for the campaign's failure. If he had stayed behind, he would have only died uselessly, so he made the right decision when *teleporting* away. What he must do now, however, is return to take back those who remained behind, for this is the only honorable solution. Brendan Erendyl agrees with both Mealidan and Dyradyl on the point that the fate of the crusaders is entirely a matter better left to the crusaders who escaped, for the Alfheim elves now have other, much urging needs.

Doriath and all the clanmasters thus decide not to intervene in any way in the Denagoth affair, leaving the duty to take back to Wendar the imprisoned elves to the Long Runners and Grunalfs who still live in Wendar, possibly under the supervision of Beasthunter and Coolhands. Should they fail, they will be removed from their positions and a new clanmaster will be selected by the Long Runners' elders. (*See Fl. 27, Ya. 8; Kl. 27, Fe. 4.*)

What This Means: Beasthunter was still too ashamed by his conduct and too depressed to face the other clanmasters, so he sent his wife to the meeting. Coolhands hoped to gain King Doriath and Redsword's support, but she failed because of Carlisan's early intervention, which cunningly lay the blame for the defeat on them. Carlisan simply wants Beasthunter and his wife removed from the position, in order to have the chance to put one of his followers in that place or as advisor to the new clanmaster. Redsword could not defend Beasthunter's position both because he was magically influenced by Carlisan and also because he judged the Long Runner leader guilty of abandoning his fellows. Mealidan and Brendan could not care less about the crusade and they reinforced the common opinion that the most important goal for the Alfheimers is currently to get back to Canolbarth, so everything else must be forgotten. Dyradyl was the only one to speak in favor of Beasthunter because of his past: by defending the young clanmaster he was defending himself in front of his conscience and the other clan leaders.

The result of the meeting is a hard one for Coolhands to accept, but she has to obey. She and her husband have one year to rescue all the crusaders left in Denagoth and possibly to retrieve Durifern, or they will earn the Alfheimers' scorn and will be replaced as clanmaster.

Yarthmont 22, AC 1016: Construction Crew Attacked.

Location: Sunken Arogansa, Sunken Alphatia, NACE. AS

Description: A party of workers, exploring the area surrounding the construction site, is attacked by what appears to be undead creatures. The survivors fend off the attack and retreat back to the relative safety of the construction site, where they report the attack. (*See Va. 18, Ya. 17; Kl. 17, Kl. 26.*)

What This Means: The party of workers were off doing some unauthorized treasure hunting at a nearby ruined estate. There they entered the catacombs to rob the family graves but instead of the expected easy pickings, ghouls feasting upon the interred corpses attacked them.

This incident is important for the mages, as they had feared something like this: with such an abundance of carrion about, it was expected that carnivorous undead would be attracted. In light of this, patrols are strengthened and the more powerful guards are sent abroad to investigate nearby ruins, with orders to destroy any undead they find.

Yarthmont 23, AC 1016: Jaggar's Right Hand Man.

Location: Viscountcy of Blofeld, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: Prince Jaggar von Drachenfels waits patiently in the laboratory of his friend, *Herr Rolf von Graustein*. He had received a message from the Viscount of Blofeld stating that a solution to the problems with his missing arm had been found. Von Graustein now presents that solution: a new arm!

The new arm is mostly metal—partly mechanical, partly magical. It will be able to perform all the functions of Jaggar's former flesh and bone arm, and more. Von Graustein will have to graft the new arm onto Jaggar's body, a surgical procedure that will take the better part of a day.

Jaggar thanks his friend profusely, and finally agrees to the procedure, after deliberating on the decision for a day. (*See Nu. 3, Va. 4.*)

Yarthmont 23, AC 1016: A Verdict.

Location: Town of Tezparn, Kingdom of Qeodhar, NACE. AS

Description: The mayor announces that the magistrate of Tezparn has reached a verdict in the case of the fighting that happened several days before. Though several Alphatians have been proven guilty of starting the violence, they will be required to pay a small fine, and will be let go. The Antalian community is furious, and its leader, Harald Yorlsson, declares angrily in a public gathering that “the children of Ystmarhavn cannot receive their due in this land.” Promising reprisals, Harald orders the gathering to disperse. (*See Fl. 7, Ya. 19; Ya. 25, Ya. 26.*)

What This Means: Although the mayor of Tezparn is a moderate, many of the Alphatians living in the town, including the magistrate, are not. In private discussions, they threatened to stop supporting him as their leader. Realizing that he must satisfy the will of the majority, the mayor reluctantly agreed to support the magistrate’s decision, that the offenders would receive the lightest possible sentence. This will lead only to more violence in the future.

Yarthmont 23, AC 1016: Dromedon Back Home.

Location: Kingdom of Aegos, NACE, Alatian islands. SD

Description: Dromedon, who used to be the king of Aegos before the Thyatians annexed the island in the wake of Alphatia’s sinking, arrives in Aegos. He is hailed by the commoners who live in Aegopolis or fled their lands with the retreating Alphatians. (*See Ya. 8, Ya. 16; Ya. 26, Ya. 28.*)

What This Means: Dromedon is hailed as a liberator by the people of Aegos, who lived for a time under the Thyatian occupation.

Actually, Dromedon’s presence on Aegos is not to reclaim his kingdom, but to fight the burrower. Dromedon is confident in his artifact’s power, though Commander Broderick is less optimistic about it, seeing how the beast is unaffected by his own artifact. If Dromedon fails to kill the beast, Broderick will proceed with withdrawing from Aegos altogether.

Yarthmont 23, AC 1016: From Bad to Worst.

Location: Kadruay Hills, Protectorate of Monzag, Converted Lands, Hulean Empire. SC.

Description: As if the overall military situation wasn’t shabby enough, the Huleans are faced with an open rebellion in Monzag and an invading army of Sendarians in northwestern Karsun. The forest nomads launch their offensive directly against Kolköy, one of the last outposts linking Hule’s center to the armies engaged against Ustalam and his nomads. The Hulean strategists suspect the coordination of the Sendaryan and Midlands forces. (*See Fl. 3, Ya. 11; Kl. 22, Fe. 8.*)

What This Means: The Huleans are right, this is part of a carefully planned operation. Since Ustalam was not able to inflict a decisive defeat to the Huleans, he needed a way to profit from his superior mobility. By cleaning northwestern Hule, the Sendaryan tribes allow him to circumvent the resistance and resume his southward progress. The slower Dvinzinian infantry is, however, asked to stay at the rear guard to prevent a move from the encircled

Huleans. This also means that the race for Jandak is open, since the nomads are nearly free to move south and Rehmin is held back by resistance around Erzmin and Cirkara.

Yarthmont 24, AC 1016: Mivosians Trapped.

Location: Tiroian Hills, City-State of Ilioloosti, Meghala Kimata Plains. DV

Description: The force of Mivosians who has been raiding the periphery of Ilioloosti for the past several days encounters a small host of Ilioloostian soldiers on patrol in these hills, which mark the northern frontier of Ilioloosti's domain. As the two sides engage, the Ilioloostians sound their horns, alerting nearby soldiers of their predicament. Within half an hour, as the battle goes in favor of the Mivosians, they are attacked by a second group of Ilioloostians from their rear!

Now evenly matched, and with fresh soldiers, the Ilioloostians soon gain the upper hand, forcing the Mivosians to desperately try to break out of the encirclement. After a few abortive tries, about 200 Mivosians manage to surge through the weak point in their enemy's line, allowing them to flee eastwards. Quickly-loosed arrows cut down more of their number, but they manage to escape. (*See Ya. 17, Ya. 19.*)

What This Means: The army of Ilioloosti has managed to determine where the Mivosian raiders were located, but the initial encounter of this battle was coincidental. Ilioloosti has begun a program of militarization along its eastern and northern frontiers, where the raids have taken place, meaning an increased number and size of patrols, the expansion of defenses, and an overall increase in military strength. These tactics allowed Ilioloosti to better coordinate its forces, and therefore defeat the Mivosian raiding party. Some of the Mivosian soldiers will abandon hope of returning home and become bandits, but most will make the long trek home, pursued by the Ilioloostians for part of the way.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs have been helping out the Ilioloostians, they could have been the ones to find out where the raiders were most likely to be found. They might also have been involved in the fighting, directing the soldiers to entrap the enemy. Another possible task for the PCs would be to hunt down the fleeing soldiers, and eliminate as many as possible.

Yarthmont 24, AC 1016: Eriadna Summons Historians.

Location: City of Andaire, Kingdom of Jafilia, Floating Continent of Alphatia. HW

Description: Empress Eriadna summons several imperial historians and instructs them to begin tracing the histories and outer world connections of the Hollow World's populace.

What This Means: It did not take long for Alphatia to discover the culture-preserving nature of Hollow World, though even its historians know little about foreign cultures' histories. Some outer world ties are pretty obvious, like the Jennites or Antalians, or even the Nithians. Others pose greater trouble to the Alphatians, either because they predate the Alphatian migration to Mystara (Azcans, Brute-Men), or because as barbarians they were never remarked by them (Traldar, Shahjapuri). Digging the rare imperial archives on other peoples, some name level scholars will study the significance of the Hollow World's civilizations in the outer world, possibly determining what events brought them here.

Yarthmont 25, AC 1016: Meeting of Minds.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Emperor Eusebius and Ruling Guild Master Oran Meditor of Minrothad meet today in a private discussion. The Thyatian ruler discusses a proposal of joining Minrothad to his own empire, as a means of solving many of the island nation's current problems. Specifically, if Meditor were to allow Minrothad to become an exarchate of the Thyatian Empire, the threat of imperial intervention could serve to defuse many of the diplomatic problems caused by the assassination of Lucius Linton, as well as to forestall further assassination attempts on Meditor's life.

Oran Meditor listens with an open mind, and though he does not agree to Eusebius's offer, he does promise to think about it. (See Ya. 11, Ya. 18; Kl. 2.)

What This Means: Though his intentions are far from altruistic, Eusebius's plan would go a long way to solving Meditor's current dilemmas. With the backing of the Thyatian Empire, he would gain that much more clout with which to oppose his political enemies, and he could finally lay his fears of an assassination attempt on his life to rest. He is strongly tempted to take Eusebius's offer, but he is concerned about the fate of his nation if he does so. He will discuss the matter with his advisors, and they will come up with a list of demands and consolations that they want to get from Eusebius about the status of the proposed Minrothad Exarchate.

Yarthmont 25, AC 1016: Riots in Tezparn.

Location: Town of Tezparn, Kingdom of Qeodhar, NACE. AS

Description: Antalian residents of Tezparn, led by Harald Yorlsson, go on a rampage today, setting fire to several Alphantian-owned shops, and loudly protesting against the unfairness of the local government. Several Alphantian shopkeepers fight back in self-defense, and soon a brawl ensues. Quickly, the town guard is dispatched, which ends the fighting, and drives the Antalians back into their portion of the town. An emergency session of the town council is called that day to deal with the problem. (See Ya. 19, Ya. 23; Ya. 26, Kl. 10.)

What This Means: Harald led his community to respond to the magistrate's decision, but things got out of hand as passions were unleashed. The Alphantian majority, long disliking the presence of the Antalians, will pressure their representatives to find a solution to the constant tensions.

What the PCs Can Do: Aside from trying to end the fighting, there is not much the PCs can do at this time.

Yarthmont 25, AC 1016: Durifern and Sylarion Ally.

Location: Aeleris Pits, Forest of Geffron, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: Durifern reaches Sylarion's hideout escorted by a group of crusaders who left it. There he proposes an alliance to the undead against the Shadow Lord and all Idris's minions to rescue the captive elves and retake Geffron for their own. The vampire elf greets the Alfheimer's proposal and the two armies start to collaborate to terrorize and hit the Shadow Army where it hurts. Combined guerrilla is led by both groups against the common enemy. (See Ya. 10, Ya. 18; Kl. 18.)

What This Means: Once informed of Sylarion's plans, Durifern immediately thought that having an undead ally in such a cursed place was better than having none, especially if he wanted to confront the Children of Idris and the other Shadow Lord's minions. So he proposed a common alliance to Sylarion, also trusting him because of his past actions against the Shadow Lord and on behalf of the crusaders. Hopefully the pact will lead them to fulfill their ultimate goals, although Durifern could regret this action in the future.

Yarthmont 25, AC 1016: Erzmin Taken!

Location: Town of Erzmin, Kingdom of Karsile, Hulean Empire. SC

Description: Finally, the troops of Rehmin's alliance are able to shake up the Hulean resistance in Erzmin. Erzmin is taken and sacked by the ongoing mountaineers and Sindhi forming the core of Rehmin's troops. Nevertheless, Rehmin is urged to resume his progression since the nomads have also been able to overcome the Hulean resistance. (See Ya. 11, Ya. 23; Kl. 2, Fe. 8.)

What This Means: The situation is getting out of hand for the hagiarchy. With the Master still abroad completing his personal vendetta and the troops' moral at the lowest, they just do not know how to contain the two enemies. Also, for Rehmin, it allows him to move the main portion of his troops toward Cirkara and join his avant-garde already positioned near the city.

Yarthmont 26, AC 1016: Armada Remnants Limp into Port.

Location: Various ports of the Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Beginning today and over the following several weeks surviving ships of the imperial armada reach harbors in port cities of the empire. When all have returned and the losses calculated, it is discovered that the casualties, while severe, were not as heavy as originally feared. Thyatian officials begin examining captured Twaelar equipment. (See Ya. 3, Ya. 17; Fe. 3, Fe. 20.)

What This Means: The Thyatians learn much from the activities of the armada. Surviving Karameikan and Ierendi participants are rewarded with the thanks of the empire and sent home, fewer but wiser, to report their experiences to their own governments. A few of the volunteers sign on for additional service. Thyatians begin putting the finishing touches on their own plans for victory.

What the PCs Can Do: Particularly heroic characters might be rewarded with domains in some part of the empire (Shadow Coast, Hinterlands, or even the Thanegioth Archipelago) if they are willing to swear loyalty to the empire.

Yarthmont 26, AC 1016: Antalians Expelled.

Location: Town of Tezparn, Kingdom of Qeodhar, NACE. AS

Description: The town council makes a proclamation that, as a result of the increasing violence, the Antalian minority of Tezparn is to be expelled indefinitely, for a safety of both communities. The Antalians will be free to relocate where they wish, but they must be no less than 10 miles from the town before five days have passed. They will be paid market value for their homes, but they must leave without delay. Hearing the news, many Antalians grow despondent, and begin to pack their belongings. (See Ya. 23, Ya. 25; Kl. 10, Fe. 14.)

What This Means: The conservative elements of the Tezparn town council won the debate the previous night, and decided the Alphatian majority would be better off if the Antalians were forced out. They hope that, in getting rid of them, some other town will take care of them. Being the majority, and having the town guard on their side, the Alphatians know that they cannot lose.

For the Antalians' part, this is the final straw. They tried to protest, and they even resorted to violence, but they could not get what they wanted—equal treatment. Knowing that there is little they can do for the moment, they will depart without a fight, but Harald, and others, will be embittered by the situation.

Yarthmont 26, AC 1016: *Fiendslayer* vs. Burrower.

Location: Kingdom of Aegos, NACE, Alatian Islands. SD

Description: Dromedon, wielding *Fiendslayer*, engages the burrower in melee after it made yet another raid on the Alphatians fortified in Aegopoli. Amused, the great annelid makes a slow, sweeping attack at the daring human, but is surprised to be parried and worse, painfully bitten by the puny human's sword. The great annelid makes two huge steps backward, toppling a small tree down in the process, and tries to overwhelm Dromedon with its immense psychic powers.

Instead of a screaming, pitiful opponent running for his life because of the mental crush, it finds itself facing a resolute foe, visibly unconcerned by the psychic manipulation, and actually, it is the burrower that feels somewhat numbed by the attempt.

Dromedon slashes two great blows at his opponent in a row, stirring a dreadful roar from the huge beast. Suddenly realizing the danger, the annelid turns and flees, its excavations causing the earth to shake. Dromedon follows the retreating beast. (See Ya. 16, Ya. 23; Ya. 28, Kl. 6.)

Yarthmont 26: Hojahan Response.

Location: Village of Ljn, Hills of Kavaja. SC

Description: Hojahan marines land at the coastal village of Ljn securing it without much of a struggle from the villagers. In coming days they also establish garrisons at Frnö and Kastr. (*See Th. 6; Fy. 24, Ei. 9.*)

What This Means: Hojah now controls all overland routes to Slagovich, or at least has garrisons within striking distance of the main ones. Hojah is attempting to squeeze Slagovich by disrupting its trade routes. Hojah also grants a number of letters of marque to individual ships controlled by its citizens. These letters effectively mean that Hojahan ships can operate as privateers—that is, Hojah denies that it has any control over these “pirates” but secretly finances and sanctions their activities. The privateers of course will only attack Slagovian shipping.

Yarthmont 28, AC 1016: Battle at The Pit.

Location: Kingdom of Aegos, NACE, Alatian Islands. SD

Description: Dromedon catches the burrower in its new lair, the very area it arrived from, i.e. The Pit. This time, the great annelid is ready for battle and not in a playful mood, and decided to get rid of the annoyance once and for all. The two foes meet and fight bitterly, and both are wounded, but none prevails and the burrower breaks from combat. Dromedon decides to return to Aegopoli to rest and heal his wounds, for he knows the annelid’s wounds will not heal and he will be at an advantage next time they meet. (*See Ya. 23, Ya. 26; Kl. 6, Kl. 19.*)

EVENTS: KLARMONT

First Week

Klarmont 1, AC 1016: Hippodrome Construction Begins.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Today ground is broken on a massive construction project in Thyatis City. Work crews clear an area over a thousand feet long running parallel to the outside of the wall separating the Zendrolium from the city itself. On this site an arena will be built to house chariot and horse races, and other events. (*See Nu. 1; Kl. 15.*)

What This Means: Keeping the people of Thyatis City entertained and their minds off rioting is a constant drive; providing new events to distract them is one way to do that. Eusebius also believes that Thyatis needs more grand construction projects to rekindle the glory of the empire. When completed, the hippodrome will be over 1,200 feet in length and seat over 100,000 people in luxurious white marble. The seats will be covered with cloth awnings on event days to shield the fans from the sun but still permit breezes. An imperial box, the *kathsimia*, will be built into the Zendrolium wall, acoustically constructed to permit the emperor's voice to reach the entire crowd for announcements, proclamations, and the like.

Klarmont 1, AC 1016: Greenston Harassed.

Location: Town of Greenston, Kingdom of Rockhome. OW

Description: Alebane's raiders plague the town of Greenston, as they stage a series of guerrilla attacks on the settlement. The Greenston garrison is quick to respond to their assaults, and is able to drive off the raiders before the goblinoids can do any real damage, but they are unable to directly engage the raiders. Messengers are sent north to Stahl to request further assistance in driving off the raiders. (*See Th. 9; Kl. 4, Kl. 9.*)

What This Means: Alebane's forces are growing bolder. Their guerrilla raids and retreats in the Stahl Lowlands have caused a great deal of trouble to the farmers and merchants in the region. Fortunately for Alebane, rising tensions between dwarven clans has prevented the surface inhabitants of the valley from receiving the necessary aid. In particular, the military Torkrest clan and their allies, the Hurwarks, have been resisting efforts to rally their armies on behalf of surface dwelling dwarves.

Klarmont 1, AC 1016: Good News and Bad News For Corydon.

Location: City of Aaslin, Kingdom of Notrion, NACE, Bellissaria. AS

Description: Corydon's advisors relate to him the influx of currency that the mages and workers erecting the domes have introduced to the local economy. As he gazes at the ever rising domes, he is interrupted by an aide who informs him that General Tahort and his armed escort have just arrived in the city.

Meeting with Tahort, the king is told of the nature and stance of the settlers. Corydon is furious at their defiance. Summoning his trusted aide, Tymaltya, he briefs her on settlers, then sends her to Ionace to protest their presence to the NACE Council. (*See Fl. 28, Ya. 1; Kl. 8, Kl. 16.*)

What This Means: Corydon is outraged because he is scared of what their presence means, as he is familiar with the reputation and attitudes of the Randel people. Still suspecting a conspiracy, he fears that those that wish to overthrow him may find the settlers as allies. As a military man, he is well aware of the Randel prowess in warfare and feels that his weakened armed forces would be hard-pressed to fend off a concerted attack, and given Notrion's economy, he cannot readily expand them. He has little choice but to place the matter in the hands of the NACE Council.

What the PCs Can Do: Trusted PCs known throughout the NACE may find themselves sent to Ionace with Tymaltya to aid in his complaint as their notoriety may prove beneficial in swaying council opinion on the matter.

Klarmont 2, AC 1016: Minrothad Joins the Empire.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: The guild masters of Minrothad journey to Thyatis City to formally sign the document joining Minrothad to the Empire of Thyatis as an exarchate. Several guild masters resign and are exiled for their role in the Linton assassination. They and other Minrothaddan merchants travel to the remote areas of the Isle of Dawn and the Hinterlands, to set up new trading operations there. Demetius Vannopolus is appointed as exarch in reward for his service in solving the Dunadale crisis. Those directly involved in the assassination (Blue Eels and members of the Privateer's Guild) are sent to Darokin for trial. (*See Ya. 18, Ya. 25.*)

What This Means: Minrothad chose the loss of some independence, rather than complete devastation. Eusebius appoints a Thyatian governor to oversee the management of Minrothad and to supervise collection of taxes from its trade. Aside from that Minrothad's government and traditions are left largely undisturbed. Oran Meditor will remain ruling guild master. Those guild masters who were involved in the Darokin assassination have been exiled to the Isle of Dawn and the Hinterlands. They chose this fate rather than being turned over to Darokin, and it even serves both themselves and Thyatis because the new trading operations they start will bring new income to them and to the empire's treasury. New guild masters friendly to Thyatis are appointed in their places. The guild masters who were not involved retain their trading rights, even though they lose some political power to the Thyatian governor. The common people are not very concerned about this change of status, because they don't see any practical changes in their lives. Minrothad traders have mixed but mostly positive feelings, since as part of the empire they gain tariff advantages when trading in its ports and with the NACE.

Klarmont 2, AC 1016: Good News, At last...

Location: Northern Kingdom of Karsile, Hulean Empire. SC

Description: Seeing in Rehmin's southward progression the opportunity to reclaim their occupied territories and advance in Azardjian, the Dvinzinians quit the northern battlefield leaving behind them a battered but still important Hulean army. (*See Ya. 23, Ya. 25; Fe. 8, Sv. 21.*)

What This Means: For the Hulean strategists, this is the first good news of the year: the nomads of Ustalam and the mountaineers of Rehmin are now deep in the Hulean territory, but they have left the best Hulean troops behind them. As long as the Dvinzinians were holding them in Karsile, these troops were of no use but now that the Kavkazian knights are back to their homeland, the Huleans in Karsile could be used to cut the invaders from their supply lines.

Klarmont 3, AC 1016: Paranoia.

Location: City of Rafielton, Colony of Aengmor, Shadow Elves' Territories. OW

Description: As a result of the Yarthmont murders and attempted murders, the shadowelf authorities increase the surveillance on Alfheim elves and restrict their freedom, both in East-Rafielton and in eastern Aengmor (the area near Selinar Lake where the Alfheimers were allowed to set up camp earlier this year). Alfheim elves complain to both the shadow elves and the DDC, but Princess Tanadaleyo does not change her mind.

Tension between the two groups is again on the rise. (*See Ya. 7, Ya. 13; Kl. 18.*)

What This Means: From now on shadowelf soldiers will patrol the streets of East-Rafielton and the Selinar camp night and day, with skinwing riders flying above for added control. No Alfheimer will be allowed to leave his house after sunset. Those surface elves that behave "in a suspicious way" will be taken to the shadow elves' barracks and heavily questioned.

Alfheim Avengers realize that they will have a tough time in Aengmor, so they decide to shift their target and try to sensitize the public opinion of the Western Defense League nations (mainly Darokin and Karameikos) by kidnapping important personalities of those countries.

Klarmont 3, AC 1016: Put It to a Vote.

Location: City of Glantri, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: The council votes today on the matter of the Krondahar succession. In separate ballots, both Lan-Syn and Ralindi Virayana meet the number of votes necessary to confirm them in the position; Rejladan, the younger son, fails to make the cut. The matter is sent on to the parliament, where Ralindi barely manages to get the two thirds necessary to make the cut. He is confirmed as the new Prince of Krondahar. (*See Va. 3, Va. 16.*)

What This Means: A lot of politicking took place on the part of Dolores and her allies, in order to persuade the lesser nobles to support Ralindi as the new prince. Many promises were made, and new alliances formed, all in the hopes that Aleah will be able to control her son as well as stick to her agreements with Dolores. It remains to be seen if such events will occur.

Klarmont 3, AC 1016: Raiders Engaged.

Location: Southern Kingdom of Dawnrim, NACE, Bellissaria. AS

Description: A patrol encounters a group of armed men and women crossing over from Surshield. Judging them to be raiders, the patrol commander orders his troops to attack. Spotting the approaching patrol, the raiders turn and flee. The patrol manages to ride down several of the raiders and cut them down; however, the bulk of the raiders make it back across the Surshield border. Not wanting to cause a political incident, the patrol halts their pursuit. (*See Ya. 6, Ya. 13; Am. 18, Ei. 11.*)

What the PCs Can Do: PCs operating in Surshield will find their reconnaissance mission evolve into an attacking role. The PCs may have even detected the raiders leaving Surshield and warned the patrol.

Klarmont 3, AC 1016: A Surprising Couple.

Location: City of Bluenose, Kingdom of Arogansa, Floating Continent of Alphatia. HW

Description: Word quickly spreads among Bluenose's social elite that the recently returned socialite, Karyndra, has frequently been seen in the company of Tazzal. The pairing provides fodder for the gossipmongers, as the two are complete opposites: whereas Karyndra is a carefree person, Tazzal is a cleric of Razud and much more serious about things. (*See Th. 17, Ya. 12; Fy. 22, Am. 17.*)

What This Means: With her divulgence of Alphaks's involvement, the following of Alphatia has decided to protect Karyndra. To stand up against the possible minions of Alphaks, the order has reluctantly gone to the following of Razud for aid. With the empire's best interests at heart, the Order of Razud has obliged and dispatched one of its most formidable clerics to act as her escort.

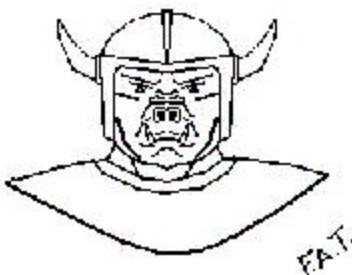
What the PCs Can Do: With Alphaks known to be involved in things, the PCs may be hired to investigate things or act as added escorts to Karyndra. What He is up to is not really known, but it does require attention. PCs may find themselves hired by followers of Alphaks to assault Karyndra and her protector.

Klarmont 4, AC 1016: DDC in Orcland.

Location: Camp of Xorg, Orcland, Republic of Darokin. OW

Description: The DDC envoys arrive in the humanoid encampment of Xorg, in Orcland. Here they embark on a 2 week long visit to explore and investigate humanoid activity in the region. They are kept under close watch by agents of Tlatepetl. (*See Fl. 4, Ya. 13; Fy. 18.*)

What This Means: The envoys are here on a twofold mission: to determine whether it is advisable to open diplomatic relations with the humanoids of Orcland, and to attempt to determine the extent of military organization (troop strength and the like) of the humanoids in the region. Being kept under such close scrutiny, they will find it difficult to do the latter.



Klarmont 4, AC 1016: Allied Forces Arrive.

Location: Town of Greenston, Kingdom of Rockhome. OW

Description: Allied forces of the Western Defense League arrive and make camp a few miles outside of the town of Greenston. Messengers are sent to the town officials to inform them of the arrival and purpose of the army, as well as to gather news of Rockhome's current state of internal affairs.

The army will encamp for a few days, as it resupplies from the town, and rests from the long march through the Dwarfgate Mountains. Then it will head north, along the Greenston Road. They hope to meet up with Rockhome forces near the city of Stahl. (*See Ya. 6, Ya. 13; Fe. 7, Fe. 22.*)

What This Means: The allied army has finally arrived in Rockhome, and now they can begin to assist the dwarves with regaining their nation.

Klarmont 4, AC 1016: Down with the *Pharaoh*!

Location: Village of Anunak, Kingdom of Thothia, NACE, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: Villagers flock to listen to the words of a one-armed man who denounces the reign of *Pharaoh* Ramenhotep. The man calls himself Haptuthep II, and claims to be a direct descendent of the ancient Thothian king. He tells the Thothians that it is time they reclaimed their empire for themselves, and were no longer beholden to the shattered Alphatia. Many villagers take his words to heart. (*See Th. 12, Fl. 5; Fe. 5, Am. 10.*)

What This Means: The man is, in fact, Haptuthep I—the very Thothian king he claims to be descended from! Haptuthep was the reigning *pharaoh* centuries ago when the Alphatians invaded. He escaped to the Great Escarpment, where he hid from them, eventually becoming a lich in order to take his vengeance upon the sorcerous empire.

He emerged from hiding following the destruction of Alphatia in AC 1009. Seeing a chance for the Thothians to be free of Alphatia, he aided Ramenhotep in his quest to restore the divided kingdom. He also provided Ramenhotep with valuable sorcerous knowledge that helped prevent the Thyatian conquest of the whole island. When Ramenhotep rejoined Thothia to the Alphatian Empire in AC 1012, Haptuthep left the *pharaoh* in a rage, and returned to hiding.

With the recent rise in aranean activity, Haptuthep sees his means to once again restore Thothia to a true empire, independent of Alphatia. Acting in concert with the aranean activity, he seeks to drive a wedge between Ramenhotep and the Thothians, and emerge in Ramenhotep's place as the new *pharaoh*. Once installed as the head of the realm once more, he will eliminate both aranean and Alphatian activity in his country.

Klarmont 6, AC 1016: Looking for a Burrower.

Location: Kingdom of Aegos, NACE, Alatian Islands. SD

Description: A fully healed Dromedon leaves the protection of Aegopoli and seeks out the wounded burrower, hopefully to *banish* it to its homeplane. He finds no signs of the entropic beast at Pittston though, and begins a careful search of the environs. After two days of unsuccessful researches, he returns to Aegopoli to report to Commander Broderick.

Broderick orders large-scale but cautious search for signs of the fiend throughout the island. After days of intensive searches, the annelid is nowhere to be found on Aegos, and the collapsed pit shows no sign of further passage.

“King” Dromedon is hailed as a hero by the commoners of Aegos. (*See Ya. 26, Ya. 28; Kl. 19, Fe. 10.*)

Klarmont 6, AC 1016: Rampage in Littonia.

Location: Town of Kuldiga, Kingdom of Littonia, Arctic Plains. NW

Description: A peaceful afternoon is shattered in the Littonian town of Kuldiga, when a group of eight frost giants descends upon it. Catching the townspeople by surprise, they destroy a large number of buildings, killing dozens of people, before being stopped by the local regiment of the Littonian army. After several minutes of furious fighting, the defenders manage to drive the giants away, but not before killing two giants. The soldiers are hailed as heroes once the battle is over, and a search begins in earnest for survivors.

What This Means: Raids from frost giants occur regularly in Littonia, positioned as it is north of Norwold, and in the path of the giants’ traditional invasion route. This small group was interested in sowing destruction, but also in gaining some loot. Kuldiga is a rather poor town, and therefore there was little for the frost giants to take. Once they started losing to the Littonians, the giants quickly lost their desire to fight, and fled.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are present, they will have an opportunity to display their heroism by helping Kuldiga’s defenders. If they do so, they will also be recognized as heroes, and word of their deeds will spread throughout the countryside.

Klarmont 6, AC 1016: End of a Diehard Bachelor.

Location: City of Corisa, Milenian Empire. HW

Description: The Corisa social scene is shocked at the announcement of the marriage between Dionios and his mistress, Sephone. Though taken a bit aback, his friends and family wish the couple luck. Even Dionios’s longtime friend, Emperor Adronius, wishes them luck and sends several presents along with his well wishes. (*See Fe. 13, Fy. 3.*)

What This Means: The announcement is such a surprise for two reasons. First, Dionios is a consummate bachelor. Second, Sephone is not exactly up to his dating standards; though pretty, she is not the ravishing type he normally dates, nor is she wealthy or comes from a wealthy family. Dionios is one of the emperor’s advisors and a close friend. Adronius and many other aristocrats have suspicions on the matter; however, most see it as Dionios finally settling down.

Klarmont 7, AC 1016: Two Emperors for an Empire.

Location: City of Titlapoca, Azcan Empire. HW

Description: Two weeks after Chupicuaro declared himself emperor in the name of Atzanteotl [Azcan weeks last 8 days. Ed.], Otziltipac is crowned *tlatoani* by the will of Quetzalcoatl in the city of Titlapoca. His wife Malinalxoch becomes the high priestess of the new clergy, dedicated to the old pantheon of the Azcans (Otzitiotl and Kalakatlal) and to the twin Immortal Quetzalcoatl. (*See Th. 10, Ya. 19; Kl. 25, Fe. 1.*)

What This Means: They are crowned on this day of 3 Nameless, which is Emperor Quetzalcoatl according to the new, as yet unofficial calendar, a date carefully chosen by soothsayers because of its obvious significance.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are Azcan, they probably will have to choose sides. They may become heroes, maybe as great warleaders, or maybe as martyrs.

Second Week

Klarmont 8, AC 1016: Notrion Representative Arrives in Ionace.

Location: Confederate Capital of Ionace, NACE. AS

Description: Representative Tymaltya arrives and calls an emergency council meeting. Once they are all assembled, she informs the rest of the council of the settler situation in Notrion. The council is surprised at hearing of it; however, they are split on what to do. While the matter is being argued, Representative Ragmon of Thothia urges the council not to rule on the matter without having heard the Randel side of the story. Using magic the council contacts the Randel settlers and requests that they send a representative to Ionace to represent themselves. (*See Ya. I, Kl. I; Kl. 16, Fe. 14.*)

What This Means: The settler situation is a potentially far reaching one for the continent of Bellissaria. Ragmon believes that the Randel settlers should be represented to offer their side in the matter. Since Thothia bore the brunt of fending off Thyatian aggression after the sinking, they have a certain degree of prestige within the council, so when Ragmon makes a suggestion, the other council members tend to listen to it.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs familiar with the Randel people may be called upon by the council to offer some informal advice.

Klarmont 9, AC 1016: Lost Valley Found.

Location: Town of Threshold, Kingdom of Karameikos. OW

Description: A well known adventurer, long thought missing, turns up in the town of Threshold today with news of a hidden valley in the Black Peaks. He tells of a war between a race of dog-headed humanoids and degenerate men, and mysterious ancient ruins. Most are inclined to disbelieve their tale, until he produces a few treasures he plundered before escaping the valley. Adventurers in the town are abuzz with the news. (*See Fy. 12, Am. 14.*)

What This Means: The adventurer is a member of a party that discovered a series of caverns near Mt. Pavel back on Yarthmont 23, AC 1013 [*see* Joshuan's Almanac. *Ed.*]. A follow-up expedition was not sent out until early in AC 1014, when the adventurers finally managed to secure a financier for the trip (oddly not a Karameikan patron, but a Darokinian merchant). The expedition has not been heard from until now.

The valley they discovered is the last bastion of the Hutaaka race on the surface of Mystara. They have lived in isolation with their Traldar slaves (the degenerate humans) for over 2,000 years. What effect this discovery will have in the nation of Karameikos is yet to be seen.

Klarmont 9, AC 1016: Alebane's Last Stand.

Location: Styrdal Valley, Kingdom of Rockhome. OW

Description: Alebane's raiders, running from pursuit by allied forces near Greenston, run smack into the advance scouts of the garrison of Stahl. The scouts, outnumbered, quickly retreat from battle, only to be pursued by Alebane. The ogre's band soon finds itself facing two companies of dwarven troops.

Alebane's lieutenants are quickly located and shot by dwarven crossbowmen while the dwarven infantry clashes with poorly disciplined band of raiders. Outnumbered and overmatched, the goblinoids quickly scatter to the four winds.

Alebane himself attempts to rally his men to form a proper retreat, but is cut off from retreat by one of the dwarven squads. After a heated battle, the dwarves eventually overwhelm the ogre's forces. Alebane falls beneath the ax of Norred Blackbeard, captain of the squadron. Blackbeard is severely wounded himself, and is sent with the rest of the wounded dwarves to Stahl, likely to sit out the rest of the campaign in Rockhome. (*See Kl. 1, Kl. 4; Fe. 7.*)

What This Means: Western Defense League forces near Greenston encountered Alebane's raiders a few days ago, forcing the humanoids into retreat down the Greenston road, where they ran into the dwarven army. Alebane, long a terror in the nations of the Old World, has finally met his end. The old ogre, though he tempted fate one time too many, will become a legend among the ranks of goblinoids across the face of Mystara.

With his passing, the raiding band of western Rockhome is defeated, and the dwarves no longer need concern themselves with fighting a two front war. The dwarves will continue to chase down goblinoids for the next few days, meeting up with the allied forces. Both armies will then continue on to Dengar, where they will begin the campaign against goblinoid forces in the Klintest Lowlands.

Klarmont 9, AC 1016: An Army of Insults.

Location: City of Rardish, Kingdom of Randel, Floating Continent of Alphatia. HW

Description: During the kingdom's annual Military Day, a great show of disrespect is exhibited. As the troops march past Queen Junna and her appointed aides, they turn away and do not offer the customary salute. (*See Fl. 11; Sv. 4.*)

What This Means: Since assuming the rule of Randel after the war, Junna has not lived up to the expectations of her subjects. Her pacifist ways and her reliance on the Alphatian Order have caused a great deal of animosity between her and her militarist citizens. The troops have decided to protest her rule by showing just how little they respect her.

Klarmont 10, AC 1016: Sisters.

Location: City of the Stars, Shadow Elves' Territories. OW

Description: Randafien has just arrived from Aengmor after testing the new *soul crystal*. Immediately after hearing the good news, Radiant Shaman Porphyriel selects Calenderi, shaman and daughter to King Telemon, as official representative of the clergy in Rafielton. She then entrusts her with one *radiant soul crystal* and quickly dispatches her to the temple in Rafielton. (*See Ya. 18; Fy. 26.*)

What This Means: Porphyriel has selected Calenderi as mouth and eyes of Rafiel, because she has already been on the surface in the past (and not only in Aengmor) [*see the novel Son of Dawn. Ed.J*, but mainly because she is the sister of Princess Tanadaleyo, thus she may have a deeper insight and influence in Aengmor. This way Porphyriel hopes to give the clergy an important position in Aengmor's politics, as it always has been in the shadow elves' underground history.

Klarmont 10, AC 1016: Turned Away.

Location: Town of Almisford, Kingdom of Qeodhar, NACE. AS

Description: A long line of Antalians—formerly of Tezparn—make their way eastwards across Qeodhar. Their wagons burdened with their belongings and children, they trudge along until they see the town of Almisford, not two miles distant. Approaching the gates, Harald explains that he and his people are seeking a new home, and ask if it would be possible to settle outside the town walls.

The guards bluntly refuse, saying that Almisford “wants no Antalians within, or near, its walls.” The guards tell them curtly to keep moving, or be charged for vagrancy. Angered at the situation, yet knowing that there is nothing he can do at the moment, Harald curses, and orders his followers to continue. (*See Ya. 25, Ya. 26; Fe. 14, Fy. 8.*)

What This Means: Word of the Tezparn expulsions has spread to several nearby communities, and many are in support of the idea. Some, such as Almisford, have even gone as far as to pressure their own Antalian minorities to leave. Most of the settlements along the southern plains of Qeodhar will not let Harald and his people settle near them.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs have developed sympathies for Harald and his people, they may accompany them. Otherwise, this event is to serve as another reminder of how unfriendly the domestic situation has become.

Klarmont 11, AC 1016: Grumman Unmasked.

Location: Town of Sylvair, Kingdom of Wendar. OW

Description: Bensarian and his investigators capture a spy of the Church of Idris exiting General Grumman’s house. They interrogate him and learn that General Grumman is working for Denagoth and is secretly trying to kill all Alfheimers with the excuse of supporting the avengers. He had just instructed the spy to deliver to the Church of Idris a carefully thought plan to arrange a terrorist act, which would have framed all the Grunalfs still living in Wendar. Bensarian immediately travels to the capital to inform the king of this shocking news. (*See Fl. 26, Fl. 21; Kl. 14, Kl. 22.*)

What This Means: Now that Grumman has been unmasked, it seems things are finally working for the group of investigators led by Bensarian. They are about to stop the conspiracy by removing the highest-ranking pawn of Idris. Unbeknownst to them however, this is exactly what “Bensarian” wanted to further his plan.

Klarmont 11, AC 1016: Aquas Sends Patrols.

Location: Sea-Kingdom of Aquas, NACE. AS

Description: Worried by accounts of battles being held to the north, the queen of Aquas sends out patrols to investigate. Soon later, the patrols encounter some fleeing devilfish. A battle develops, and the Aquas patrols emerge triumphant. (*See Th. 8, Fl. 1; Kl. 24, Fe. 17.*)

What This Means: This is the beginning of the end for Underocean’s isolation.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs can be one of the patrols, or could be in the area and get caught up in the fighting.

Klarmont 13, AC 1016: First Contact.

Location: Northeast of the settlement of Stompor, Great Escarpment, Kingdom of Thothia, NACE, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: A gnomish scoutship spots recent construction in the woods to the northeast and lands to investigate. To their surprise, the gnomes discover a clan of elves inhabiting the woods. Relations are established between the two groups, who are revealed to share a common set of circumstances—both have been forced from their homes. (*See Th. 12, Fl. 5; Fe. 5, Am. 10.*)

What This Means: The elves are members of the Trueflower clan, who until recently lived further north on the Great Escarpment. They have been driven from their former homes by increasingly aggressive attacks from araneas. It seems the araneas are consolidating their homeland on the northern arm of the Great Escarpment, and the elves were not a part of their plans.

A number of phanatons are also with the elves, though the majority have chosen to remain in their natural homes near Aran, and war with the spider-folk. Both groups welcome the new settlers to the region, and send a diplomatic envoy back to Stompor.

Klarmont 14, AC 1016: Grumman Disappears.

Location: Town of Sylvair, Kingdom of Wendar. OW

Description: With a squadron of chosen guards provided by King Gylharen, who has been informed by Bensarian of General Grumman's treachery, the sage and his friends sneak into Grumman's house to capture him. However, the general is missing, and no real evidence of his double-dealing can be recovered. Bensarian and his allies start thinking that somebody warned the traitor. (*See Fl. 21, Kl. 11; Kl. 22, Kl. 24.*)

What This Means: Provided nobody spied on their moves, only Gylharen, Bensarian and his friends knew Grumman had been exposed and that he was about to be captured. Now they really start having doubts regarding each other... and especially regarding King Gylharen, since it was him who appointed the general to this task, after all.

Third Week

Klarmont 15, AC 1016: Arachnarium Opens.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Thyatian divers recovered silk spider samples in AC 1013 from the sunken continent of Alphatia [*see* Joshuan's Almanac, p.229, *Fyrmont 25. Ed.*] and they were revived with clerical magic. Silk spiders, native of the Alphatians' old home plane, need specially created environments to live on Mystara. Over the last several years the Thyatians have been busy recreating these conditions and beginning the process of producing spider silk. Today the first shipment of strands are delivered to the Mesonian Millworks, where they will be dyed and woven into silken cloth. (*See Nu. 1, Kl. 1.*)

What This Means: The only spider silk factories were in the large cities of mainland Alphatia, largely destroyed (Sundsvall and Aasla) or vanished and inaccessible in the Hollow World. This factory represents the only source of this precious material on the surface of Mystara. Spider silk production will be maintained as a monopoly of the imperial family; sale of it to wealthy Thyatians and exports (especially to the NACE) will bring in much needed trade revenue. This also gives Thyatian traders a product that the NACE wants to buy; until now, trade between the NACE and Thyatis has not been vigorous, despite the trade provisions of the recent treaty. For now the very existence of the factory will be kept secret and buyers will be told that the spider silk comes from existing stockpiles.

Klarmont 15, AC 1016: Ruins Reclaimed.

Location: Ruins of Hayavik, Heldann, Heldannic Territories. OW

Description: A group of 30 knights, mounted on war-horses, rides over the hills southwards from Grauenberg. Arriving at the mossy ruins of Hayavik, they set up camp, and unload bags of tools and other supplies from their horses. One of them then mounts her horse, and rides back to Grauenberg. In the meantime, the remaining knights cut down some of the nearby trees, using the logs to build makeshift palisades. (*See Ya. 13; Kl. 17.*)

What This Means: With the increasing discord in Ethengar, the leadership of the Heldannic Territories has decided to take the opportunity to increase its control over the borderlands, which have long been threatened by the Ethengars to the south. Hayavik was once a settlement of the indigenous people of the Heldannic Territories, which was destroyed in AC 926. Now, the leadership of the Heldannic Order is planning to build a small fort here, accompanied by a village. The palisades are to serve as an interim fort until the actual fortress is completed.

Klarmont 16, AC 1016: Return of a Ruler.

Location: City of Blueside, Kingdom of Lagrius, NACE, Bellissaria. AS

Description: Queen Elenitsa announces that she will abdicate the throne in favor of the kingdom's former ruler Siaron Lagrius and that she will return to her former role as advisor. The reaction of the populace is pretty neutral and the change of rulership without incident. (See Kl. 1, Kl. 8; Fe. 14, Fe. 16.)

What This Means: Since abdicating the throne to Elenitsa in AC 1013, Siaron has remained politically active by appointing her friend Elenitsa as a figurehead. Zandor's removal has given her reason to contemplate reclaiming the throne officially. The citizens see no problem with the reassertion of power as most have been aware of, or at least suspected, who was really in control of the kingdom. For her part Elenitsa approves of the move, seeing it only right that Siaron be queen as the descendant of the kingdom's founders, and a just ruler.

Klarmont 17, AC 1016: Work on Strelitz Begins.

Location: Ruins of Hayavik, Heldann, Heldannic Territories. OW

Description: A group of 200 Heldannic citizens arrives at the camp established here, and, under the direction of the senior officer present, *Oberleutnant Arnd Jäger*, uses the tools present to dig out the foundations for the future fortress. Accompanying the workers is a small team of engineers, who are to oversee most of the actual construction. (See Ya. 13, Kl. 15.)

What This Means: This is the beginning of the actual construction of Strelitz, which is to be a small fortress overlooking the surrounding hills and plains. Though it will not be a highly important fortress, it was determined that this region of the southern Heldannic Territories lack sufficient protection from potential Ethengar advances in the future.

Klarmont 17, AC 1016: Another Attack.

Location: Construction site of Torenal, Sunken Arogansa, Sunken Alphatia, NACE. AS

Description: A small patrol *submersible* returns to the construction site and reports an encounter with an unknown type of undersea creature, possibly undead. The group had been cruising near a group of buildings near Bluenose when they saw movement inside. They left the *submersible* and ventured inside to eliminate what they thought was a ghoul. Inside, they were beset by as many as twenty of the creatures that attacked them with both weapon and spell. Outnumbered and out of their element, the party was forced to flee the building; reaching the *submersible*, they set their course and made top speed for the construction site. They describe the creatures as being very similar in appearance to humans, the main difference being that their skin bore a gray hue. They wore clothing of Alphatian make and several were heard speaking Alphatian. Unlike a ghoul or zombie, their physical features were devoid of any signs of decay. The general consensus is that had the skin been a normal hue, it would have been difficult to tell them from a living human. (See Ya. 17, Ya. 22; Kl. 26, Fe. 7.)

What This Means: These undead are lightning zombies. They were created by the expelled *Radiance* energy from the use of the *Doomsday Weapon*. Since gaining their unlife, the lightning zombies around Arogansa have come together and formed a community in Bluenose which has recently found itself under siege by lacedons (aquatic ghouls) who have come to feed upon them.

What the PCs Can Do: With this recent event, adventurer types will be in demand to further supplement the construction site's defenses and offensive capabilities. The aquatic nature of the site makes it necessary to have more specialized persons available so PCs should have access to magic that enables them to operate effectively under water.

Klarmont 17: New Laws Promulgated.

Location: City of Lemminster, Kingdom of Bellayne. SC

Description: King James II promulgates a new set of laws that allow the Bellaynish army and townsfolk to kill nomads without trial if they are suspected of thievery. (See Fl. 22, Ya. 3; Fy. 7, Am. 1.)

What This Means: These new laws are in response to a wave of violence between townspeople and nomads that has been building for some time. These new laws are more dangerous than helpful, as they will only serve to add more fuel to the conflict.

Klarmont 18, AC 1016: Emilio Kidnapped.

Location: Cruth Mountains, Republic of Darokin. OW

Description: Emilio the Great, famous actor, playwright and producer, and his cast are ambushed while en route to Selenica, where they were supposed to perform Emilio's latest creation, "McGregor." The brigands, a group of elves, quickly dispose of Emilio's bodyguards, then head for the mountains, leaving behind a note which reads: "Emilio will be released only when the corrupt Darokinian and Karameikan governments stop cooperating with the evil elves from underground." (*See Ya. 13, Kl. 3; Fe. 1.*)

What This Means: It was a band of Alfheim Avengers who kidnapped Emilio and brought him to a secrete shelter in the Cruth Mountains. This is part of the new terror strategy of the Alfheim Avengers.

What the PCs Can Do: Rescuing Emilio sounds like the perfect challenge for mid-level PCs.

Klarmont 18, AC 1016: The Vanished Ones.

Location: Forest of Geffron, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: Many elves of the group led by Durifern are reported missing while out for foraging. The vanishings repeat in the next days and the Elf Skull Units are blamed. Durifern orders the foraging duties be carried on only during the day, since the elves seem to disappear only at night without leaving traces. (*See Ya. 18, Ya. 25.*)

What This Means: Sylarion and his vampires are behind these mysterious kidnappings. Since the vampires started to grow increasingly frenzied and disappointed, Sylarion resorted to kidnapping Durifern's elves and keeping them as living cattle to nourish his people. This is done without letting the living crusaders helping Sylarion suspect anything, of course. As long as Durifern will not discover his schemes and the kidnapped elves will be able to feed his clan, Sylarion will continue to collaborate with Durifern's band without problems.

What the PCs Can Do: Discover the shady machinations of the elder vampire elf.

Klarmont 18, AC 1016: Lovers' Spat.

Location: City of Dovir, Kingdom of Haven, Floating Continent of Alphatia. HW

Description: The mages Terrika and Barthro are overheard in one of their frequent arguing matches. As passersby gather outside their tower to listen in, the insults change to spell fire. Their fighting spills out into the streets, sending the curious scurrying for cover. By the time the city guard and several powerful mages intervene, several bystanders are injured and two buildings are in ruins. Ironically, neither of the combatants is injured and the two quickly reconcile. They offer to pay for the damage they have done and the matter is dropped.

What This Means: Terrika and Barthro are lovers with a history of arguing, however this is the first time the locals remember them coming to magical blows. Before the sinking, such fighting was fairly common between the two. This attribute had been omitted from the locals' false memories. Fortunately, enough name level mages do remember their spats to be able to intervene, much like they had in the past.

Klarmont 19, AC 1016: Burrower Resurfaces.

Location: Kingdom of Gait, Alatian Islands. SD

Description: A dreadful beast attacks some petty lords of Gait's estates, bringing death and destruction to an already war-ravaged island. The attacked lords, when they survive, believe they were attacked by a fiendish creature summoned by a rival, hated lord and vow revenge, failing to see the real danger. (*See Ya. 28, Kl. 6; Fe. 10, Fe. 18.*)

What This Means: Painfully injured by Dromedon and his *Fiendslayer*, and with its wounds not healing through rest nor magic, the great annelid decided to leave Aegos for less dangerous lands. From mind-probing on Aegos it learned that nearby Gait was an independent and war-torn place, protected from annexation by hated Alphatians and their artifacts by a treaty—the perfect place for the malevolent burrower.

Klarmont 20, AC 1016: Thyatian Ship Arrives in Kastelios.

Location: City-State of Kastelios, Serpent Coast. DV

Description: The first Thyatian ship destined for Raven Scarp arrives in Kastelios today, as per the Thyatis-Kastelios Accord of AC 1016. After the large cargo vessel pulls into its designated quay, Kastelian port authority officers board the ship, and minutely examine its contents. After everything has been examined, and the 20% share to the Kastelian government is paid, the ship's passengers are cleared to disembark while essential supplies are restocked, and escort vessels are assigned. The ship will leave for the Hinterlands tomorrow. (*See Fl. 17, Fl. 18; Fe. 18, Fy. 4.*)

What This Means: As per the agreement negotiated earlier this year, Thyatian ships heading to the Hinterlands are to stop over in Kastelios first. Afterwards, Kastelian vessels will escort Thyatian ships to their destinations along the treacherous northern coastal waters of Davania. This is but the first of many ships to come here this year, and Kastelios stands to make a good profit, both from the 20% it receives on every shipment, and the favorable trading concessions for Kastelian merchants in the Hinterlands.

What the PCs Can Do: This is a possible way to get the PCs involved in the affairs of northern Davania, by having them be on board the ship as it enters Kastelios. From there, they could either remain with the ship, or stay in Kastelios and explore it.

Klarmont 20, AC 1016: The Ugly Truth Comes Out.

Location: City of Haldemar, Kingdom of Alphatian Neatharum. HW

Description: Days after the execution a crowd gathers in the city's market to listen to a group of Alphatians and Neathar. They offer the gathered masses their findings in the attack that led to the recent execution. First, the Neathar visitors had initiated the melee: they had tried to abscond with an attractive barmaid, a common custom in Neathar Lands. Since the barmaid was the sister of one of the Alphatians, they had moved to oppose this kidnapping. The Neathar stood little chance against the Alphatians, as all were experienced soldiers.

As the guard moves in to break up the gathering, the orators add a final bit of information that stops them in their tracks. They divulge that Ezreilla had been prejudiced in her judgment as it seems that one of the Alphatians, Trajorn, had been a rival and an infrequent lover of hers in the military. That the barmaid was Trajorn's sister was not readily known. His excessive patronage of the tavern, his walking her home, and that she lived with him had many folks thinking they were romantically involved. The governess had mixed her personal feelings with her political duties and condemned three innocent men to their deaths.

The public outcry is deafening. As the day proceeds, collaborating evidence and witnesses prove the accusations. Many of the citizens call for Ezreilla to resign; some demand that charges be brought against her. As darkness falls, security is tightened at the palace. Despite this, many citizens are seen approaching the guards and conversing with them. (*See Fl. 28, Ya. 1; Fy. 8, Ka. 15.*)

What This Means: These accusations are true. They are the work of adventurers hired to look into the matter. Though their divulgence comes too late to save the condemned men, the adventurers do wish to see justice prevail. They put the matter to the people, who react with outrage. Haldemar is on the verge of revolt and Ezreilla knows it. Though she has strengthened her defenses, the guards themselves are contemplating her overthrow—Trajorn was

one of them, a soldier. There was enough discontent before, but now with foul play involved they are on the verge of mutiny, only their sense of duty keeps them loyal.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs may be the ones that present this oration. If so, they will find themselves on Ezreilla's least liked list. Likewise, witnesses may find themselves in danger and will need protecting.

Klarmont 21, AC 1016: Visitors.

Location: City of Helskir, Kingdom of Heldun, Thyatian Empire and NACE, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: A group of 12 men disembark from a small sailing ship after it docks in Helskir's harbor. Saying that they are traders out of Oceansend, they present their papers to the harbor guards, gather their belongings, and enter the city. (*See Fl. 2, Fl. 3; Ka. 2, Ka. 3.*)

Fourth Week

Klarmont 22, AC 1016: Trap Ready.

Location: City of Wendar, Kingdom of Wendar. OW

Description: Bensarian reports to King Gylharen to having found important clues in some of General Grumman's papers that may lead him to uncover the chief of all Denagoth spies inside Wendar. He tells him that he must go to Woodgate to check something that will allow him to reveal the real identity of this spymaster, but it will be a matter of days. The king is sincerely pleased to hear this and offers Bensarian an elite escort to Woodgate, but the sage refuses, preferring to go there by himself incognito. (*See Kl. 11, Kl. 14; Kl. 24, Fe. 4.*)

What This Means: Bensarian and his investigators have no proofs whatsoever, they are just lying hoping to expose Gylharen as a pawn of Idris. Only he knows what they are about to do, so if something happens this time too, it will be obvious that Gylharen is indeed the mastermind.

Klarmont 22, AC 1016: Monzag Kingdom Reinstated.

Location: Fortress of Yüksek Hisar, Kingdom of Karsile, Hulean Empire. SC

Description: Following the victorious southward drive of the Monzag rebels and the capture of Puzstöck and Szekçarüt by them and their Sendarian allies, Balàzs Khuen is proclaimed King of Monzag by his fellow supporters. After years in exile, the young wizard-king may lead his nation to a life outside the Master's yoke. Still, Debredladany and most of western Monzag are still at the hands of the Huleans and of their Antasyrian allies. (*See Ya. 23; Ka. 17.*)

What This Means: The Monzags have always been one of the most restive nation occupied by Hule. As soon as the empire looked on the brink of collapse, the rebel network has undergone a major sabotage campaign against the Hulean military infrastructures. As more troops were pulled out of the region to reinforce the northern front, their task has been made easier. However, they now face the strong resistance of the Antasyrians who still hold more than one-third of the country's historical territory.

Klarmont 24, AC 1016: Bensarian Ambushed.

Location: Town of Woodgate, Kingdom of Wendar. OW

Description: While exiting the city of Woodgate, Bensarian is ambushed by a band of shady cultists bent on killing him. The adventurers following the sage invisibly reveal themselves and jump to his aid, killing some of the assailants and making the others flee away. When one of the killers' soul is summoned and asked who informed them of Bensarian's location, the ghost answers: "your liege." The killer's answer is the evident proof of Gylharen's guilt.

Now that the investigators have seen how wide Idris's spy network stretches, they understand their task is more difficult than ever. Bensarian states that the only way to save Wendar from Idris at this point is to remove Idris's cancer permanently before it becomes too widespread. He then exposes them the last part of his plan. (*See Kl. 14, Kl. 22; Fe. 4, Fy. 7.*)

What This Means: "Bensarian's" plan is drawing near. It was him who informed Idris's spies on what to do and staged a fake assault against himself to throw away any suspicions. The killer's answer has been his last masterpiece: by saying "your liege" he obviously meant Bensarian, so he did not lie. However, the whole group understood he was talking about the king, and this led them to believe Bensarian's bigger lie. Now that the adventurers are convinced of Gylharen's guilt, they are resolute to do everything to stop him.

Klarmont 24, AC 1016: Trees of Life Back Home.

Location: Colony of Aengmor, Shadow Elves' Territories. OW

Description: With the cooperation of skeptic shadowelf authorities and frightened Alfheim exiles, all the Trees of Life are secretly brought back in Canolbarth in their original spots. A special body of mixed Alfheimers-Darokinian-Aengmorian soldiers is charged with guarding the precious trees against any kind of would-be offenders. (*See Th. 27; Fy. 26.*)

What This Means: A few months ago Jorodrin Feadiel noticed that the two Trees of Life still in Canolbarth had had a regain of energy, so he decided to bring back all the Trees of Life from their temporary homes in Darokin. Despite the growing distrust between the two elven races and the opposition of some Alfheim leaders who didn't want to reveal the location of their most precious artifacts to the much-hated shadow elves, the trees (even the Feadiel's one) were finally brought back to Canolbarth. The DDC had, again, a key role in this process.

At first Princess Tanadaleyo didn't want to allow the surface elves to set up an armed escort to guard the Trees of Life, but, after long talks with King Doriath, she understood that this might have been her last chance to heal the forest and thus agreed to the move.

This event will give a new push forward to the healing of Canolbarth.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs born in Alfheim or long-time friends of Alfheim elves may be entrusted with bringing back to Canolbarth one of the remaining Trees of Life.

Klarmont 24, AC 1016: Patrols Meet.

Location: North of Sea-Kingdom of Aquas, NACE. AS

Description: The patrols from Aquas encounter an Underocean training squad sent to reconnoiter the area. When the tritons are questioned, the inexperienced squad leader informs the patrol of Underocean's existence. The patrol immediately takes the tritons into custody and heads back to Aquas. (*See Fl. 1, Kl. 11; Fe. 17, Fy. 3.*)

What This Means: When word of this reaches the Alphatian Council, debates will emerge about what to do about the triton kingdom. The opinions will range from wishing to use military force to eject the "trespassing" tritons, to just ignoring their existence.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs could be members of either patrol.

Klarmont 25, AC 1016: New Way Army.

Location: City of Titlapoca, Azcan Empire. HW

Description: Emperor Otziltipac raises a sizable army, drawing from the city he ruled for years and elsewhere in the northern region around it. In addition to the military and converted commoners, he has the full support of the priesthood of Quetzalcoatl, and a squad of warpriests that trained for years in anticipation of this day, supplements the force.

The officers lead the army along the southern road, toward the friendly capital of Chitlacan, where they hope to find more recruits willing to fight the followers of the Evil Twin. (*See Ya. 19, Kl. 7; Fe. 1, Fe. 20.*)

What This Means: Though some of them now follow the Way of Quetzalcoatl, the Azcans remain bloody fighters at heart, who enjoy combat and hope to die from a violent death on the battlefield. For years, the New Way has been building up its forces, especially in Titlapoca under the protection of Governor Otziltipac, and now is time to reveal the existence of those cells.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs can engage in the army on Otziltipac's side. If they are leaders of the New Way, they may be in charge of leading the troops to battle; if they are lower-ranking reformist leaders, they may be asked by their superiors to track any infiltrated followers of Atzanteotl and terminate them and their spying activities.

Klarmont 25, AC 1016: If You Cannot Take It, Encircle It.

Location: Town of Buenos Viente, *Baronia del Grande Carrascal*. SC

Description: After a few disastrous attempts to penetrate into the sacred Town of Buenos Viente, the goblins of Garok's horde set up camp around the town, and lay siege to it. Most gnoll warriors are regrouped within the besieged town, though some groups still remain out nearer to the border with Almarrón. Marshal Vupilor Watak organizes the town defenses, but with few food and water supplies in the recently resettled town the prospects are not good for the gnolls indeed. (*See Fl. 4, Ya. 16; Fy. 9, Fy. 21.*)

What This Means: Buenos Viente was a long-deserted place until the Hutaakans discovered it was sacred, and may hold secrets to their past. The new *barón* declared the place as the capital of the new barony, and many gnolls, especially Long Legs, came to it, though some places are sacred and restricted to the clergy. A makeshift palisade has been erected hastily when the goblin threat forced the gnolls to retreat to the town, but the gnolls never brought any large food supplies—they are more used to being the raiders than the raided, and even so they generally live in tribal camps rather than towns. Now, the town is under siege and the supplies will quickly run low.

Klarmont 26, AC 1016: The NACE Nationalizes *The Torpin*.

Location: Confederate Capital of Ionace, NACE. AS

Description: The NACE announces that there has been another construction project initiated, that of an enormous *submersible* designed by the renowned magist Bordicar, who disappeared during the Great War. With it, the Alphatians will be able to project their influence under the waves and explore the sunken continent. *The Torpin*, as it has been named, will operate out of the new domed complex. (*See Ya. 22, Kl. 17; Fe. 7, Fy. 2.*)

What This Means: With the attacks at the dome site, the council has recognized the need to have a sizable presence beneath the waves. To insure their control of the *submersible* they have opted to fund its completion. With its budget highly restricted, the NACE has had to delve deep for the resources; different areas of the NACE have had to commit portions of their budgets to the project.

Klarmont 27, AC 1016: Beasthunter's Own Crusade.

Location: Elven lands, Kingdom of Wendar. OW

Description: Clanmaster Beasthunter starts recruiting new volunteers to return to the Forest of Geffron and rescue the elves who have been trapped there by the Shadow Army and the dragon-knights about two months before. Once they know of these preparations, the humans start protesting against the elves' continual interference with Denagoth, convinced that they will cause the Shadow Lord to attack Wendar in retaliation. The recruiting campaign does not stop however, and King Gylhare does not intervene on the matter. (*See Ya. 22; Fe. 4, Fy. 7.*)

What This Means: Beasthunter has been charged by the Alfheim clanmasters with the task to save all elven crusaders he left in Geffron, and to retrieve Durifern Widefarer of clan Grunalf. If he does not achieve these goals in a year term, he will be removed by his position and will earn the elves' scorn. For this reason and to show himself he's

still got some dignity and courage, he is rearming and recruiting new volunteers especially among his clan to return to Denagoth and accomplish his mission.

The humans are not pleased and because of Denagoth's arranged assaults at the borders they now believe another elven invasion of Denagoth could bring the two nations to war. The humans will obviously do everything to avoid this.

As for King Gylharen, he still hopes Bensarian will discover Idris's master spy in Wendar, and in the meantime he's still too occupied with the avengers issue to overly concern with Beasthunter's problem.

Topic of the Month: The Annexation of Minrothad

as told by Hason Bercos to Joshuan Gallidox in tavern talk during a stop in the port of Ierendi.

"Aye, I still don't believe it. I can't believe it. The guilds, annexed by the empire. Must be the booze. Can't be nothing else. Over a dead bozo!

"I mean, first, the Daros [*Darokinians in patois. Ed.*]. They accuse the merchant-princes of killin' one of their merchants. They even dare accuse the guild master. Like, we need to assassinate 'em to get our business rollin'. Yeah, right. We certainly don't need that. Aye, we're the best sailors and traders in the world. We are. I served on several ships, and I traveled as far north as Alpha, and also east past the Alphatians to Minaea, and south to the ports of the Davanian city-states, and west to Yavdlom and Slagovich and beyond. Never met a Daro there. Never saw anyone else go to all those places either actually. Even the Thyatians, 'cause they won't go far into the Alphatian Sea. Well, I hear now they do, but I've yet to witness it myself. Where was I? Oh yeah, the Daros, they ain't got no merchant fleet to match us. Sure, they have caravans, and they control a big chunk of the land trade in the Old World, and I've seen their caravans reach as far as Slagovich. We leave that to 'em. But on the sea, we're the kings. Only the Thyatians and Alphatians have anything near a merchant fleet, and that's for their internal goods transport. We only've a true merchant fleet, I tell ya. Thus, you see, we don't need to assassinate some Daro merchant.

"They didn't even bring any evidence. Rumors, wild guesses. That's how the Daros do it. I'm sure the so-called evidence that convinced their allies of the league, were set-ups. Can't be otherwise. For all I know, they may have killed one of their own to frame us an' steal our trade. I'm convinced they did this to gain market shares within their league allies, to our detriment. Maybe they didn't even expect it to grow so out of proportion. I mean, tradesmen sometimes do not so nice things to gain an edge. Shady things are fair enough, sometimes, ya know. But it remains under the cloak. Doesn't become political and state affairs.

"Once it became so big an affair, the best thing to do was to do nothing, of course. Well, deny, and that's all. Even when the Daros and their puny army threatened us. I said, they ain't got no fleet, so it's not as if the threat was real. Their league allies, they dragged 'em into that mess of military build-up too, but they're not much better off. Only the hin have some amount of a fleet, but even then it's a pity compared to the might of the merchant-princes. And, it's not as if they meant it, either. With the legions of Thyatis and the hordes of Hule at their doors, can you imagine they'd act upon it? No, 'course not. 'Twas just threats, no biggie.

"So what happened? I don't understand. The government called the Thyatians for help. Nonsense! Hmm, that must've been corrupt government officials, I see no other explanation. Or maybe Thayan spies in the government. I dunno. Most stupid thing to do. You'd think they know you can't trust a Thayan. The only Thayan I trust, is the *emperor [the coin. Ed.]*. They allowed Thayan warships in the guilds. For our protection they said! I know better! Of course, once you punch a hole, water floods in, and the ship sinks. The treacherous Thyatians had somethin' else in mind that our protection, obviously. I don't understand how our government didn't see it. Crazy! So... so... stupid. I can't believe it..."

EVENTS: FELMONT

First Week

Felmont 1, AC 1016: Painting Disfigured.

Location: City of Akesoli, Republic of Darokin. OW

Description: A fresco of Greenleaf Vickers, in the merchant guild's hall of Akesoli, is found horribly disfigured by elven runes this morning. The runes read: "Canolborth free! Death to shadow elves!" (*See Kl. 18; Fe. 13.*)

What This Means: This is another wretched act of the Alfheim Avengers, that try to draw the attention of the Old World on the Alfheim-Aengmor situation. This time they "attacked" Greenleaf Vickers, head of Umbarth House and one of the staunchest supporters of the peace process.

Felmont 1, AC 1016: To Reclaim Chitlacan.

Location: City of Huitlaktima, Azcan Empire. HW

Description: Emperor Chupicuaro sends a large chunk of his loyal army to reclaim Chitlacan, the Azcan capital and place of Quetzalcoatl's return. They are accompanied by a contingent of priests who are to desecrate all of places of worship dedicated to Quetzalcoatl, and restore the worship of Atzanteotl—and conduct a lot of sacrifices. (*See Kl. 7, Kl. 25; Fe. 20, Fe. 21.*)

What This Means: Chupicuaro knows that the new faith in Quetzalcoatl originates in Chitlacan, where the reality of His sacrifice was witnessed firsthand on the Day of Dread last year. The emperor hopes that by taking Chitlacan and purging it of its subversive elements, he can quickly restore the old ways and nip the revolution in the bud. He knows he will later have to fight war more to the north, in the city of Titlapoca where Otziltipac challenges his authority, but hopefully bringing Chitlacan onto his side will tip the tide in his favor. Little does he know that Otziltipac's army is already bound for the capital.

Felmont 1: A Secret Pact.

Location: Village of Punto-Eseobar, *Baronia de Narvaez*. SC

Description: *Baronesa* Isabel of Torreón and *Barón* Hugo of Narvaez meet secretly to discuss an alliance. Together, they will pool their forces when the time is right for an invasion of Terra Vermelha and divide the *cinnabryl* of the conquered lands between themselves. Both leaders know that they cannot invade at the moment given the political climate of the Savage Baronies, but they decide to await further developments for an opportunity to do so. (*See Ya. 8; Sv. 22, Ka. 1.*)

What This Means: An alliance between the most militaristic (Torreón) and the most warlike (Narvaez) states on the Savage Coast is always bad news for the other baronies.

Felmont 2, AC 1016: Seelitz Regained.

Location: Village of Seelitz, Heldland, Heldannic Territories. NW

Description: At dawn today, a large body of knights enters this coastal village, some 150 miles northeast of Landfall. The leader of the column, none other than *Herr* Wulf himself, proclaims that Seelitz is once again under the protection of the knights, and that its lands and citizens are once more part of the Heldannic Territories. Fifty knights are left behind to garrison the village. (*See Fl. 7, Fl. 19.; Fe. 8, Fe. 14.*)

What This Means: Seelitz is a coastal village of roughly 600 people, whose administration had lost contact with Freiburg during the string of Heldannic defeats at the hands of rebels. The reclamation of Seelitz is not only a political move to show who is in control; it also lies on the way to Oceansend.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are with the knights, they could very well be garrisoned here as a defensive force. If this is the case, they could face the dangers of a still untamed region, such as bandits, humanoids, and monsters of various sorts.

Felmont 3, AC 1016: The Empire Strikes Back.

Location: Sea of Dread. OW

Description: While the armada inflicted heavy casualties on the Twaelar, it was ultimately defeated. Thyatis still has not found a way to limit Twaelar raids against its ships, though convoy systems have helped. Using the experience gained so far, the Thyatians finally come up with a way to fight back effectively, through decoys. The few Thyatian *skyships* available patrol the Sea of Dread. Thyatian mages now begin to use powerful illusions to make it appear that a squadron of Thyatian ships is sailing below the *skyships*, luring the Twaelar strike forces into attacking. When the Twaelar appear, the Thyatian *skyships* use a combination of spells, *depth bombs*, and *water fire* to defeat them. (See Ya. 17, Ya. 26; Fe. 20, Fy. 12.)

What This Means: Thyatian *skyships* employ this ruse over the next few weeks in between supplying bases. The shoe is now on the other foot; this time it is the Twaelar who are taking losses without any means of inflicting casualties of their own. After a few such encounters the Twaelar become more cautious and stop falling for the illusion trick. Then the Thyatians turn to towing derelict ships (damaged in earlier battles with the Twaelar) behind the flying *skyships*, luring the Twaelar into battle with this ruse. This makes the Twaelar even more cautious. The Twaelar stop falling for these ruses but are hesitant to attack any ships. With new sea lanes towards Kastelios the Thyatians are able to avoid the most dangerous areas of the Sea of Dread in any case. Thyatian losses in the war quickly decline to a trickle.

Felmont 4, AC 1016: Beasthunter Joins Bensarian.

Location: Forest of the Curse, Kingdom of Wendar. OW

Description: Bensarian gains an audience with Clanmaster Beasthunter. During this private meeting, the clan leader is informed that the sage has gained evidences that confirm Gylharen is in fact a puppet of the Shadow Lord. Gylharen is letting the anti-Alfheimers campaign go unchecked because the Church of Idris wants to throw Wendar into a civil war, with the Alfheimers used as scapegoats. Bensarian is thus asking clan Long Runner's help in neutralizing Gylharen and restoring order inside the nation. Beasthunter is shocked by the news, but Bensarian's reputation and logic exposition of the facts convince him of the truth. The two forge a secret alliance and together prepare the last stages of the plan to overthrow Gylharen. (See Kl. 24, Kl. 27; Fy. 7, Fy. 14.)

What This Means: Beasthunter finally has the chance to prove everyone he is a capable leader and a hero, and promptly joined Bensarian in his desperate quest to rid Wendar of Idris's spies. He sincerely hopes to regain his reputation as champion of elvenkind after this matter clears. As for Bensarian, he has just obtained the last piece of his puzzle, now everything is ready for the final act.

Felmont 5, AC 1016: Alphatians Go Home!

Location: City of Edairo, Kingdom of Thothia, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: Alphatian citizens in the city of Edairo are assaulted by Thothian citizens outside of the foreign quarter. One Alphatian is severely wounded, two others bruised, before Thothian soldiers break up the fighting. The suspects who are apprehended declare that "Alphatians are unwanted in Thothia." (See Fl. 5, Kl. 4; Am. 10, Sv. 18.)

What This Means: The independent efforts of the araneas and Haptuthep to undermine Ramenhotep's authority are bearing fruit. Long hidden anti-Alphatian sentiments are being stirred up among the normally sedate citizenry of

Thothia. This incident was not masterminded by either side, but is the direct result of their manipulations in other areas.

Over the next few months, such situations will continue to be on the rise, demanding further attention of the Thothian military.

Felmont 5, AC 1016: Dikhoff Accuses Sixx.

Location: Barony of Dikhoff, Tranquil Coast. NW

Description: Spies of Baron Dimitri Dikhoff intercept a small caravan of Thyatians marching toward their border from the northern Barony of Serenity, and escort them to their lord's castle. There, Baron Dikhoff is invited to join a coalition of nobles loyal to Thyatis to break free from the NACE and the Heldannic Knights' control and regain freedom under the Thyatian banner. Accused of treachery and fomenting the war, the Thyatians are imprisoned and later tortured to know which barons did accept their offer so far. When the names of the neighboring states of Serenity and the Swordcoast are mentioned, Dikhoff immediately sends a messenger to Alpha to inform Ericall and call for his help (and that of his loyal nobles) in defeating this nest of snakes. Then he prepares the army to wage war on his archenemy Baron Sixx and his treacherous Thyatian allies. (*See Fe. 6, Fe. 10.*)

What This Means: The Thyatians were in fact adepts of Talitha, who is now trying to put suspicion among the Norwold lords and undermine their unity. In particular, She wants to exploit the ongoing intermittent war between Sixx and Dikhoff to draw the whole region into a full-scale vicious war and prevent these barons from sending forces to Oceansend when the knights will besiege it. Baron Dikhoff didn't bother to check the Thyatians' lies: the mere fact that Sixx was involved caused him to believe their words. He now thinks he has a good reason to justify the invasion of his old foe's dominion and wants to exploit the situation.

Felmont 6, AC 1016: Infamous Wizard.

Location: Barony of Halag, Kingdom of Karameikos. OW

Description: Rumors abound that Bargle the Infamous, former court-wizard to Ludwig "Black Eagle" von Hendriks, has returned. Though the rumors cannot be substantiated, attacks by humanoids and rogues known to have once been under the Black Eagle's command have been on the rise. Someone or something is organizing them against both the Barony of Halag and the nearby elven estate of Achelos. A call is put out for adventurers to assist in seeking out and nullifying the new menace.

What This Means: It is not actually Bargle, but rather his cousin Sverdlov [*see module DDA3 Eye of Traldar. Ed.*], that is rallying the hordes. Another court-wizard of the Black Eagle's, Sverdlov has returned to attempt to gain some power in the region. He is not too proud to cash in on Bargle's infamous name to do so, either. The real Bargle is currently in the employ of the Grey Front, on the flying city of Serraine.

Felmont 6, AC 1016: Dikhoff Unmasked.

Location: Barony of Serenity, Tranquil Coast. NW

Description: Spies of Baron Siegfried Sixx of Serenity capture a bunch of Heldannic Knights who are galloping in No Man's Land, the buffer area between Serenity and the southern dominion of Dikhoff. After a rough interrogation, they report to their lord that the Heldanners are emissaries sent to some of the Norwold Barons to enlist them on the Heldannic Knights' side. It seems that Baron Dikhoff was just paid for his loyalty to the knights. Baron Sixx immediately sends a messenger to inform King Ericall of the events and readies the army to invade Dikhoff. (*See Fe. 5; Fe 10, Fe. 22.*)

What This Means: The Heldanners captured by Sixx are in fact other adepts of Talitha, who is apparently succeeding in Her scheme. Each baron believes that he has gathered enough evidence of his enemy's betrayal, and will thus easily gain the support of the other lords of Norwold to crush his foe once and for all.

What the PCs Can Do: If they work for Sixx, they can be the ones who spot, chase and capture the false knights, who will not put much resistance to avoid it. However, it will be nigh impossible for them to understand that they are being fooled.

Felmont 7, AC 1016: Allied Forces Reach Dengar.

Location: City of Dengar, Kingdom of Rockhome. OW

Description: The allied forces of the Western Defense League reach the dwarven capitol of Dengar. There, they meet with King Everast XVI and his generals, and plan their campaign against the eastern goblinoid armies.

The dwarven king wants to set out immediately into the Klintest Valley in order to reclaim Rockhome, but the armies of the Western Defense League would prefer to take some time, and go over dwarven intelligence reports on goblinoid activity.

Just when it seems both sides are coming to an agreement, representatives of the Torkrest military clan voice dissension over working with not only human and halfling armies, but the goblinoids of the Orclands as well. King Everast XVI hastily attempts to bring the bickering armies to accord. (*See Ya. 13, Kl. 4; Fe. 22, Fy. 6.*)

What This Means: Even in the midst of their goblinoid turmoil, the isolationist factions among the Rockhome dwarves are making their voices heard. The expedition will be delayed as Everast and his diplomats try to solve their difficulties. Meanwhile, the goblinoids in the Klintest Lowlands continue to secure their holdings.

Felmont 7, AC 1016: The Super Destroyers.

Location: Construction site of Torenal, Sunken Arogansa, Sunken Alphatia, NACE. AS

Description: From the ranks of the armed escorts, the most powerful, most skilled, and most experienced adventurers are grouped together in a party to investigate the unusual undead in Bluenose. The party, dubbed the “Super Destroyers,” are loaned a *submersible*, a craft, *The Shark*, which is considered to be one of the best *submersibles* in the NACE. Morale among the workers lifts as these folks depart. (*See Kl. 17, Kl. 26; Fe. 15, Fe. 18.*)

What This Means: The Super Destroyers are the best adventurer types the construction crew can muster. Officially their task is to clear out dangerous undead in Bluenose but their real task is to investigate these undead and bring back a few trophy heads to increase morale among the frightened workers, for the party to try to clear the city’s numerous undead would be a suicide mission—such a task is designed for an army.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are powerful enough and are involved in the defense of the construction site, chances are good that they are members of the Super Destroyers. Otherwise lower level PCs may be off on other patrols in lesser strength “destroyer” groups.

Felmont 7, AC 1016: A Difficult New Life.

Location: Provincia Septentriona, Thyatian Empire, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: Over the following weeks new settlers, including the Thyatian exiles from Dunadale, Aegos, and (eventually) Gaity, as well as retired Thyatian soldiers and a small garrison, begin arriving in Septentriona. The new settlements concentrate mainly along the Shadow River in the center of Septentriona, at the mouth of which the province’s new capital is founded. This town, christened Rialtos, consists of several marshy islands linked to each other and to the riversides by bridges and ferries.

Life for the colonists is hard, especially for the exiles that are conscripted into labor gangs, clearing the wilderness and building up the infrastructure. By the end of the summer, however, Rialtos is the center of a rustic, but growing community of fishermen, already becoming a stopover for merchants, and numerous farmsteads are sprouting up along the riverbanks, as well as the beginnings of a logging industry. (*See Fl. 2, Fl. 27; Fe. 10.*)

What This Means: This is part of Eusebius's continuing program to strengthen Thyatis's colonial possessions, and the empire's control of them. The town of Rialtos is also positioned to be a future base for the Thyatian navy, as well as a port of entry into the wild interior of the Shadow Coast. Also, Septentriona's center of gravity will move from the harsh environment of its north to its potentially richer central region.

What the PCs Can Do: The Shadow Coast is a forbidding, unfamiliar wilderness, with dangers and resources undiscovered and untapped. The Thyatian government will reward scouts who explore the region, eliminating dangers and surveying its riches. PCs will find the character of Rialtos and the surrounds to be similar to rustic Threshold circa AC 1000.

Second Week

Felmont 8, AC 1016: Gnolls of the World, Unite!

Location: *Mumlyket* of Baratkand, Kingdom of Sind. OW

Description: The Great Migration receives an infusion of fresh blood, in the form of gnollish converts. Gnollish members of the *kuliya* caste, the lowest caste in Sind, flock to the tremendous group of humanoids that have invaded Baratkand. They join up with the migration as it begins to move westwards once more, in hopes of bettering their lot in life. (*See Fl. 3; Am. 4, Ei. 12.*)

What This Means: Hool's Great Migration has been wandering aimlessly through Sindhi lands for the better part of a year. Feeling the Master has reneged on his promises of leading them to the Blue Knife, Hool and Nizam-Pasha have decided to head westwards once more, in the direction of Wogar's initial migration of centuries earlier.

Baratkand has a large population of gnollish workers, descendants of gnollish migrations of BC 1000. Most of these are of the lowest caste of workers, and are greatly discriminated against in the Sindhi caste system. They see a better life awaiting them with the horde.

Felmont 8, AC 1016: Battle of Nordberg.

Location: Village of Nordberg, Heldland, Heldannic Territories. NW

Description: The advance party of knights, led by *Herr* Wulf, reaches the village of Nordberg today, which, along with a large swath of territory, is in the hands of a rebel lord, named Gustav Schmidt. Seeing that Schmidt's forces are quite small, compared to his own force of almost 4,000 knights, *Herr* Wulf offers amnesty if the rebels lay down their arms and submit to Heldannic rule. Schmidt refuses the offer, and orders his men, numbering over 300, to attack the knights.

The battle is ferocious, taking place just west of Nordberg, and initially Schmidt's force appears to have the upper hand due to the sheer size of the assembled force of the knights, which is more difficult to co-ordinate. The tide soon turns against the rebels as the knights begin to turn their numerical superiority to their advantage. Many of Schmidt's men lose heart as the knights press closer to their own positions, and some flee the battlefield for the relative safety of the wilderness. Within the hour, the knights are victorious, and Schmidt is captured. *Herr* Wulf leads the knights into Nordberg, where Schmidt is tried for treason, found guilty, and hung before nightfall. *Herr* Wulf posts a force of 30 knights to guard the village in his absence after he and the remainder of his forces leave the next morning. (*See Fl. 19, Fe 2; Fe. 14, Fe. 17.*)

What This Means: Gustav Schmidt was one of several petty despots who arose following the loss of Oceansend and the temporary decline of the knights' influence. Word of *Herr* Wulf's success in Davania, and the restoration of the knights' clerical abilities, has not yet reached some parts of Heldland. Additionally, Schmidt did not expect to see so many knights this far north so soon after their apparent decline. Those areas which have not heard this news, and which are openly rebellious, will soon be in for a shock when the knights march upon them.

Felmont 8, AC 1016: Dvinzinians Hit a Wall at Rehmin's Rear.

Location: Theocracy of Dvinzina, Kavkaz. SC

Description: While Rehmin's troops are engaged deep into the Hulean territory, the Sublime Octagon Order's knights head toward the portion of Azardjian controlled by his alliance. Sure of the easy task ahead, they head directly into a trap set by Rehmin. Knowing the fate that the Azards will suffer if the Dvinzinians crusaders succeed in their expansionist drive, the brigand has convinced the Chengouch to protect his rear. If the military operation to retake the occupied territory in Dvinzina has been a quiet journey, the offensive in southern Azardjian stumbles on the fierce Chengouch warriors and native resistance. The Dvinzinians are forced to withdraw in the Azards' territory that they control. Being frustrated of further conquests, the order intensifies its religious persecutions on the Azard people. (*See Ya. 23, Kl. 2; Sv. 21.*)

What This Means: The religious zealotry of the order is increasingly rejected by the rest of Kavkaz, even by people who share the same faith in the Way of the Law. Facing this situation, the order turns inward and undertakes the forced conversion of as many Azards as possible.

Felmont 9, AC 1016: Courting a Princess.

Location: Tower of Linden, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: Princess Juliana Vlaardoen receives an unusual guest at her home—the Black Eagle, Ludwig von Hendriks. Von Hendriks requested the honor of meeting with the princess a few days ago, much to her surprise. The two of them share dinner and exchange pleasantries. When the evening is over, Juliana's uncle Anton shares his thoughts on the matter—he doesn't like von Hendriks. Expecting Juliana to agree with him, and join in his jests at the Black Eagle's expense, he is shocked to learn that Juliana plans to see the man again very soon. (*See Nu. 15, Fl. 12; Am. 1, Am. 10.*)

What This Means: The Black Eagle and his ally Dolores (a.k.a. Synn the night dragon), have seen a perfect opportunity for them to increase their power base in Juliana. A notorious bachelorette, they had the idea to have von Hendriks court her, with the intent of marrying her. Of course, he will have help—notably via the same magical charms Dolores once used on Prince Jaggar von Drachenfels.

Anton Vlaardoen—in reality an ancient gold dragon named Raknaar—is put off by Juliana's interest in von Hendriks. He senses the evil and instability in the man, but so far doesn't suspect anything underhanded. In fact, he isn't entirely sure that he isn't simply jealous of von Hendriks.

Felmont 10, AC 1016: New Ambassadors.

Location: City of Darokin, Republic of Darokin, City of Glantri, Principalities of Glantri, City of Mirros, Kingdom of Karameikos, City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire, City of Shireton, Five Shires, City of Norrvik, Kingdom of Vestland, and City of Wendar, Kingdom of Wendar. OW

Description: The first shadowelf ambassadors are posted to the capital cities of Darokin, Glantri, Karameikos, Thyatis, the Five Shires, Vestland, and Wendar. Together with the ambassadors, several members of the new Second Shadow are sent there disguised as aides. (*See Va. 14; Am. 3, Am. 16.*)

What This Means: It took the shadow elves more than a year to set up the first ambassadors after the revision of the Verse of the Wanderers on Thaumont 26 AC 1015. Those new ambassadors, all wanderers, will have the tactful task to set up the first diplomatic contacts between the shadow elves and some nations of the Old World, thus bringing Aengmor into the “civilized” world.

Darokin and Glantri were chosen for their proximity to the shadowelf kingdom; Karameikos and Wendar because they still house Alfheim refugees; Thyatis, the Five Shires and Vestland just for political reasons (the first being the most important nation of the Old World and the others being part of the Western Defense League).

This event also marks the first official assignment of the members of the Second Shadow, after it was completely rebuilt by Gilfronden.

Felmont 10, AC 1016: Thyatian Quarters Open.

Location: Confederate Capital of Ionace, NACE. SD

Description: The council announces that the threat on Aegos has been removed by the NACE, and that the Thyatian quarter can now be opened safely. (*See Kl. 6, Kl. 19; Fe. 18, Fy. 9.*)

What This Means: According to the Helskir agreement, the Thyatians would return control of Aegos to the Alphatians but a quarter of Aegopolis would become a Thyatian Quarter. With the appearance of a dangerous burrower when the Thyatians withdrew from the island, they were suspected of treachery by the Alphatians and the opening of the Thyatian Quarter was delayed until things were safer (actually, diplomatic term for until the Thyatian involvement is puzzled out).

Now that the annelid has left Aegos, quick researches have demonstrated that the great annelid came from The Pit, and thus was not summoned. Considering the state of The Pit, it is unlikely the Thyatians have anything to do with the coming of the monster at all.

Although light has not been made on the matter yet, chances are the Thyatians are not behind the event—at most they did not prevent it when other, more knowledgeable people *[i.e. the Alphatians, according to themselves of course. Ed.]* may have.

Felmont 10, AC 1016: A Clash in the Wyrmsteeth.

Location: Wyrmsteeth Mountains. NW

Description: The emissaries of Baron Sixx and Baron Dikhoff meet each other quite by accident in a narrow glen while traveling north to Alpha. Upon recognizing each other's colors they engage in a ruthless duel which sees the Dikhoffians prevail. However, before they can even joy of their deed, they are attacked by a small goblin war-party, which soon captures them and later throws the survivors down a steep cliff to their death after looting them. (*See Fe. 5, Fe. 6; Fe. 13, Fe. 22.*)

What This Means: This time fate played against the two barons, further helping Talitha's plans of mischief. Unable to reach Ericall's court, the two barons will wage war on each other without receiving the support they asked for, and this will obviously cause them to further mistrust Ericall and his allies.

Felmont 12, AC 1016: Raid on Vanya's Rest.

Location: Outpost of Vanya's Rest, Heldannic Territories, Aryptian Coast. DV

Description: At dawn today, about one hundred Meghaddara warriors descend on the farms surrounding the fortress of Vanya's Rest. Caught completely by surprise, many settlers are killed, and dozens of homes are set ablaze, before the Heldannic Knights garrisoned at the fortress realize what has happened. As the main gates of the fortress open, the Meghaddara flee northwards into the hills, though some do not escape. Heinz Kronenburg, Castellan of Vanya's Rest, surveys the scene afterwards, and demands a full report from every knight present. He also issues an order to set up a permanent watch over the settlers. In total, 78 farmers and seven Meghaddara raiders have died. (*See Fe. 26, Fe. 28.*)

What This Means: The Meghaddara, a semi-nomadic people who live in the Aryptian Savannah, have decided to strike at the knights in retaliation for the battle fought against them last year. They hope to hurt the knights by attacking the farmers living outside the fortress, thus reducing their food supply. The fact that they are lightly armed and armored, and know the land well, means that they can strike quickly and disappear. Protecting the farmers from the Meghaddara will cost the knights in terms of men being reassigned elsewhere, meaning that there will be fewer knights to conquer more land in the near future.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are with the knights, the PCs can help track down the fleeing Meghaddara raiders, possibly locating the camp where they are based. If the PCs are helping the Meghaddara, they could divert the knights' attention to allow their allies to escape.

Felmont 12, AC 1016: Slave Ban Vote Scheduled.

Location: Confederate Capital of Ionace, NACE. AS

Description: Favian Vern, President of the Republic of Esterhold, again raises the question of banning slavery within the NACE. This time, however, he asks for a vote, which will take place during another Council meeting in a month. (*See Fy. 11, Fy. 12.*)

What This Means: Favian Vern is now convinced that he has swayed enough rulers to his view on slavery to win a vote. However, he delayed the voting to another meeting because two of his supporters were not attending in person, and Favian Vern does not wish to take any chance.

Felmont 13, AC 1016: Ambassador Disappears.

Location: City of Mirros, Kingdom of Karameikos. OW

Description: The Alfheim ambassador to Karameikos, Shalander, fails to return home after a hunt in the Karameikan wilderness.

Late in the night an arrow with an attached message hits the door of *Joshuan Gallidox Publishing* in Mirros. The dart is clearly of Red Arrow make. The message, signed "Alfheim Avengers", is destined to King Doriath of Alfheim, and asks for his abdication in exchange for Shalander's life. (*See Fe. 1; Fe. 15, Fy. 17.*)

What This Means: The Alfheim Avengers strike again, this time attacking directly one of their own kind. If they were looking for notoriety, then the avengers managed to get it, at least in Karameikos and Darokin. But will this really help them get back their beloved forest?

What the PCs Can Do: Rescuing Shalander sounds like the perfect challenge for mid-level PCs.

Felmont 13, AC 1016: Magistrates Assassinated.

Location: Province of Verdan, Republic of Esterhold, NACE. AS

Description: Two magistrates of Verdan, a moderate and a secessionist who rallied Tristilia, are found murdered in the streets of Faraway. Both were Jennites. (*See Fl. 3, Fl. 11; Fy. 18, Fy. 23.*)

What This Means: The secessionists are suspected of the double murders.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs can be hired by Governor Tristilia to shed light upon that sordid murder.

Felmont 13, AC 1016: Dikhoff and Fergus Ally.

Location: Barony of Sonnenfeld, Tranquil Coast. NW

Description: Emissaries from Baron Dikhoff arrive in Sonnenfeld (a small dominion some forty miles southwest of Dikhoff) and demand an audience with Lord Fergus. They seek the baron's alliance to stand against the treacherous northern lords of Serenity and the Swordcoast, renegades who allied with Thyatis to bring mischief in Norwold. When Baron Fergus hears the news, he immediately agrees to join Dikhoff in his war, in order to rid Norwold of Swordcoast's lord once and for all. (*See Fe. 5, Fe. 10; Fe. 22, Fe. 25.*)

What This Means: Baron Fergus is a just ruler with no prejudices against Siegfried Sixx. However, he does have an old grudge against Maximus I, Baron of the Swordcoast, which dates back to their adventuring career. Basically, Maximus I once betrayed Fergus to a Thyatian who was seeking him for personal revenge, and from that day on

Fergus has always believed him to be a Thyatian spy. Now that he has the proofs of his mischievous dealings (or so he thinks), he has finally the opportunity to avenge himself rightfully.

Felmont 13, AC 1016: The Makings of a Hen-Pecked Husband.

Location: City of Corisa, Milenian Empire. HW

Description: Dionios and Sephone are seen at the Agora, heavily engaged in a shopping spree. It is noted that Sephone is leading Dionios around to the various venders, where he spends gratuitous amounts of money on her. Several of his friends comment on his recent manner. Dionios has of late devoted all of his time and moneys to his fiancée and seems to have none left for his friends. He no longer visits his old haunts and when friends drop by his estate, his servants make some vague excuse for him. He is even rarely present at the Acropolis to fulfill his advisory duties to the emperor. His bizarre behavior has been noted and his friends are becoming suspicious. (*See Kl. 6; Fy. 3, Fy. 24.*)

What This Means: Dionios has fallen head over heels in love. However, this love is not as it seems: Sephone has not depended upon her comely face and personality to win his heart, she has used magic. Sephone is a member of the Cult of Matera who used the powers that the order gives her to make the cock-sure Dionios a pawn of the cult. As an advisor and friend of the emperor, their influence over him is a big step. It offers them the insight into Adronius's inner circle, a place that even Myrina has had trouble infiltrating.

Sephone has made a tragic mistake by mixing her own self-interest with that of the order. Her manipulation of Dionios has been without any restraint, and this alteration of character has caused many to suspect that something is amiss. Though none will voice their suspicions to the emperor, several have begun to look into the matter.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs may be hired to subtly look into the matter, investigating Sephone present acquaintances and her past.

Felmont 13, AC 1016: Ceremonies Interrupted.

Location: Ruined City of Aasla, Kingdom of Haven, Floating Continent of Alphatia. HW

Description: Amid great fanfare, Queen Kryndylya officially recommissions Aasla's *skyship* base and announces that the city of Aasla shall be cleared of its rubble and rebuilt. As *skyships* fly over the ruins of the old capital, a lone figure comes forth and begins decrying the queen's speech as a farce. As he puts it, Aasla was not a victim of natural disasters, but was a sacrificial lamb to Flaemish aggression. He cites a history of lies, supported by the charred ruins of docks that look out upon a void instead of ocean. With *skyships*, troops, and mages converging upon him, the figure retreats back into the maze of ruins of the old city. Despite a thorough search, the person is not to be found. (*See Va. 4, Va. 26.*)

What This Means: Stereotypically impatient at the lack of results from his transplanted pawns, Alphaks has opted for a more direct approach, transporting one of His clerics to Alphatia to handle the matter personally. The cleric made his big announcement during the Aasla ceremony. Utilizing his spells, the cleric was able to avoid subsequent capture. For their part, those witnessing the ceremonies know the truth about Alphatia, as most are name level. Those not privy to the real history are obviously confused as the declarations do make some sense.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs at the ceremony may participate in the search for the orator. Though they will fail to capture him, they may find other nasty creatures amid the ruins, possibly aiding the cleric. If they know the true history of Alphatia, they may be hired to act as damage control. If they are ignorant of the truth, they might be swayed by the announcement. If they are approaching name level or have reached it since the sinking, the Alphantian authorities may divulge the truth to them.

Felmont 13, AC 1016: A Long Awaited Return.

Location: Temple of Greatrealm, The Dark Wood, Hulean Empire. SC

Description: The Master is back from his vendetta journey. Even though nobody knows if his vengeful drive has been successful, all Huleans with a decisional position are relieved to see that their spiritual and political leader is back. But the rejoices are short as the situation is critical. The Master knows it and he has a plan to turn the tide in his favor... (*See Fl. 7; Fy. 14, Fy. 15.*)

What This Means: As major strategic decisions need to be taken, the return of the Master is a blessing for the crumbling empire. It also means that more troops will be pulled out of Sind and that the territorial hemorrhage in the Converted Lands is one of the highest priority on the Master's agenda, since a considerable part of Hule resources come from Bulzan and Antasya.

Felmont 14, AC 1016: A New Home.

Location: Town of Østmark, Kingdom of Qeodhar, NACE. AS

Description: Harald and his people finally arrive in eastern Qeodhar, not far from the coast itself. Here, they come across a small town, straddling a tiny river leading out to sea. The town is named Østmark, and is populated entirely by Antalians. Before long, scouts intercept Harald's group, and soon the story of what happened in Tezparn, and other towns, becomes known. The refugees are quickly escorted into the town, and given food and shelter. (*See Ya. 26, Kl. 10; Fy. 8, Am. 18.*)

What This Means: Harald has led his kin to eastern Qeodhar, where the Antalians form the majority. Here, they will be accepted, but their tales will be received with anger. The people of Østmark have long known of discrimination, but the acts of exclusion suffered by the refugees are too much for them. In the coming weeks, word will spread among the various Antalian communities in the east and north of what is happening.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs accompanied Harald and his people to Østmark, and helped him in his travails, they should be considered friends by now. If this is so, then they will be welcomed warmly as well. It is in Østmark that the PCs can also learn some of the history of the Antalians, and of Ystmarhavn.

Felmont 14, AC 1016: Randel Representatives Arrive.

Location: Confederate Capital of Ionace, NACE. AS

Description: In front of the council hall, a group of Randel troops arrive via a *teleport* spell. The appearance draws an understandable amount of interest from Ionace inhabitants. Ignoring the growing crowds, the group strides into the hall and announces its arrival to the attendants. After awaiting other matters to be discussed the group is allowed to enter.

As they enter, several of the council representatives recognize members of the party as General Czekostrine, former head of Randel Intelligence, and General Cleodondra, one of the former Randel king's daughters; also noted are the accompanying warmages and elite fighter troops.

The council decides to postpone the hearing until Felmont 16 to allow everyone to observe the Alphatian holiday of Doggerel Days. The council arranges quarters for the Randel party. (*See Kl. 8, Kl. 16; Fe. 16, Fe. 28.*)

What This Means: Since receiving the message from the NACE Council, the Randel settlers have contemplated whom they would send. They choose Cleodondra as she is of the Randel royal family, as well as the former commanding officer of the king's guard. Czekostrine is legendary within the empire and draws much respect by being there. The council had expected Gverfrifar, a man they felt confident in dealing with but the arrival of Czekostrine and Cleodondra has thoroughly muddied their plan of action. Putting the matter off until after the holidays will give them time to rethink their strategies.

Felmont 14, AC 1016: Renegades!

Location: Southern reaches of the Finsterwald, Heldland, Heldannic Territories. NW

Description: While passing through the easternmost limits of the dark coastal forest known as the Finsterwald (“Dark Forest”), the leading edge of *Herr Wulf*’s host falls to a sudden rain of arrows. Before anyone can react, a series of great yells sounds from deep within the forest, as hundreds of men and women, many dressed in the armor of Heldannic Knights, surge into the traveling army.

Those closest to the attackers fall quickly before the whirling blades of the attackers, though the defending knights soon exact a deadly toll of their own as many begin casting spells at the enemy. *Herr Wulf* barks orders to those surrounding him, and is thus able to maintain some order in the midst of the fray. Before a concerted counterattack can be put into place, the attackers melt into the woods. After saying prayers for the fallen, the knights spend the next few hours gathering large stones and building a great cairn for their dead, after which they continue their march. (See Fe. 2, Fe. 8; Fe. 17, Fe. 20.)

What This Means: Not long after the Heldannic Knights lost their clerical powers, a high-ranking member of the order, named “Count” Helmut Jaschke, decided that, since Vanya had forsaken the order, it was time to found his own dominion. Accompanied by other fallen knights, Helmut went throughout the countryside to build up a following, promising protection in exchange for fealty. He has also hired a small band of elven mercenaries from the Foresthomes to the north, to act as archers. Only a few months later, Helmut’s Company of the Resurgent controlled almost all of the Finsterwald and the villages within it, as well as a considerable stretch of coastline. *Herr Wulf*’s forces are just now entering Helmut’s domain, the County of Wolkenberg, and they will be subject to attacks for a considerable time to come. In this battle alone, *Herr Wulf* lost 78 men, while the renegades lost only 24.

Third Week

Felmont 15, AC 1016: Western Defense League Meets.

Location: City of Selenica, Republic of Darokin. OW

Description: Chancellor Corwyn Mauntea and King Stefan Karameikos call for a meeting of the Western Defense League to discuss about the acts of the Alfheim Avengers. King Doriath of Alfheim and Princess Tanadaleyo of Aengmor are also invited to join the meeting (or at least to send a representative).

The league members, gathered in Selenica, decide to confirm their support to the peace process and outlaw the organization known as the Alfheim Avengers and all of its members. (See Fe. 13; Fy. 17.)

What This Means: This is the first official reaction to the Alfheim Avengers’ series of murders and kidnaps. From now on it will be harder for the Alfheim Avengers to go on with their terror campaign.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs may attend to the meeting as representatives of one nation, bodyguards of an important NPC, spies, cooks, thieves, correspondents of *Joshuan Gallidox Publishing*...

Felmont 15, AC 1016: Missing Countess.

Location: City of Glantri, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: A group of adventurers returns from a long trip with news of a long missing Glantrian noble. Recently returned from a trip to the Nightmare Dimension, the adventurers found a human woman in that realm. Driven insane by the horrors she encountered there, the group’s wizard was nonetheless able to determine via *ESP* that the woman was Lady Sinaria Verlien, Countess of High Sonden. Upon their return to Mystara, their first stop was Glantri City. There, they turn the woman into the care of city officials.

Lady Verlien is soon determined to be utterly insane and incapable of fulfilling her duties as countess. She is remanded into the care of the Lovecraft Asylum in Boldavia, for treatment.

What This Means: The countess kidnapped Prince Virayana’s youngest son, Rejladan, many years ago, in an attempt to gain information about the *Radiance*. He was eventually freed by his father and brother, and the angry

prince imprisoned Verlien in his castle in the Nightmare Dimension. There, over years, she was slowly driven to the brink of madness. When Prince Virayana was killed last year, his castle in the Nightmare Dimension collapsed, freeing the insane countess. Sometime thereafter, she was found and rescued by the adventurers.

The dominion will now be administered by the Verliens' eldest son and heir, Pieter Verlien. He had been taking care of the affairs of the county in what was presumed an extended leave of absence by his mother.

Felmont 15, AC 1016: Destroyers in Dismay.

Location: Sunken City of Bluenose, Sunken Arogansa, Sunken Alphatia, NACE. AS

Description: With their *submersible* hidden outside of the city, the Super Destroyers make the trek on foot. As they look down upon Bluenose, they are surprised to see a battle being waged. Moving in closer they make out that the gray-skinned undead are engaged in a pitched battle with other undead. The battle is going the way of the defender and the ghouls are forced back. With the battle over, the destroyers fall back towards their *submersible* and journey back to the construction site to report the sighting. (*See Kl. 26, Fe. 7; Fe. 18, Fe. 21.*)

What This Means: The ghouls have come together to conquer the city of Bluenose. This battle is not for land or riches, but is for flesh: the ghouls have devoured most of the carrion in the area and are seeking the abundant flesh of the undead in Bluenose.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs enlisted with the Super Destroyers will be involved in this event.

Felmont 15, AC 1016: The Dragonslayers Arrive in Norwold.

Location: City of Oceansend, Kingdom of Oceansend, Tranquil Coast. NW

Description: A group of four disembark in the town of Oceansend and start looking for a guide who can lead them safely to the Barony of Wyrmhart, in the very heart of the Wyrmsteeth Mountains. The head of the group, a Darokinian fighter by the name Kelter Zerben, finally manages to hire a local dwarf who accepts to guide them in exchange for a high fee. The party leaves the city the morning after, heading westwards into the wilderness. (*See Fe. 27, Fy. 6.*)

What This Means: This party is by no means a common group of adventurers. Their leader is Kelter Zerben, a retired Darokinian soldier who, after playing an important part in the Great War both as unwitting pawn of Hel and willful hero, has finally found his ultimate goal by converting to the faith of Bemarris the Dragonslayer, a Norwold Immortal Patron of war and wyrm-hunters. In the last six years he has quested along the world searching for the lost pieces of the *Dragonlord Suit*, a mighty artifact once donned by the first Dragonlord during the times of Blackmoor and later used in AC 500 to pacify the dragons of Norwold and Glantri and the humans living in those lands. On his way to become the new Dragonlord, three other powerful adventurers have joined Kelter Zerben during these years: the first is Ceowulf Bjorgensen, the old priest of Bemarris who converted Kelter and granted upon him the powers of paladinhood. The second one is a bald, red-bearded Alphatian mage by the name of Alminthrar, an expert of arcane draconic history and lore who saved Kelter from a dragon's fury when he went to Bellissaria to retrieve the fabled *Dragonshield*. The third member of the party is a raven-haired, attractive woman named Siren the Sorceress, who joined the group only a year ago when it was traveling through Wendar. Together they are the Dragonslayers, a band whose name is becoming more and more known in the Old World.

The party has now come to Norwold to find clues that will lead them to the last of the missing artifacts: the *Dragonhelm*. Kelter Zerben, nicknamed Dragonlord by his associates, now owns the sword *Wyrmslayer*, the *Dragonshield* and the *Armor of Draconic Power*. Only one item remains before he completes his quest. And once this is done, he will seriously begin to teach dragons their place in the world: subject to human beings, that is.

What the PCs Can Do: If they want, they can meet the Dragonslayers and accompany them during their adventures in Norwold.

Felmont 16, AC 1016: A Day of Threats and Compromises.

Location: Confederate Capital of Ionace, NACE. AS

Description: The council reconvenes from its recess to observe the Doggerel Days. Czekostrine and Representative Tymaltya begin stating the stances of each side. The Randel contingent remains adamant about their sovereignty and their claim upon the land. Czekostrine remarks that his people have fought and died for the empire and deserve their own kingdom. He stresses that his forces do not want to shed the blood of fellow Alphatians, but if it comes to it they will defend their claims.

The council recesses temporarily to debate the matter. When the sides are called back in before them, Ragmon chastises the Randel settlers for their threats. He does state that the council appreciates their want to remain sovereign and should the settlers be given their own domain they will have to appoint a ruler that the council approves of. Cleodondra agrees to the terms, but states that it will take a few days for their candidate to arrive. (*See Kl. 16, Fe. 14; Fe. 28, Fy. 9.*)

What This Means: During the council's adjournment to celebrate Doggerel Days the council has candidly met with each other and Czekostrine and discussed the settlers in Notrion. Therefore, the council has a general consensus that favors the Randel settlers. As they see it, Notrion is not using the lands and no one wants a costly war to subdue the settlers to Corydon's rule.

The council do have their reservations about the founding of a new Randel. As is, the settlements are little more than city-states bound by a common heritage and a common defense. This new kingdom will need a strong leader to unify the settlements; they also want a ruler that they can trust to be loyal to the NACE and not be a nuisance. They had thought that Czekostrine would nominate himself, Gverfrifar, or even Cleodondra as this new ruler, but to their surprise he does neither.

Felmont 17, AC 1016: Underocean Decision.

Location: Confederate Capital of Ionace, NACE. AS

Description: After days of arguing, and a recess to evaluate the Randel/Notrion situation, the Alphatian Council decides to send an emissary to Underocean with a request to send a representative to the council. They begin to construct suitable quarters to allow triton and other sea peoples to live comfortably. (*See Kl. 11, Kl. 24; Fy. 3, Fy. 19.*)

What This Means: The Alphatian Council has decided to discover more about the triton before committing to a course of action.

Felmont 17, AC 1016: Another Ambush.

Location: County of Wolkenberg, Heldland, Heldannic Territories. NW

Description: While pressing northwards through the self-styled County of Wolkenberg, *Herr Wulf*'s force is ambushed once again by Helmut's renegades. Many knights are cut down as hundreds of arrow shafts rain down, seemingly from nowhere. Barked orders echo throughout the clearing, and the knights draw close in a ring, raising their shields. The element of surprise being ended, the renegades then surge out of the woods to engage *Herr Wulf*'s knights.

The fighting is brutal, and screams echo across the glade among both sides. Suddenly, several blinding flashes of light erupt all over, as *Herr Wulf*'s knights respond to a signal to cast their *continual light* spells at their attackers. Many renegades, and a handful of elves, are blinded and cut down as they stumble about. Realizing that his edge has been seriously eroded, Helmut orders a retreat, and signals his elven mercenaries to cast *magic missile*, *hold person*, and *sleep* spells to cover the retreat. Knowing that pursuit would be dangerous, *Herr Wulf* forbids any of the knights from giving chase.

When the area is clear once more, over 200 men and women lie dead in the clearing, about 100 belonging to each group. Knowing that nothing can be done, *Herr Wulf* leads a prayer for all of the fallen, and orders his force to press on after tending to the wounded. (*See Fe. 8, Fe. 14; Fe. 20, Fy. 10.*)

What This Means: Helmut was surprised during the first battle when the knights began casting spells, as he did not know the order has regained Vanya's favor. He thought that they must be some clerics masquerading as knights, or some other trickery was involved. Now that he has seen them cast spells a second time, all thoughts among both his forces that the spellcasting was a fluke have ended. He will pray for spells himself over the next few days, but to no avail, for Vanya has deemed him unworthy for having abandoned Her. Realizing that his forces cannot stand up to the knights in a melee for very long, Helmut opts to harass the knights as they press north, but not to engage them directly in combat.

Felmont 18, AC 1016: A New Arrival.

Location: Seapearl Dome, Sea-Kingdom of Aquas, NACE. AS

Description: Citizens of Seapearl note the presence of a darkly-clad newcomer within. His physical features indicate that he is of Thothian heritage and several inhabitants recognize him as the magist Pidimigd, a known practitioner of the necromantic arts. Pidimigd's stay in the dome is short as he is later seen boarding a *submersible* that leaves soon after. (See Fe. 7, Fe. 15; Fe. 21, Fy. 2.)

What This Means: With its encounters with the lacedons [*aquatic ghouls. Ed.*] and the mysterious gray-skinned undead, the NACE has decided to send for professional help, and who better to call upon than a necromancer. Pidimigd had traveled here by sailing ship then was ferried down by a small *submersible*. A larger *submersible*, carrying supplies, transports him to the construction site where the necromancer is to research the undead, in particular the gray-skinned ones.

Felmont 18, AC 1016: Burrower News.

Location: Kingdom of Aegos, NACE, Alatian Islands. SD

Description: Commander Broderick hears rumors from the rare daring merchants that trade with Gait, that a fiendish beast has been wreaking havoc on the island for a few weeks. Some petty nobles have been attacked and killed, and contact with whole dominions has been lost. It is whispered that entire dominions have been overrun and the survivors devoured or enslaved.

Against Broderick's advice, Dromedon decides to go to Gait and confront the burrower. (See Kl. 19, Fe. 10; Fy. 9, Fy. 14.)

Felmont 18, AC 1016: Ships Arrive in Raven Scarp.

Location: City of Raven Scarp, Thyatian Hinterlands. DV

Description: The Thyatian cargo vessel that arrived in Kastelios last month pulls into the port of Raven Scarp today, amid cheering from the residents of this city, as well as the people on board. Also present are three small Kastelian warships, their weapons visibly unloaded. The colonists disembark and the trade goods are unloaded without incident. Some of the locals look upon the Kastelian ships with curiosity, which, after picking up some supplies of their own over the next few hours, turn around and head back to Kastelios. (See Fl. 18, Kl. 20; Fy. 4.)

What This Means: The Kastelians were true to the word, and they upheld their part of the Thyatis-Kastelios Accord by guiding the Thyatian vessel along the safest and quickest route to Raven Scarp. Aware of the fact that they were within the waters of a much larger nation, they ensured that their ships were as inoffensive as possible, and that they did not overstay their welcome. This is the first of several successful shipments to Raven Scarp over the course of the year, which will satisfy Thyatian needs, as well as enrich the Kastelians.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs were en route to Raven Scarp, this is a good way to get them there. Likewise, the PCs could be with the Kastelians, in which case they could be either serving on their ships as soldiers, or as observers, discretely obtaining as much information as possible about Raven Scarp.

Felmont 20, AC 1016: Battle over the Island City.

Location: City of Chitlacan, Azcan Empire. HW

Description: Early in the morning, Otziltipac's army reaches Chitlacan from the north, having not rested during the last sleep. They are well received and settle to rest, while officers and priests begin to recruit new warriors among sympathizers to the Way of Quetzalcoatl.

Late in the afternoon, Chupicuaro's army reaches the city from the south, and both armies are surprised to meet within the city. Battles immediately erupt, as both tired armies attack without fear. (*See Kl. 25, Fe. 1; Fe. 21, Fy. 12.*)

Felmont 20, AC 1016: Investigators Report to Eusebius.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Thyatian experts examining captured Twaelar equipment to try and learn more about them and underwater combat in general discovered some interesting differences between some of the captured equipment: not all of it seemed to be of the same make. They turned the enigma over to some mages and clerics for investigation. Divination established that the peculiar equipment was not of Twaelar manufacture. The matter was then turned over to Thyatian spies, who used more traditional methods to uncover the source of the items. They were found to be of Alphantian manufacture. Armed with this information they reported to Emperor Eusebius, expecting him to go public with it and expose the perfidy of the NACE. Eusebius simply gave the investigators his thanks and told them to keep their discovery to themselves. (*See Ya. 26, Fe. 3; Fy. 12.*)

What This Means: While some believe that exposing the truth will result in the international community responding in outrage and forcing the NACE to discontinue their arming of the Twaelar, Eusebius is not that naïve. He remembers that when biological weapons of mass destruction were used against the Thyatian civilian population, no one cried out in outrage. Today people like King Stefan are warm allies with the NACE, tacitly supporting Ramenhotep's actions. He knows that people untroubled by mass murder are unlikely to be concerned about a few arms shipments. Eusebius will keep the information to himself; he might find a way to make use of it later. In the meantime, he will take steps to cut off the arms shipments through more reliable means.

What the PCs Can Do: Acting through a string of intermediaries that cannot be traced back to him, Eusebius will hire "deniable assets" (adventurers) to disrupt the arms shipments to the Twaelar. These counterstrikes will take place in the southern Sea of Dawn over the following weeks and months.

Felmont 20, AC 1016: New Settlers Arrive.

Location: City of Raven Scarp, Thyatian Empire, Thyatian Hinterlands. DV

Description: New colonists and would-be dominion rulers arrive in the Hinterlands escorted by Kastelian ships. Among them is the rich nobleman Claudio Vitalis, former senator for the southern provinces, who has decided to found a barony where to spend the last years of his life together with his family. (*See Fe. 25, Am. 22.*)

What This Means: These are the first effects of the Thyatian-Kastelian Accord of AC 1016. Now that the route to the Jungle Coast is once more secured and rumors about rich and learned civilizations living in Davania have reached Thyatis, many people in the empire begin to look at the southern continent with new eyes and new hope. This is part of the first wave of settlers that will come to the Hinterlands in the months to come.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs can either act as bodyguards for one of the new barons or claim some part of the forest for themselves, making the first efforts to build a new dominion and possibly a stable dynasty.

Felmont 20, AC 1016: Treptow Surrenders.

Location: Town of Treptow, Heldland, Heldannic Territories. NW

Description: In the late afternoon, Treptow's town guard from atop the city walls spots a long column of Heldannic Knights. Realizing that the massed force is very large, the governor of Treptow decides to send a messenger to the knights, to ask about their business in the region. Within hours, the messenger returns, saying that the advancing knights are reasserting their control in the region, and they wish to retake Treptow.

The governor, realizing that resisting the knights would only end in disaster, decides to open Treptow's gates to the knights, on the condition that he is allowed to remain as governor of the town. Once the knights' agreement to this proposal is received, he then opens Treptow's gates, and stands by as the knights enter the town by nightfall. *Herr Wulf* arranges for 250 knights to be left behind as a garrison. (*See Fe. 14, Fe. 17; Fy. 10.*)

What This Means: Treptow is a strategic coastal port, not too far from Oceansend. Securing this fortified town ensures that the knights will have a secure landing point for ships in the future, should they be needed. Future efforts to reduce the County of Wolkenberg could also be made easier, since it could be attacked from two directions—from the north and the south. For his own part, the governor of Treptow only wants what is best for his people, and surrendering to the knights ensures that no one is killed, nothing gets destroyed, and he remains in power.

Felmont 21, AC 1016: Retreat from Chitlacan.

Location: City of Chitlacan, Azcan Empire. HW

Description: After having battled for the whole the period when the area of Chitlacan was under the shadow of the floating continent of Alphatia, the two armies break combat and retreat to rest, though skirmishes continue here and there in the streets of Chitlacan, especially around places of worship. After a few hours' rest, Chupicuaro's army leaves the city altogether and regroups on the road to Huitlaktima, before finally retreating further south. (*See Fe. 1, Fe. 20; Fy. 12, Am. 1.*)

What This Means: Though both forces were about equal in size, Otziltipac's army refilled its ranks, as the battle was raging, with volunteers from Chitlacan. Now outnumbered two to one, the generals of Chupicuaro's army opted for a retreat to Huitlaktima where they will be reinforced by the garrison and the numerous priests of Atzanteotl there, despite the fear of being sacrificed as soon as news of their retreat reaches the emperor's ears.

Felmont 21, AC 1016: Supply Convoy Assaulted.

Location: New Alphatian Sea over Sunken Arogansa, Sunken Alphatia, NACE. AS

Description: A grouping of six surface ships drop anchor over the construction site at Arogansa. The ships are tasked with replenishing the supplies of the construction crews at submerged Arogansa. As the crews off load their cargoes and hoist them down the seabed, pirates attack the ships. Of the six ships, two are lost before *submersibles* from below come to their aid and the pirates flee. The Alphatians take some satisfaction in that none of the ships were captured and that the sunken vessels' cargoes can be salvaged. Most importantly, the convoy's shipment of *water breathing potions* is secure. Still, the apparent ease in which the pirates attacked Alphatian ships over the construction site undermines the sense of security Alphatians have while sailing their seas. Hearing of this attack, the NACE Council vows to secure its sea-lanes. (*See Fe. 15, Fe. 18; Fy. 2, Fy. 10.*)

What This Means: These pirates are known as the Arogansa Corsairs. Unaware of the construction effort below, they took advantage of the anchored vessels and attacked. For their part the supply ships thought little of the approaching ships: well within Alphatian waters, they had little reason to fear an attack. In the process of off-loading, they could do little when attacked. Grappling onto two of the ships, their unsecured cargoes shifted making the vessels list badly until sea water poured into the open cargo doors, rapidly sinking the ships.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs can go pirate hunting. This will involve exploring small islands in the Alphatian Sea. Whether the PCs directly assault the pirates depends upon the experience level. More likely, the PCs will act as scouts to discover the pirate lairs and report them to the NACE. There is nothing stopping them from assisting naval forces in the assault.

Fourth Week

Felmont 22, AC 1016: Allied Army Sets Forth.

Location: City of Dengar, Kingdom of Rockhome. OW

Description: The allied forces of Rockhome and the Western Defense League set out from Dengar today. They head along the Denwarf Pass that connects the Stahl and Klintest Lowlands. Their objective: nothing less than the complete annihilation of any enemy goblinoids occupying Rockhome territory. (See Kl. 4, Fe. 7; Fy. 6, Am. 2.)

Felmont 22, AC 1016: Dikhoff and Sonnenfeld Declare War.

Location: Town of Serenity, Barony of Serenity, Tranquil Coast. NW

Description: A messenger of Baron Dikhoff arrives in Serenity bearing the declaration of war from both his lord and Baron Fergus of Sonnenfeld against Serenity and the Swordcoast for treachery. He then departs and returns to his dominion without being harmed. Lord Sixx is ready for battle, however, and he immediately sends his front line to take position along No Man's Land. He also sends news of the war to Baron Maximus I to enlist his alliance. (See Fe. 6, Fe. 13; Fe. 25, Fy. 8.)

What This Means: War has broken out again between the rival barons (the two had just signed a truce only six months before), just as Talitha planned, and right in time for the Heldannic Knights' move on Oceansend. Free Norwold is now on the verge of chaos, and more is yet to come.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs can choose which side they want to fight along. They could even try to unravel the truth behind this war, even though this will be a little more difficult to perform, since there are not many clues left pointing to the real schemer.

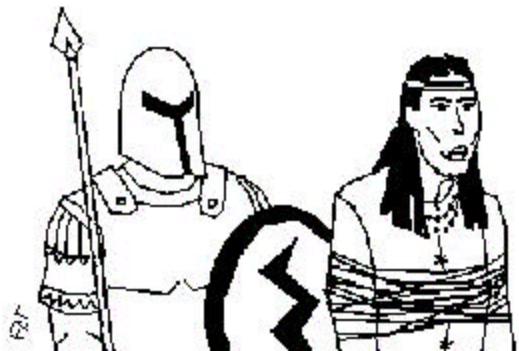
Felmont 22, AC 1016: An Interesting Captive.

Location: Agrisa Fort, Milenian Empire. HW

Description: Milenian griffon riders arrive at Agrisa Fort. Slung over the back of one of their mounts is a bound and gagged female. They tell the commanding officer, General Zarkrios, that they had been engaged with a large war party of female warriors far to the south. Undaunted by their tale, Zarkrios orders the female captive freed of her gratuitous bonds. For his gentlemanly gesture, he is rewarded with a deep gash in his ribs as the captive quickly grasps a dagger from a guard's side. Despite his wound, Zarkrios orders his troops to take the woman alive. After several of their fellows arrive as reinforcements, the troops manage to subdue the warrioress. Learning from his folly, the general orders her bound and gagged and safely locked away. He also dispatches one of the riders to inform the emperor of this discovery. (See Fy. 10, Am. 5.)

What This Means: The group of griffon riders were off on a long-range reconnaissance mission, when they came across a party of armed women. Seeing the opportunity to have a little fun and partake in capturing a few slaves, they swept down upon the women. Their quarry turned out to be competent warriors, holding off the riders' attack. With themselves taking casualties, the riders broke off the attack with but one trophy for their efforts.

Since that encounter, the riders have spurred their mounts to the nearest Milenian military base, Agrisa Fort. Like themselves, the fort commander underestimated the women warriors and did a very gentlemanly act. He sends a messenger to Corisa to inform the empire of these previously unknown warrioresses.



Felmont 23, AC 1016: The Tsar Attacks, Texeiras Is Concerned.

Location: City of Richland, Eastern Yalu Bay. SC

Description: 8,000 Zuyevan infantry supported by 2,000 marines from the Zuyevan Southern Fleet attack and subdue Richland. Texeiras becomes concerned with the Zuyevan presence in the Yalu Bay and begins to harass the inexperienced Zuyevan fleet with piratical activities.

What This Means: Zuyevo has been building its power in the Yalu Bay area since the begin of the century. At first, the expansion has been seen by the neighboring countries as benevolent and profiting as the main opponents of the Zuyevan were the humanoids of the Yalu Steppes. But, now they discover that Andrei is even more power-hungry and dangerous than the humanoids were. Suspicion also comes down on the Renardois since they are in a formal alliance with the *tsar*.

Felmont 24, AC 1016: Ericall's Call.

Location: City of Alpha, Kingdom of Alpha, NACE, Southern Bay Marches. NW

Description: After hearing the news of the knights marching northwards and bent on reconquering the land they lost last year, King Ericall consulted with his wisest counselors, Madiera the Magist, Lord Magistrate Blind Wooster, and General Ney, to counter the knights' moves before it is too late. After much debating, King Ericall finally agrees on calling to Alpha all the Norwold rulers to discuss an old project he has been cherishing in the past years: the formation of a military defensive league strong enough to prevent further conquest attempts by the Heldannic Knights. Ericall sends Knights of Chitine to the four corners of Norwold to summon the Norwold lords for the 7th of Fyrmont to his palace. (*See Fl. 19, Fe. 20; Fe. 26, Fy. 1.*)

What This Means: Ericall and his entourage realize the danger that the Heldannic Knights pose and are trying to prevent another major war in Norwold by displaying their strength and unity to the knights before it's too late. However, they moved indeed a bit too late.

Though Ericall also sends a request for help to the NACE, it has done little so far to help him face the knights, or other threats, so he has no reason to believe it will be different this time. With the Alphatian forces already stretched far and wide, he is probably right.

Felmont 24, AC 1016: The Race for Jandak.

Location: Kingdom of Huyule, Hulean Empire. SC

Description: Unaware of the Master's return, Rehmin and Ustalam continue to speed up their progression toward Hule's metropolis. They carefully turn around the major cities on their way (Cirkara, Seyvan) as neither of them wants to be distanced by his competitors, for their common secret objective lies in the ancient city. Unexpectedly, they don't stumble on much resistance from the Huleans. (*See Ya. 23, Ya. 25; Fy. 14, Fy. 15.*)

What This Means: The followers of Rehmin and Ustalam slowly become aware that the destruction of the Hulean Empire isn't the primary goal of their leaders, but, since they are deep in the enemy's territory and since promises of incredible riches in Jandak are made by both leaders, they are able to keep their ranks tightly knitted. It also means that the Master is well-aware of the two's ultimate goal and that he is not afraid of a permanent occupation force in the center of his empire. Finally, the fact that they are able to progress so easily in Hulean territory hides the regrouping of the Hulean armies at their rear (where the Dvinzinians have left them, east of them, where the reinforcements from Sind are regrouping and in front of them, most of the Hulean forces still on the empire's territory have been grouped in Khuur).

Felmont 25, AC 1016: Lord Vitalis Disappears in the Jungle.

Location: City of Raven Scarp, Thyatian Empire, Thyatian Hinterlands. DV

Description: After checking out the assigned lands, dealing with the bureaucrats of the Ministry for Colonization and preparing the expedition to the site of his barony, Lord Vitalis sets out for his dominion. He is accompanied by some native carriers and an escort made of legionnaires and hired mercenaries: his dominion lies in the western part of the Jackal tribal lands. Contacts with Baron Vitalis and his entourage are lost soon after their departure. (*See Fe. 20; Am. 22, Sv. 16.*)

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs can either act as mercenaries hired by Vitalis, or if the DM permits it, one of them could be used as the new baron.

Felmont 25, AC 1016: Maximus Enters the Fray.

Location: Town of Serenity, Barony of Serenity, Tranquil Coast. NW

Description: An ambassador of Lord Maximus I arrives in Serenity bearing the answer of his master to Lord Sixx's alliance. The Baron of the Swordcoast is more than willing to lend Sixx a hand and part of his troops to fight what he calls "the treacherous Heldannic fools." A contingent of cavalrymen has come along the ambassador to show Baron Sixx his neighbor's trustworthiness. (*See Fe. 13, Fe. 22; Fy. 8.*)

What This Means: Baron Maximus has his own plans, of course. He is trying to make the war last as long as possible to deplete his neighbors' strengths, so that he will be able to conquer them easily once they run out of troops and resources. He dreams of establishing his own kingdom in the area and to ally himself with the Thyatian Empire should the Heldannic Knights become a threatening force.

Felmont 26, AC 1016: Farmers Assaulted Again.

Location: Outpost of Vanya's Rest, Heldannic Territories, Aryptian Coast. DV

Description: Reminiscent of the first raid on Felmont 8, the Meghaddara raiders launch an assault on the farmers around Vanya's Rest. The raiders assault several farms, setting the residences and fields aflame. Thanks to the knights being vigil, the actual damage is minimal as the fires are quickly contained. However, the farmers are anxious and unnerved. Heinz Kronenburg, Castellan of Vanya's Rest, orders a group of knights to pursue and eliminate the raiders. (*See Fe. 12; Fe. 28, Fy. 6.*)

What This Means: The raid is a continuation of the Meghaddara attempts at weakening the knights by attacking their agricultural base. The raiders were to burn out the farms and destroy the crops in the fields. This time, the knights were more prepared for an attack and managed to mobilize and meet the raiders before too much material damage was done. As the knights fought the fires, the raiders escaped back into the hills.

Despite the limited damage, the farmers are hesitant to return to their fields. With harvest fast approaching, Kronenburg realizes that action must be taken. The castellan orders an expedition to set off and hunt down the raiders, either destroying them or keeping them busy away from Vanya's Rest.

The expedition is composed of 10 heavy cavalry (C3), 10 medium cavalry (F2), and 30 light infantry (F1). Leading the expedition is *Herr* Dietrich, a young but promising knight within the order. To aid his expedition, *Herr* Dietrich has secured the skills of the noted huntsman, Dieter von Kleindorf; originally from the Heldannic Territories, he moved down to Davania some years back. He is familiar with much of the area, his strong points are as a tracker and surviving in the wilderness.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs in Vanya's Rest can be called upon join this band. Given the circumstances, only one or two PCs will be allowed to join the expedition—the majority of the PCs will be needed to bolster the defenses of Vanya's Rest and the surrounding farms.

If the PCs join, Dieter should be presented as a highly skilled ranger/forester. The DM should also set things up such that the PCs not only respect him, but also that they be friendly with him—he is also a quite carefree and personable fellow, so this should not be difficult. He should clash with the discipline of the knights, so unless the PCs themselves are devout knights, they should find the hunter a welcome addition at camp.

Felmont 26, AC 1016: Norwold Elves Meet.

Location: Town of Erones, Kingdom of Siegeria, Western Bay Marches. NW

Description: Under the impulsion of the Shiye-Lawr who left Alphatia during the Great War and settled in Norwold, the various leaders of the Norwold elves gather in the neutral ground of Siegeria.

Though they were against the Great War, the Shiye-Lawr are still loyal to the Alphatian Empire and urge their brethren to work with King Ericall of Alpha and the NACE in order to protect their land from the dangers that threaten Norwold. The representative of the free Foresthomes virulently refuses to submit to the humans' rule, especially to imperialistic ones like the Alphatians. Both Zoltan the White and Elarianthas Blackblade refuse to go that way (despite Baron Quillan's more open attitude), advocating for an elf-only alliance instead, though they still disagree on the way to achieve it.

When the discussion breaks, the Shiye-Lawr have failed to gather the help of the other Shiye clans of Norwold, and return to Ericall without the additional support they hoped for. (*See Va. 14, Fe. 24; Fy. 8, Fy. 13.*)

What This Means: There is too much disagreement between the various factions at this point for them to cooperation except under the most dire circumstances, let alone unite. The free-spirited Shiye are too independent-minded and unwilling to surrender their freedom, while Zoltan and Elarianthas are too busy with their own projects to acknowledge the need for cooperation with the humans.

Felmont 27: Escape from Wyrmhart.

Location: Barony of Wyrmhart, Wyrmsteeth Mountains. NW

Description: After arriving in the secluded Barony of Wyrmhart, the Dragonslayers (a band of adventurers led by Kelter Zerben, the next would-be Dragonlord) have been hosts of Baroness Maximilian, whom they revealed to be on a quest regarding dragons. Leaving their motives vague, they were able to get her sympathy and trust and to peruse her library. There they found out that the *Dragonhelm* was indeed mentioned in many tales of the northern lands, last said to be in possession of a cruel ruby dragon that lived near Leeha.

During the researches, Siren manages to sneak into Lady Maximilian's private chambers and look at some of her scrolls. There she finds evidences that one of the current northern rulers, Baron Quentin Jax, is in fact the same ruby dragon they are looking for. Apparently he is doing business with the baroness, who also trades with and serves other draconic earls of the Wyrmsteeth.

The group decides to leave the barony before the lady becomes aware of their true goals, but are met by a night patrol outside the gates. Battle follows and under the wizards' spells, one of the guards turns into a red dragon and charges the party. After disposing of the beast and his comrades, the Dragonslayers flee northwards into the mountains. (*See Fe. 15; Fy. 6, Fy. 20.*)

What This Means: Though *invisible*, the party was discovered while leaving Castle Maximilian and attacked by a red dragon, which somehow proves that the allegations against the baroness and the northern baron are true. The Dragonslayers are now determined to confront and expose the impostor, claiming back the lost artifact in his possession.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are with the party, they can participate the researches trying not to arouse suspicions and can try to sneak out of the castle without being spotted.

Felmont 28, AC 1016: Ships Sighted.

Location: Kingdom of Notrion, NACE, Bellissaria. AS

Description: A Notrion naval vessel reports sighting a group of twenty ships sailing west along the coast. Closer examination reveals that the ships fly the flags of the Alphatian Empire and the Kingdom of Randel. The Notrion ship follows the ships from a safe distance. Shortly after dusk, the Notrion vessel loses track of the flotilla. (*See Fe. 14, Fe. 16; Fy. 9, Fy. 11.*)

What This Means: These ships are the remnants of Verothrics's battle group. They are sailing west to the mouth of the Lagrius River; there, they will sail upriver and into Lake Lagrius. Their ultimate destination is joining their comrades in Notrion. In all there are some 3,500 personnel onboard, almost exclusively Randel nationals.

Felmont 28, AC 1016: Knights Pick Up the Trail.

Location: A day's ride from Outpost of Vanya's Rest, Aryptian Coast. DV

Description: The expedition under *Herr* Dietrich has discovered a fresh trail left by the raiders. They follow the trail. (*See Fe. 12, Fe. 26; Fy. 6, Fy. 27.*)

What This Means: Thanks to the forester's skills of Dieter von Kleindorf, the knights have uncovered the trail left by the Meghaddara raiders. This is the beginning of their attempts to engage and destroy the raiders.

Felmont 28, AC 1016: Alphatians Snubbed.

Location: City of Argandir, Lands of the Icevale. HW

Description: In the skies over Argandir, an Alphatian *skyship* appears and slowly descends upon the elven city. A group of Alphatians, including several elves, disembarks and approaches the gathering masses of elves. They ask to meet with the elves' leaders. After some deliberations, the Alphatians are brought before King Rollodir and Queen Bergeya.

The Alphatians propose establishing relations between their people and the Icevale. As the Alphatian delegate goes into the details, the elven monarchs stun the Alphatians by interrupting their proposals and turning down any alliances. They do add that they just see the situation as being too premature for anything beyond friendly interaction. Bergeya tells them that her people would not be opposed to their peoples visiting the lands of the other. After a few hours of conversation, the Alphatians depart and set course back to Alphatia. (*See Fl. 8.*)

What This Means: This move is an attempt by Eriadna to expand Alphatia's influence and relations with the peoples of the Hollow World. The Icevale turn down the proposal, as they know nothing about these people. They have heard rumors from the Neathar and seen the flights of flying boats coming from the newly spotted flying continent. Plus, the carefree Icevale do not want to be restricted by commitments to anyone, especially an empire. The tales that they have heard of empires such as Nithia and Milenia give them the impression that empires are constrictive to a person's personal freedom. Until the Icevale can feel more comfortable about these mysterious newcomers, they will not even speak of alliances and the like.

What the PCs Can Do: Alphatian PCs of good character may be sent to the Icevale to reside among them, to act as examples of Alphatia and learn about these elves. Likewise, Icevale PCs may be sent to Alphatia or Neatharum to see what the Alphatians are all about.

Topic of the Month: The Battle of Richland, a Tactical Analysis

[Battlefield correspondent: Jacques Montpellier. Ed.]

Forces Involved

Zuyево: 9,800 troops. Commander: Prince Yuri Brusilov.

The 3rd and 9th Imperial Shock Troop Battalions (1,500).

The 7th Imperial Fleet (1,800).

The 1st Imperial Hussars (2,500).

The 11th Imperial Zuyevan Infantry Division (4,000).

Richland: 3,400 troops. Commander: Sheriff EJ Wilson.

Richland City Guard (500).

Richland Militia (1,500).

Cimarron Colonial Marines (500).

Iron Claw Defenders [*an elite mercenary unit. Ed.*] (300).

Texeiran Privateers (600).

Background

In the last 20 years or so, Richland has grown from a small Cimarron trading colony to a large city of 12,000 people, administering a dominion of 38,000 souls. The catalyst for this extraordinary growth has been the opening of new trade routes from Richland to the Empire of Zuyево, which had finally managed to establish itself on the Yalu Bay in AC 998 with the founding of the port of Kishinev. Most of the trade is conducted by the LB Trading Company of Cimarron and its Texeiran allies who protect the shipments of trade goods (mainly furs and gold) to the Savage Coast. Given the Texeiran presence at Porto Maldição and Porto Escorpião, they have been able to choke Yalu Bay in their iron grip denying passage to all other trade vessels in an attempt to corner the trading routes with the Empire of Zuyево and also the Yezchamenid Empire. This is where the interests of the *Royaume de Renardie* intervene. For it is we who established the first trade contacts with the mighty Zuyevan Empire. I, Jacques Montpellier, military attaché to Renardie's diplomatic mission in Kishinev have been instrumental in convincing the Zuyevans that Renardie would be a far better carrier of their trade. Unlike the greedy Texeirans we would only levy a moderate sum to export Zuyево's produce to the wider world. The first step in restoring Renardois dominance of the Yalu Bay trade routes would be to expunge the Cimarron and Texeiran presence from Richland and then hopefully from the two Texeiran ports that have a chokehold on the bay.

Timeline [*from the Diary of Monsieur Montpellier, military attaché to the Renardois diplomatic mission at Kishinev, Kishinev Oblast, Empire of Zuyево. Ed.*]

Felmont 1, AC 1016: Over winter, the Zuyevan authorities have been putting together an expeditionary force with which to conquer the LB Trading Company port of Richland. Today the Zuyevan expeditionary force sets off for Richland from the town of Zablin in the occupied province of Drazde. The land force comprises 4,000 infantry and 2,500 cavalry with a large supply train, and is closely shadowed by the 3,300 strong naval forces on its journey. The expedition is led by Prince Brusilov, renowned as one of the better tacticians in the Zuyevan military and a veteran commander of the Bylot Hills actions against Hule of AC 1012-1013. No military resistance from Richland is expected for at least two weeks, although we suspect that the Texeirans may at least know of our movements—a Texeiran spy-ring was rooted out in Kishinev last month, but I suspect that a few spies may still be active.

Felmont 18, AC 1016: The expeditionary force has been making good time along the seaboard known as the Grass Coast for more than two weeks now. This morning, the Zuyevan vanguard came across the first outlying settlement that is claimed by Richland. A small hamlet of no more than a handful of farms, the Zuyevans surrounded the area as

if it might hold an enemy army. Within minutes they had set fire to all the buildings they could find looting what they could before the farms were completely razed. I found this undisciplined activity quite disturbing, and it appeared to me that the Zuyevan officers were even condoning the wanton destruction. Prince Brusilov's aide de camp, Viscount Machetov, explained that the troops were merely a little overzealous and that he would convey my concerns to the prince and would ensure that such activity did not occur again.

Felmont 19, AC 1016: Our naval escort left us at dawn to make an end run around Green Cape and blockade Richland before the army arrives there in two days or so. For the remainder of the day the Zuyevan army continued along the coast toward Richland. The rough grasslands were quickly giving way to rolling pasture land. I noted that the troops seemed a bit more restrained today and no farms were ransacked.

Felmont 20, AC 1016: In the early morning the expeditionary force arrived near the village of Wainford which is located on the western bank of the Great Northway River. The Richland garrison at Wainford we knew would be jealously guarding the ford over the river that broached the western bank only 3 miles north of Richland. In fact we could see that town in the distance from our position perched on a low ridge outside of Wainford. From our vantage point we could see frenzied activity in Wainford, as Richland troops scurried about hastily putting together last minute defenses—clearly they had not had as much warning of our approach as I had previously thought they might.

Prince Brusilov ordered elements of the 1st Imperial Hussars to test the defenses of the village. Soon the elite Zuyevan cavalry, about 300 of them in all, charged down from our position to the outskirts of Wainford. They penetrated deep into the village before skirmishing with some Richland city guards and some rural militia. However, it was soon apparent that the tide of battle was turning against the hussars, and they began to flee headlong from the village. At first I was shocked, surely the elite mounted troops of Zuyevan could take on a bunch of farmers and lazy colonial troops. But then I realized the full brilliance of Prince Brusilov's strategy. As the hussars fled the skirmish, the undisciplined Richland militia pursued them away from the safety of the village. Seven hundred hussars sprang from their hiding places behind the ridge outflanking and then enveloping the militia. The slaughter was mercifully short. That night I was in Prince Brusilov's new headquarters in Wainford when the final casualty lists were brought in from the day's fighting. Twenty-three hussars were dead along with a further 46 wounded, while the bodies of almost 300 militia and 75 Richland city guards were counted. The remainder of the Richland troops had fled the village and had regrouped on the other side of the ford with reinforcements from Richland. There was going to be a mighty battle tomorrow.

Felmont 21, AC1016: Battle of Richland Harbor. This morning I awoke expecting Brusilov to be preparing to attack the ford where more than 1,800 Richland troops had drawn up. Instead Machetov explained that the Zuyevan commander was awaiting developments at sea first. Zuyevan forward scouts had reported the approach of 12 Texeiran warships toward Richland where the 7th Fleet and 3rd and 9th Shock Troops had set up a blockade of Richland harbor. Sure enough, I could soon spot the masts of the Texeiran ships on the horizon. I rode with Machetov and a small cavalry detachment to the mouth of the Great Northway River, a little more than 2 miles south of Wainford from where we could better view the unfolding battle. The Zuyevan 7th Fleet was a much larger formation of ships however, including 10 galleys, 24 sailed warships, and the mighty flagship of Admiral Nikolaev which was called the *Noit Angelsk*—I think it loosely translates as the Dark Angel. The 7th Fleet adopted a standard battle pattern with the galleys moving up to ramming speed in the middle, and the warships turning broadside to unleash a hail of ballista bolts and catapult stones.

The Texeiran warships predictably turned broadside themselves which seemed surprisingly stupid as it would make them perfect targets for the charging galleys. However, soon huge puffs of smoke could be seen rising from the broadsides of the Texeiran warships. This was soon followed by a rumble-like thunder that rolled across the waters to our position. To our surprise, the bow of the lead Zuyevan galley exploded in a cloud of splinters, and the ship skewed sideways, broke up and sunk. The same fate befell three of the other galleys. It appeared from our distant position that the Texeiran ships were firing some kind of solid round projectiles on flat trajectories straight into the Zuyevan ships. As each projectile fired a large puff of smoke appeared from the location of the shot. We were mystified as to what this weapon could be—the only thing I could think that it looked like was a wheellock pistol firing, but on a much larger scale... surely not!

As it appeared that all was lost for the Zuyevan fleet, with five ships sunk, three listing badly and at least four others on fire, one of the Texeiran ships exploded in the most magnificent fashion—as if the whole ship was full of *smoke powder* to which someone had carelessly applied a lighted match. At this, the other Texeiran ships seemed to

take fright, and they quickly let out their sails to flee the battle. Admiral Nikolaev saw his opportunity and ordered the remaining galleys to ram the fleeing ships. Two were sunk in this fashion, before they could get fully under sail. The Dark Angel itself tangled with one of the fleeing ships, even from our vantage point we could see Zuyevan marines leaping onto the deck of the Texeiran ship. After ten minutes of fierce fighting on the deck of the ship, the Zuyevan naval flag was hoisted from the Texeiran warship's stern—indicating that she had been captured. Now we would find out what this secret Texeiran weapon was all about!

The eight remaining Texeiran ships soon fled southeast from Richland as the 7th Fleet limped back to its position at the blockade. Word came from Admiral Nikolaev that he was sending some ships on a long-range patrol to make sure that he had plenty forewarning of any future Texeiran attack. However, I suspected that the Texeirans had conceded Richland, confident they could still control naval access to the Yalu Bay from their colonies on the Yalu Strait. In the meantime Admiral Nikolaev requested that Prince Brusilov please hurry up and take Richland, so that he could park his damaged vessels in dry-dock.

Even though it was late afternoon, Brusilov, realizing that a number of Zuyevan ships would be lost from the damage sustained in the battle if they remained at sea, ordered a full frontal assault by the 11th Division on the ford. In typical Zuyevan fashion, Brusilov was clearly happy to sacrifice his infantry in a bloody assault of the highly defensible Richlandian position. The unfortunate nature of this decision soon became apparent as the superiority that the 11th had in numbers was eliminated by channeling the troops over the narrow ford. Wave after wave of infantry rushed across the ford, leaping out of the knee-deep water only to be impaled on the pikes and swords of the Richland troops. Even though the light was fading, it was apparent that the river was turning red from the blood of all the soldiers cut down on the ford. Eventually as night fell, Brusilov conceded defeat and withdrew the shattered remnants of the 11th Division from the bloodbath. Casualties were high, but the true number would not be known until the morning.

Felmont 22, AC 1016: *Impasse.* Clerics of the Zuyevan Orthodox Church did their best for the wounded and dying that were recovered from yesterday's morass. Machetov estimated the Zuyevan losses at 1,400 killed or drowned, and perhaps 350 wounded. It was difficult to tell how many of the Richland forces had been cut down, but from our position in Wainford it was evident that they have suffered heavily as well. The rest of the day was spent tending to the injured. In Richland harbor, two of the badly damaged warships of the Zuyevan squadron gave up their fight to stay afloat and sank.

Felmont 23, AC 1016: *The Battle of Richland.* Today at dawn, from our observation posts, word came that the Richlanders had strengthened their positions at the ford—digging in to defensive positions on the eastern bank of the Great Northway River and supported by reinforcements sent from Richland. In all, Zuyevan spotters estimated that there were perhaps 1,200 Richland troops entrenched on the other side of the ford. Now, Brusilov put Plan B into effect. The artillery on the decks of the ships of the 7th Fleet began bombarding Richland to keep the defenders' heads down, so that by the time they realized what the Zuyevans were doing it would be far too late. The two battalions of shock troops that had been waiting offshore in their galleys surged forward landing just north of Richland, in between the town and the ford. Leaving their galleys protected by a small cadre of troops, they launched themselves at the unprepared rear of the Richlandian defenses at the ford. As the Richlanders turned to face this new menace the 1st Imperial Hussars charged across the ford catching the Richlanders in a pincer movement. The ensuing battle was fierce as the Richlanders tried to defend themselves from this onslaught, but they were never going to win. While the Richlanders fought valiantly, and the Iron Claw Defenders in particular, within an hour they had surrendered. Over 700 troops were captured. The way to Richland was now open wide.

Felmont 28, AC 1016: The town of Richland is a reasonably defensible fortress, ringed as it is by six foot thick stone walls that rise to a height of thirty feet. However, from the sea it is not well defended—on the insistence of the Texeirans who wanted to make sure that the Richlanders didn't get any ideas about trying to usurp Texeiran dominance of the region. Another problem for Richland is that it does not have anywhere near an adequate water supply within the walls of the city to sustain the garrison and the population. This is more a consequence of the quick growth of the city than anything else—but now it was clearly a significant problem given that the city had been surrounded on all sides for five days.

Seeing that the Texeirans had abandoned the Richland garrison, Sheriff EJ Wilson, the Cimarron commander of Richland decided to parley with the Zuyevans. His envoy arrived in our camp this morning and negotiated with Brusilov for more than an hour before terms were finally agreed to. The Cimarrons would surrender the city to

Zuyevo in return for free passage for the sheriff and his staff on a ship. So, in the early afternoon, the Zuyevan forces entered the town triumphantly and the Cimarron governors left on a merchant ship tied up in the harbor.

While Zuyevan losses were relatively heavy that did not seem to bother Prince Brusilov. As Machetov explained to me the losses were mainly amongst the sailors of the fleet and the infantry—and they were mainly made up of serf-soldiers and there were plenty more where they came from. This best sums up the Zuyevan military machine I think. The country is large, the population is large, the army is large... and its officers (mostly of the nation's nobility) are happy to sacrifice troops for territorial gains. This is the Empire of Zuyevo's first foray this far south, but I think that they might pose a significant threat to the Savage Coast in coming years. Although, this new weapon of the Texeirans was mystifying—even now it was being examined by the Zuyevan armorers. Perhaps this weapon will help to tip the balance of the military equation in Texeiras's favor. Either way, I can see the Yalu Bay region descending into bloody conflict in the near future.

EVENTS: FYRMONT

First Week

Fyrmont 1, AC 1016: Even Shamans Make Mistakes.

Location: City of the Stars, Shadow Elves' Territories. OW

Description: The shamans put a “low level” *soul crystal* in the special niche of the *Chamber of the Spheres*, in order to produce a *radiant soul crystal*, but it soon shatters like broken glass. (*See Ya. 18.*)

What This Means: Only “high level” *soul crystals* can be strengthened using the *Chambers of the Spheres*, all other crystals are too weak to undergo the treatment.

News of this accident is restricted to the radiant shaman and her most trusted advisors. Should the younger shamans (or worse, the shadowelf population) learn about it, there would be long discussions about the true nature of *soul crystals*.

Fyrmont 1, AC 1016: The Crones' Prophecy.

Location: Crones of Crystykk's Abode, Western Bay Marches. NW

Description: In desperate need to know how to act for the behalf of Norwold, Ericall decides to consult the mysterious seers known as the Crones of Crystykk, who dwell in a secluded mountain cave nearby the Duchy of Chitine (northwest of Leeha). Accompanied by Ney (Ericall's general and Duke of Chitine) and Madiera (Ericall's magist, who *teleports* the group there), they enter the old seers' abode and confront them. After proving their trustworthiness and bravery, Ericall asks for their help to divine out what will happen to Norwold. The three crones answer with a sibylline prophecy:

“Four plagues on Norwold will descend,
Before the new year be close at hand.
First the sky will fall deadly near,
When wings of doom will teach you fear.
Then the traitor will play his tricks,
Thrusting you in the bleakest of Pits.
For third the knights whose swords are swift,
Will make you taste utter defeat.
Last will come the red disease,
Endlessly floating across the seas.
And misery shall then have thee,
Until the black skull's fire
By gallant hands unlit will be.” (*See Fe. 24; Am. 1, Am. 2.*)

What This Means: The Crones of Crystykk have just prophesied the future of Norwold, albeit in a rather obscure way; this is certainly not what Ericall had hoped for, but alas he cannot get anything better from the three ageless sisters.



Fyrmont 2, AC 1016: Breakthrough in Alchemos.

Location: City of Alchemos, Kingdom of Meriander, NACE, Bellissaria. AS

Description: The magist Drulivia, former queen of Meriander, announces the development of a new liquid for use in *submersible* construction. The fluid is said to be able to insure a suitable watertight seal and is dubbed *Drulivia's putty*. (See Fe. 18, Fe. 21; Fy. 10, Am. 5.)

What This Means: The fluid is a big breakthrough for Drulivia and the NACE. The material's development was started years ago by the magist Bordicar for use in his *submersible* designs. Since her abdication in AC 1013, Drulivia has been working on its completion and after years of sporadic research, she has finished it. She then contacted Xerathis, who is leading the effort to finish *The Torpin*. The thick fluid is to act as a sealant for hatches and vision ports: there are already existing rubbery materials for this, however they tend to leak at extreme depths and through heavy use. This new sealant has the advantage of being easy to apply in its liquid form, then cures into a semi-hard rubbery mass. Its fluid state at application insures uniform coverage and strength, and lessens the chances of leaks and is thus a great improvement over current usage of treated skins and raw rubber.

Fyrmont 3, AC 1016: Horrors from the World Mountain.

Location: Plain of Grass, Ethengar Khanates. OW

Description: Undead attacks have been on the rise in regions surrounding the World Mountain. Notably, on this day, the Sliktor orcs, long since thought to have died out, return. They have succumbed to the horrors of the World Mountain and been transformed into zombies and ghouls. They pour out onto the Plain of Grass and attack helpless Ethengars. (See Fl. 11.)

What This Means: The Evil Spirits of the Spirit World are starting to become more active, now that one of their own (in the body of Manghai) has gained power in the Prime Plane.

Fyrmont 3, AC 1016: Emissaries Reach Underocean.

Location: Town of New Smaar, Sea-Kingdom of Underocean. AS

Description: The Alphatian emissaries reach New Smaar and present their request. After a brief discussion with his advisors, King Juliest chooses Arantria, an Aquarendi, and several powerful triton cleric/mages as representatives. (See Kl. 24, Fe. 17; Fy. 19, Am. 4.)

What This Means: Arantria was chosen because of her status as a former council member and her ability to survive out of water. The cleric/mages were sent to show the Alphatians that the tritons have powerful spellcasters, in an attempt to impress the Alphatians with their command of both clerical and magical powers.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs, depending on their power level, could replace any of the delegates or be sent to guard them.

Fyrmont 3, AC 1016: Uldis Ponders His Nation's Future.

Location: Town of Gaudavpils, Kingdom of Littonia, Arctic Plains. NW

Description: King Uldis VI of Littonia summons his advisors to discuss various possibilities for his kingdom's future. News of events in the Old World has reached Littonia, through rumors and the *Mystaran Almanac*, and he realizes that his nation could benefit greatly if he were to somehow increase Littonia's links with the outside world. He raises the possibility of joining the New Alphatian Confederate Empire, hoping that joining it would bring investment and magical resources to Littonia. His advisors quickly dissuade him from doing so, arguing that there are many disparities in the NACE, with some regions being largely undeveloped. They also point out that Littonia has been an independent state for over 1,100 years, and the people are too independent-minded to acquiesce to a foreign power. Uldis realizes that this would not be the best move, and he resolves to find another way of bringing Littonia into the world. (*See Sv. 12, Sv. 15.*)

What This Means: Uldis honestly wants what is best for his people, and he thought that joining a major power would bring Littonia into the family of modern nations. Lying north of Norwold, Littonia has been isolated from most events in the Old World—few nations outside of those in Norwold know it even exists. A cold, distant land, Littonia wants to increase its contacts with other nations. Uldis's advisors know what happened to Qeodhar when it joined Alphatia—it remained a cold, forgotten island. They know a similar thing would happen if Littonia joined the NACE.

Fyrmont 3, AC 1016: An Informal Investigation Committee.

Location: City of Corisa, Milenian Empire. HW

Description: At Senator Krameos's urging, several prominent members of Milenian society gather at the baths to discuss matters. Present are Senator Tibernos, High Priest Dagos, High Priestess Helentia, Tassia Red-Hair, General Tythus, Xanthipon, and High Magus Amnethon. After the mages Xanthipon and Amnethon cast a series of spells on the room, Krameos speaks to the gathered. He tells them of the odd behavior of Advisor Dionios, and that, like them, he has initiated his own investigation. Krameos suggests that they pool their resources and findings. (*See Kl. 6, Fe. 13; Fy. 24, Am. 5.*)

What This Means: Using his extensive network of informers and spies, Krameos has turned up much information on the Materan effort. His sources have also uncovered several other prominent figures that are also investigating matters. With some of his leads going into the Acropolis itself, Krameos sees the need to call upon others. Using his resources, he has sought out powerful allies and called them to meet.

Those present have differing motives for the investigation. Several, Krameos included, have desires for the imperial throne. However none of them wish to see the empire harmed; in fact, those with imperial ambitions see the matter as a way to increase their own prestige. This meeting will be but the first of many to swap information on the matter. As is, most do not entirely trust each other yet.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs previously hired to investigate the matter may be present to offer testimony. Likewise, PCs may be hired to start a new series of investigations. Or the PCs may be hired by the Order of Matera or other parties to investigate why some of the empire's notables are seen meeting in private.

Fyrmont 4, AC 1016: Thyatis Establishes Waystation.

Location: Eastern Thanegioth Islands, Sea of Dread. OW

Description: A group of three small Thyatian war galleys land at the westernmost island in the Thanegioth Archipelago, disgorging their troops. Over the next couple of hours, the troops fan out over the island, surveying it for any possible threats. Afterwards, they report back to their ships, saying that the island does not appear to be inhabited, but it does appear to have good soils and fruit-bearing trees. The expedition commander deems this island safe, as well as potentially valuable as a waystation, and he orders the ships to be unloaded of their supplies. He also orders one-third of the crew to remain behind to begin construction of interim facilities. With that done, he and the remaining crew set sail for Thyatis that evening. (*See Kl. 20, Fe. 18.*)

What This Means: Since the signing of the Kastelios-Thyatis Accord of AC 1016, Thyatis has recognized that there is a definite need for a waystation, midway between Thyatis and Kastelios, where Thyatian ships could restock essential supplies and undertake repairs as necessary. This island had been known to the Thyatians for a number of

years, but only with more recent developments has the idea of establishing any sort of presence here been feasible. This waystation will also serve the Thyatian efforts to fight off the Twaelar, as well.

Fyrmont 6, AC 1016: Clash in the Lowlands.

Location: Smaggeft Road, Kingdom of Rockhome. OW

Description: The allied forces, having managed to push their way through a mountainous ambush and a fortified, goblinoid occupied village, are making their way steadily through the Klintest Lowlands. Today, on a plain midway to the city of Smaggeft, they have an engagement with the goblinoid forces of Psa'gh and Mokamet-Qadi. The gnollish cavalry, formerly very effective against the dwarven infantry, has its edge dulled by the opposing cavalry of the Darokin legions. The battle ends after a few hours with the routing of the goblinoid army.

The allied forces pursue the retreating army all the way to the city of Smaggeft itself. (*See Ya. 14, Fe. 22; Am. 2.*)

What This Means: This is the first real demonstration of the usefulness of the Western Defense League forces. The Darokin cavalry are able to keep the gnollish cavalry at bay, while the dwarven archers, backed by halfling slingers and bowmen, keep the boulder-tossing giants pinned down. The dwarven and Karameikan infantry are then able to engage the predominantly kobold infantry, and are able to force the opposition into retreat.

Fyrmont 6, AC 1016: Knights Engage Raiders.

Location: Six days' ride from Outpost of Vanya's Rest, Aryptian Coast. DV

Description: Following the winding trail left by the raiders, the Heldannic Knights are attacked by the Meghaddara. The battle is short as the Meghaddara use hit and run tactics before falling back into the wilderness. The knights regroup and pick up the trail again. (*See Fe. 26, Fe. 28; Fy. 27, Am. 2.*)

What This Means: The Meghaddara raiders have been aware of the knights' presence for the past three days, and laid down a visible trail to lure the knights into a trap. Their goal was to first wear down the knights and then bring them into a favorable area for an ambush. The Meghaddara then halved their numbers, one half would continue to harass these knights using hit and run tactics, drawing them further away from their home garrison, while the other half would return to the lands surrounding Vanya's Rest and continue the raids against the farms.

What the PCs Can Do: Any PCs with the expedition are pretty limited in terms of what they can do, except to bolster the knights against this first encounter.

Fyrmont 6, AC 1016: The Dragonlord Rests His Legs.

Location: Barony of Hopeland, Wyrmsteeth Mountains. NW

Description: After a week of avoiding dragon ambushes and following a difficult trail throughout the Wyrmsteeth Range, the Dragonslayers led by Kelter Zerben arrive in the outskirts of Hopeland, just in time to help Lord Ernest Day, the local baron, repel a pair of great black dragons attacking a small village in the foothills. The baron thanks the group after disposing of the two beasts, and invites them to stay at his home, Castle Daylight, in the capital city of Friedenburg, as long as they wish. The group gladly accepts and enjoys the stay, while getting more information on Baron Jax and his dominion, Dragonard. (*See Fe. 15, Fe. 27; Fy. 20, Fy. 23.*)

What This Means: Baron Ernest Day is a bold, fair man who has learnt to hate dragons after his arrival in Norwold. He is a devout follower of Bemarris and so he heartily offered shelter and solace to a group of kindred dragon slayers. He will protect and help them the best he can, and he will see that no harm comes to them as long as they remain in Hopeland.

Fyrmont 7, AC 1016: Assassination in Wendar!

Location: Korigan Forest, Kingdom of Wendar. OW

Description: During the celebrations for the *Adàn Dainyàs* (Land Reborn) festival, King Gylharen's royal procession is suddenly targeted by deadly volleys of arrows and spells coming from the tree branches. In the confusion that follows, Beasthunter throws himself in front of Gylharen to protect him and escorts the startled king into a safer place, while the royal guards try to catch the assailants. Gylharen is beginning to heartily thank his savior when Beasthunter treacherously impales him on his sword, cutting his head to finish him off.

But Beasthunter's joy is brief, for a loud cry echoes in the forest when Bensarian discovers the grim scene. Beasthunter gives the sage a puzzled look, but when guards start popping out of the bushes with killer looks on their faces, he understands there is no time for explanations. The Long Runner clanmaster *teleports* away before the guards can catch him, leaving behind a shocked Bensarian in deep commotion. (See Kl. 24, Fe. 4; Fy. 14, Fy 16.)

What This Means: Bensarian's plan worked out just fine. His assistants' spells and arrows worked as a diversion to allow Beasthunter to take away Gylharen without arousing suspicions. Then, after the elf killed the unsuspecting wizard king, Bensarian revealed his deed to the guards, faking his shock and deep commotion at the event. Now all Wendarians will know of Beasthunter's crime in a matter of days, and Bensarian has still got some aces up his sleeve.

What the PCs Can Do: Participate in King Gylharen's assassination, although they won't be boasting about it afterwards. At this time, they have a slight chance to discover Bensarian's lies, but it is a remote one.

Fyrmont 7, AC 1016: Discussions Start in Alpha.

Location: City of Alpha, Kingdom of Alpha, NACE, Southern Bay Marches. NW

Description: All the rulers of free Norwold (including ambassadors from the distant northern lands of Kaarjala, Littonia and the Foresthomes) gather in the council room of Ericall's castle to discuss the future of their countries. Ericall explains them that the Heldannic Knights are slowly advancing and reconquering the southern independent holdings that revolted last year and will likely soon threaten Oceansend again. He admits that the knights' army far exceeds the power of any of their own warbands, and that the only possible way to stand in the knights' way (now that Alphatia is gone, and with the NACE not sending any help) is to join together in a defensive alliance.

Using their combined military forces, continues General Ney, they will be able to oppose the Heldannic Knights without loosing too much terrain, finally forcing them to accept the superiority of their league and leaving their dominions free from the knights' hands. However, they all must accept this treaty, for showing uncertainty and disorder to their enemy could bring their downfall.

Madiera then explains everyone the nature of the planned league: all the nations belonging to it will be obliged to help each other in case of invasion by a foreign force, by sending troops to repel the invader without striping their nation's defenses bare. Also, all the nations will be forced to respect each other and remain in peace with one another. Any breaking of this rule will result in the attacker's immediate expulsion from the league and the following reprisal from the other members. The lords will not be obliged to send soldiers in case a member of the league attacks a foreigner, however. Finally, an overlord will be named each year to be placed in charge of guiding the common troops of the league. A heated debate follows and lasts the whole day long. (See Fe. 20, Fe. 24; Fy. 8, Fy. 9.)

What This Means: As expected by Ericall and his counselors, not all the rulers are willing to give up their freedom and be obliged to follow a single ruler, as many of them have personal quarrels that still carry on to these days. King Ericall, though still nominally considered an overlord by some of the rulers, has explained that he cannot protect his loyal nobles anymore after the fall of Alphatia (as the past years showed) and so he now proposes them all to join their forces in a common league as peers. However, time and old rivalries play against this coalition.

What the PCs Can Do: Obviously, if the PCs are nobles ruling their own dominion in Norwold, they will be invited to take part in this meeting and voice their opinion. At the end, they can choose whether to join the alliance or to remain independent, and maybe face the knights by themselves!

Fyrmont 7: Slaughter in Wyndham.

Location: Near Village of Bexley, Kingdom of Bellayne. SC

Description: A group of Bellaynish militia assaults a nomad camp in the Wyndham Marches. The nomads are taken by surprise and slaughtered. This is the fourth such massacre in the last six weeks. The situation in Bellayne is beginning to get seriously out of hand. (*See Ya. 3, Kl. 17; Am. 1, Am. 12.*)

What This Means: This is the practical effect of the laws promulgated by James II on Klarmont 17. Many townspeople in the border regions are beginning to arm themselves and form citizens militia to combat the nomads. For their part, the nomads are also banding together to protect themselves. The people of the Wyndham Marches and Penwick support them for a variety of reasons: for some it is that they find common ground with the nomads and for others it is their dislike of Bellayne's new monarch.

Second Week

Fyrmont 8, AC 1016: A Meeting of the Jarls.

Location: Town of Østmark, Kingdom of Qeodhar, NACE. AS

Description: Today a gathering of *jarls* takes place, on the subject of the continued repression of the Antalian inhabitants of Qeodhar by their neighbors. Soon, a general consensus is reached—if the Antalians are to live freely in their own homes, they must fight back, and take what is being denied them. Messages are sent to every Antalian community—arms must be gathered, and able-bodied people trained in the arts of battle. (*See Kl. 10, Fe. 14; Am. 18, Sv. 15.*)

What This Means: Since the arrival of Harald's people, several other groups of refugees have come north and east. All of them shared tales of being forced from their homes, and being treated poorly. Realizing that there was nowhere else they could go, the *jarls* called this meeting to discuss their options.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs who are present may find themselves carrying messages to the various communities, or they could be working for Norlan, keeping watch on the Antalians, and reporting back to him of their plans.

Fyrmont 8, AC 1016: Norwold Confederacy Founded.

Location: City of Alpha, Kingdom of Alpha, NACE, Southern Bay Marches. NW

Description: The discussions have finally reached a conclusion with the majority of the rulers backing King Ericall's proposal in the final vote. All nobles are then invited to sign the treaty which establishes the foundation of the Norwold Confederacy with an impartial and renowned champion of freedom and justice, Ethendril h'Caramore, a renowned traveling paladin of Norwold, as its current overlord.

As expected, not all of the lords join the confederacy and among these a big surprise comes from King Sieger von Duwn, who boldly announces he will stand against the knights on his own, should they be so brave to challenge his dominion.

Among those who politely decline the invitation are also the ambassadors of Littonia and Kaarjala (both nations located north of the Landsplit river), who state that their rulers do not want to meddle in the affairs of lower Norwold for now.

The Foresthomes' elves refuse to enter the league as well, even though Quillan Elm-Grower, on his behalf and that of Zoltan the White, assures Ericall that all those clans loyal to both of them will be ready to defend "their lands" should the need arise.

Also refusing to share in the alliance are the barons living north of Oceansend (Dikhoff, Sixx, Fergus, Maximus—a.k.a. the Warring Baronies), who accuse one another of being in league with the Heldannic Knights or being a Thyatian spy; after their demand to arrest and imprison their rivals is refused by the members of the league, they exit the castle, severing all ties with the confederacy members.

Also not in the league is the self-styled Baron Alak Dool, who has already been declared a traitor after the Great War and has founded a rogue dominion nestled in a small valley among the Wyrmsteeth Mountains. The lords of Two Lakes Vale (Sir Maltus Fharo), Wyrmhart (Lady Maximilian) and Ersenbal (Count Martigan) just did not reply to Ericall's call, so they are technically out of the confederacy as well.

Finally, the lords of Ironwood, Moonland, Dag, Stamral and Vyolstagrad (a.k.a. the Free Baronies) refuse to join the confederacy, explaining that their geographical position puts them too far from the other members of the alliance to benefit from it. They prefer to remain independent, although a friendly relationship of mutual respect will remain with the confederacy states.

Once the session is over, King Ericall, King Yarrvikson and Madiera immediately *teleport* to Oceansend to bring the news to the marching Heldannic Knights, hoping to stop or at least slow them while the armies of the allied lords of Norwold are assembled for war. (*See Fe. 24, Fy. 7; Fy. 9, Fy. 10.*)

What This Means: Ericall and the other lords do not want to be assimilated by the knights, yet they also refrain from calling out to the NACE for help. They want to remain as much free as possible and refuse to return to the old days when they were obliged to obey Alphatia's will. The Norwold Confederacy is at the moment the only means they have to defend themselves without losing their freedom, trying also to be recognized worldwide as a real political entity not to be taken lightly.

Currently, the list of dominions and lords who adhered to the confederacy consists of (in order of importance and rank): Ericall (Kingdom of Alpha), Olaf Yarrvikson (Kingdom of Oceansend), Shaedrik Divotfoot (Shires of Leeha), Ney (Duchy of Chitine), the Black Duke (Duchy of Ossian), Celia (Marquisat of Panteria), Beriak (County of Draken), Shuren (County of Kameloth), Brogahn (*Khanate* of Ublaat-nor), Ulf Karlsson (Theocracy of Odinia), Longtooth (Barony of Latela), Ernest Day (Barony of Hopeland), Allisa Patrician (Barony of the Free Plains), Quentin Jax (Barony of Dragonard), Adik de Chevas (*Baronie* de Chevas), Arcadius (Barony of Arcadia), Diablerus I (Barony of Redhorn), Quillan Elm-Grower (Barony of the Elms), Winnefred of the Lake (Barony of the Lake), Bardeen Longwalker (*Jarldom* of Nordenhafen) and Shebb Woolsey (Barony of Shebb).

What Ericall and his loyalists have not taken into account is that some of the lords who joined the alliance have their own hidden agendas and allies, and may be ready to backstab their unsuspecting allies of the confederacy when the time will be right.

Fyrmont 8, AC 1016: Troops Revolt.

Location: City of Haldemar, Kingdom of Alphatian Neatharum. HW

Description: Troops assigned to guard the governor's keep turn on their liege and storm into Ezreilla's private rooms, taking her prisoner. Commander Trikard assumes rule of Haldemar and quickly proclaims a state of martial law. Later in the day, a *skyship* lands. From it emerge additional troops and representatives of Empress Eriadna who take Ezreilla into custody and place her in the *skyship*. Leaving the kingdom under the temporary rule of Trikard, the *skyship* departs for Alphatia. (*See Ya. 1, Kl. 20; Ka. 15.*)

What This Means: News of the executions and Ezreilla's part in them has reached all the way to the imperial palace. Such mishandling of such a trivial matter has given Eriadna cause to remove her from her rule. Ezreilla's troops prove themselves willing accomplices in her removal. Had the Empress not contacted them earlier they probably would have avenged their comrades and overthrown Ezreilla.

Fyrmont 9, AC 1016: Kidnapping!

Location: Dominions belonging to the Norwold Confederacy. NW

Description: Throughout all the nations of Norwold who joined the confederacy, the seneschals and the most important generals are reported missing today (including Ericall and Sieger von Duwn's seneschals—although the last one does not belong to the confederacy). After some investigations, in each of the vanished people's bedchamber a scroll is found, bearing a simple line in both Heldannic and Alphatian: "If you want him (or her) back,

come to the Dragon River's mouth on the midday of the 16th of Fyrmont." No other sign or trace has been left, and any attempt to magically detect their location fails miserably. (*See Fl. 21, Fy. 8; Fy. 16, Sv. 28.*)

What This Means: The Black Duke is at work. Spies and doppelgangers working for him have skillfully gagged and *teleported* to his castle the missing seneschals, taking them by surprise in the middle of the night. The duke has provided them with an *amulet of teleportation* and has personally arranged to imprison the seneschals in a special area of his castle that is immune to any magical scrying or telepathic bond. The duke sent away his minions a month and a half ago to wait for this kind of opportunity, and now he knows that he has seriously hindered the preparations for war.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are Norwold lords they will probably be caught completely by surprise. They won't be able to locate their seneschal, and they will experience firsthand how hard (and stressful) it is to handle the daily matters of their dominion. If they work for a Norwold lord, on the other hand, they could be the target of the kidnapping attempt, and will have to watch their back or that of the local seneschal in the future.

Also, if they were spying on the Black Duke's moves, they could suspect he is behind the kidnappers—and maybe warn the lords just in time. However, it will be very difficult to prove the duke's involvement, since he too joined the confederacy and, like the other rulers, he too reported his seneschal missing (he had him kidnapped as well to avoid suspicions). The only possibility for them now would be to sneak into the Black Duke's castle and find the prisoners—a difficult and dangerous mission.

Fyrmont 9, AC 1016: Breaking a Siege.

Location: Town of Buenos Viente, *Baronia del Grande Carrascal*. SC

Description: After a few weeks of siege of the gnollish sacred place by the goblins, supplies are getting low and the gnolls make a sortie on that sunny day, forcing the goblins to fight at a disadvantage. Signaling to gnollish units without the town, they crush the goblins caught in between them and are able to break the siege on one side of the town. After the initial surprise, the goblins retaliate though, and hold their ground but are unable to drive the gnolls back. (*See Ya. 16, Kl. 25; Fy. 21, Fy. 22.*)

Fyrmont 9, AC 1016: Returned from the Dead.

Location: Confederate Capital of Ionace, NACE. AS

Description: The city's garrison cries out that *skyships* are approaching; as they come closer, they prove to be flying the flags of the kingdom of Randel. The vessels halt and hover just out of range of the city's air defense batteries. Minutes later, a squad of Randel aerial marines and a trio of high-ranking officers, magically appear in front of the council hall.

The trio leaves its accompanying troops behind and enters the council hall. The council is in hushed silence as they recognize one of the three for who he is. In the silence, Czekostrine bows before the trio briefly, then rises. Turning to the council, he announces the arrival of King Verothrics, their candidate to rule the Randel settlers.

Verothrics then addresses the council, stating that he is here to assume rulership of the Randel settlers in Notrion and to guarantee their rights. Verothrics responds to the question of where he has been that, like the settlers, his battle group had been moved to rear areas pending the assault upon Glantri—instead of Notrion, they were heading back to Randel. When Alphatia sank, he and his troops proceeded to the continent of Skothar where they established a stronghold to work from to build a new Randel.

The council recesses for the day to ponder the matter, stating that they will reconvene the following morning with a decision. They make the necessary arrangements for Verothrics and his accompanying troops to be fed and bedded down for the night. (*See Fe. 16, Fe. 28; Fy. 11, Fy. 12.*)

What This Means: Verothrics was the king of Randel prior to the Great War; as customary for that kingdom, he assumed a command position during the war, as leader of a battle group. When Alphatia sank, Verothrics was assumed to have perished and his eldest spellcasting daughter, Junna, assumed the throne in Randel.

With Alphatia gone, Verothrics decided against heading for the Isle of Dawn, the Alatians, or Bellissaria; instead his group would land elsewhere and establish a new kingdom of their own. Norwold and Esterhold were the two most likely locations; since the latter lands were closer, they chose to settle there. They never made it to Esterhold, as their supplies were rapidly depleted, but landed far to the south and established a settlement there.

Unlike the settlers in Notrion, Verothrics's battle group fared badly in their attempts at forging a new kingdom. The land was not as gracious to their farming efforts and the local humanoids were a constant menace. Also, they lacked the labor force of Thyatian prisoners. The years since had been difficult for Verothrics and his men.

In AC 1015, Czekostrine discovered and established contact with Verothrics via magic. Thus he learned of Alphatia's survival in Hollow World and of the settlements in Notrion. Since then, there has been talk of Verothrics and his troops coming to Notrion. Though preparations were under way for this, the recent events in Notrion have moved up the timetable to now.

Fyrmont 9, AC 1016: Doom of the Burrower.

Location: Kingdom of Gauty, Alatian Islands. SD

Description: Sneaking past the defenses set by the burrower on its new Gauty lair, Dromedon reaches the ugly beast and confronts it for the second time. This time, Dromedon is at an advantage as the annelid couldn't heal the wounds made by *Fiendslayer* in their first encounter, though he also knows that this time he cannot retreat to a friendly place if he is himself injured, so it will be a fight to death.

The great annelid attacks Dromedon with a mix of mental, magical and physical assaults, some of which the former king is able to withstand unharmed, but some attacks get through the magical defense of his artifact and he is badly wounded. Meanwhile, Dromedon wields *Fiendslayer* with fury, and on several occasions harms the spawn of entropy with tremendous blows that rip through the creature's hide and open huge, painful wounds that shall never heal.

After a hours-long, strenuous fight, both man and beast are covered with scars of battle, strained with blood and gore, and exhausted, yet neither has the upper hand. Then Dromedon seizes an opportunity to inflict another blow, and activates the artifact's ultimate power, and the burrower is *banished* from Mystara. However, a weakened Dromedon fails to resist the power activation's effect, and dies instantly, his life-force sucked into *Fiendslayer*. (See Fe. 10, Fe. 18; Fy. 14, Fy. 22.)

What the PCs Can Do: If Dromedon has been replaced by a PC, there are two broad options at this point:

The PC survives the artifact's activation. In that case, he or she probably becomes a great hero of the NACE and beyond, all the while gaining the eternal enmity of Thanatos. The PC may become an important figure in the NACE, maybe becoming the ruler of Aegos, or, who knows, replacing Broderick as commander in chief of the military. It is also possible that the PC is well on his or her path to immortality at this point.

The PC dies like Dromedon. Though this may seem an end for this PC, it may not be: the PC may have been absorbed within the artifact, just like at the time of its original creation, and then who know what could happen to the preserved soul in the future?

Fyrmont 9, AC 1016: Defects Is Another Word for Defeat.

Location: Town of Buenos Viente, *Baronia del* Grande Carrascal. SC

Description: As the sun sets on El Grande Carrascal, the goblins of Garok's horde redouble their efforts to restore their siege of Buenos Viente. The hit-and-run attacks against the gnolls are not enough to break the bridge though, as Marshal Vupilor Watak makes sure that the corridor does not collapse under the assaults.

After several hours of on and off battles, many gnolls from various tribes turn on their brethren and their Long Legs officers, slaughtering many, and integrate Garok's horde. The goblin horde and its new turncoats resume the siege of Buenos Viente; few supplies have been brought to the town during the short respite. (See Ya. 16, Kl. 25; Fy. 21, Fy. 22.)

What This Means: The gnollish defectors are opponents to the new way of the gnolls that mimics the humans', and are especially opposed to the worship of Pflarr. Many of them are followers of Karaash, whose following among the gnolls has been eroded in the past few years, prompting the Immortal to encourage the very creation of the humanoid horde.

What the PCs Can Do: Gnoll PCs may discover about the plan by the followers of Karaash and other gnolls opposed to the way of Pflarr and the Hutaakans' prominence, and try to inform the marshal and her officers about the upcoming defections. Though this will not prevent the defections and subsequent resuming of the siege, due to the diffuse nature of anti-Pflarr feelings rather than an actual organized rebellion with clear leaders, this will save many lives and probably allow the PCs to get them the attention of the marshal.

Fyrmont 10, AC 1016: Aquatic Mercenaries.

Location: Wavedasher Dome, Sea-Kingdom of Aquas, NACE. AS

Description: Queen Zynnia and Aquas military officers meet a group of armed merrow and tritons. After a brief meeting, including a light dinner, the aquatic troops depart the area. (*See Fe. 21, Fy. 2; Am. 5, Ka. 1.*)

What This Means: Well aware of its limitations at fighting underwater, the NACE has opted to enlist the services of merrow and tritons from around Aquas. Though they are mercenaries, the cost to employ them is relatively cheap thanks to the influence of Queen Zynnia, whose own mother is a mermaid.

Fyrmont 10, AC 1016: Oceansend Sighted!

Location: South of Oceansend, Kingdom of Oceansend, Tranquil Coast. NW

Description: After more than two weeks of marching, the massed force of Heldannic Knights, led by Wulf von Klagedorf, see the towers and spires of Oceansend, several miles to the north. With a great cheer, the knights rejoice, knowing that their goal is near. (*See Fl. 19, Fe. 20; Fy. 12, Fy. 13.*)

What This Means: The knights are on the verge of completing a second quest under the guidance of *Herr* Wulf, and they realize that if they succeed, the Heldannic Order could be restored to its former glory.

Fyrmont 10, AC 106: Prisoner Questioned.

Location: Agrisa Fort, Milenian Empire. HW

Description: A recovering General Zarkrios and several troops visit the female prisoner in her cell. They spend several hours trying to question her, but to no avail: though they use various languages, she sits in unmoving silence without even acknowledging her interrogators' presence. Frustrated, the interrogators temporarily abandon the questioning and leave the cell. (*See Fe. 22; Am. 5, Am. 9.*)

What This Means: Though the military is particularly interested in the culture that spawned these warrior women, they are not yet ready to utilize more heavy-handed means to gain the information. Being officers, they see torturing a woman as being ungentlemanly. Besides, such action is unneeded as magical aid is supposed to be coming from Corisa.

What the PCs Can Do: Spellcasting PCs may be hired, or dispatched, by the empire to Agrisa Fort to use their magics to pry the answers from the captive.

Fyrmont 11, AC 1016: New Kingdom Announced.

Location: Confederate Capital of Ionace, NACE. AS

Description: After a day's deliberation, the council decrees officially that the contested land in Notrion will be ceded to the Randel settlers; in exchange, the settlers will join the NACE. The new kingdom is dubbed Veroth in honor of its ruler. Surprisingly, the Notrion contingent is silent at the ruling. (*See Fe. 28, Fy. 9; Fy. 12, Fy. 14.*)

What This Means: Upon deliberation, the council has decided to grant in favor of the Randel settlers. To quell Notrion opposition, they have spoken to them prior to the announcement, pointing out that by joining the NACE, Veroth will be less likely to wage war against Notrion. Also, Veroth has the potential for being an ally in both trade and defense, a point that struck home as Randel and Notrion had traded heavily before the war.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs affiliated to Randel or with a military history can migrate to Veroth. Randel nationals living abroad that do not want to return at the moment may find themselves recruited as operatives. All they have to do is regularly report bits and pieces of information that they see during their travels, in exchange, they can count upon aid from other Veroth agents and a home if and when they choose to travel to Veroth.

Fyrmont 11, AC 1016: Legates Dispatched.

Location: City of Beitung, Kingdom of Ochalea. SD

Description: Having returned from their successful missions to Helskir and Westrourke and been rewarded by a pleased emperor, the Thyatian envoys are given a new mission: talks with Ochalea and the Pearl Islands. Throughout the last several years these rebellious domains have been negotiating with the empire, hoping Thyatis will recognize their independence. However, having severed their ties with the empire both kingdoms have seen their economies dry up as trade withered while banditry and piracy have increased, with neither king seemingly able to do anything about it. Both nations have a peaceful character, and are having difficulties grappling with their troubles (which Eusebius has secretly encouraged).

In addition, both Ochalea and the Pearl Islands are troubled by the growing power of the NACE in the region. Rumors that the NACE plans to conquer them next are widespread. With this backdrop, Eusebius proposes a meeting between his deputies and the rulers of the Pearl Islands and Ochalea, to be held in Beitung. (*See Fl. 21, Fl. 25; Fy. 17, Am. 10.*)

What This Means: Ochalea and the Pearl Islands are neither strong nor warlike enough to maintain their independence in the face of an expansionist NACE and a recovering Thyatis. While both nations are close enough to help each other, they are distant from other potential allies.

In addition, ever since declaring independence, the economies of both nations have suffered. The Thyatians have redirected trade elsewhere, and Eusebius has given covert support to bandits and pirates basing themselves in the island nations. As poverty and lawlessness increase, the once happy realms are on the brink of societal chaos, and people are becoming disillusioned with their rulers as the promised benefits of self-rule vanish. The thousand-year stability and comparative prosperity of life as a citizen of Thyatis are fondly remembered by many.

Fyrmont 12, AC 1016: Business Is Booming.

Location: Town of Threshold, Kingdom of Karameikos. OW

Description: Merchants in Threshold, particularly those that deal in outfitting adventuring parties, are experiencing a market glut. The town, always a hotbed of adventuring activity, has attracted even more prospective treasure seekers and glory hounds ever since the news of the Lost Valley. Over the past few months, many expeditions have set off in exploration of the mountains. Though most of the townsfolk are elated at the profits, Patriarch Halaran is not so sure that all is well. The adventurers bring with them many problems, ranging from a shortage of space to house them, to rowdiness and brawling in the town.

Mysteriously, the adventurer who originally brought the news of the valley has disappeared, without ever revealing its exact location. (*See Kl. 9; Am. 14, Sv. 4.*)

Fyrmont 12, AC 1016: Thyatian Strikes Escalate.

Location: Twaelar Merrow Empire, Sea of Dread. OW

Description: With the decoy ruse becoming less successful, the Thyatians shift their tactics once again, becoming more aggressive. Over the last several months the Thyatians have used a variety of resources (including casting *speak with dead* spells on merrow) to gain information about the Twaelar Empire, specifically discovering the location of some of the settlements that the Twaelar strike forces are operating from. Thyatian *skyship* detachments (divisions of 2 *skyships*) are used as platforms for surprise assaults against these settlements. Thyatian forces launch enchanted submersible platforms derived from the diving bells first used to explore submerged Alphatia [*see* Joshuan's Almanac, *Fyrmont* 25, p.229. *Ed.J.*] These small submersibles are insulated against attack and equipped with a variety of weapons including *lightning projectors* that shoot *ball lightning* effects at their targets. (*See Fe. 3, Fe. 20.*)

What This Means: The war has definitely turned in favor of the Thyatians. Thyatis is not using crude mass tactics and suffering disproportionate casualties anymore; they have put their own magical and clerical assets to work on the problem, and are closing in on victory.

Fyrmont 12, AC 1016: Slave Ban Vote.

Location: Confederate Capital of Ionace, NACE. AS

Description: The council votes today on the proposal made by Favian Vern a month ago, which would ban slavery within the entire confederacy. Gratia, Zynnia, Aiklin, Ericall, Teskilion, Hubertek, and Corydon support Favian Vern's proposal. The representative of Arkan leads the cons, and is followed by the representative of Thothia and the three city-states of the Isle of Dawn, Norlan, Siaron Lagrius, Villiun, and newly-appointed King Veroth. The motion is rejected, and slavery remains authorized within the NACE, though many nations have banned it within their borders.

During that same council session, the council also rejects demands for troops to defend Alpha and its allies from the Heldannic Knights. The reasons given are the troubles in the south (in the Alatians), and the fact that the NACE does not wish to declare war on the knights; the fact that the Alphatian Artifacts' range does not reach all the way to most of Norwold, though not mentioned, probably influenced some councilors' votes. (*See Fy. 9, Fy. 11; Fy. 13, Fy. 14.*)

What This Means: Favian Vern knew he didn't have a majority, but he hoped for a tie which would give his friend Commander Broderick the deciding vote. Unfortunately, his plans failed because of the recent division of Notrion into two nations.

Fyrmont 12, AC 1016: The Knights Make Their Demands.

Location: City of Oceansend, Kingdom of Oceansend, Tranquil Coast. NW

Description: A small group of envoys is dispatched by *Herr Wulf* to ride to the main gates of Oceansend, and issue an ultimatum to the city. They demand the unconditional surrender of the city, and its recognition, for all time, of undisputed Heldannic dominance in the region. They also state that the knights will show mercy upon the city if it surrenders, but will give no quarter if it refuses these terms.

A representative of Oceansend's leadership responds from the battlements that the knights will have their answer tomorrow. (*See Fy. 8, Fy. 10; Fy. 13, Fy. 15.*)

What This Means: The Heldannic Knights realize that they are straining their resources by attempting to reconquer Oceansend so soon after recovering their powers, but they also know that it is an insult to their order's reputation as conquerors that such a large and important city as Oceansend should remain outside their sphere of influence, when it was once ruled by them. This is why they are taking a slightly more diplomatic tack by offering Oceansend the opportunity to surrender.

Fyrmont 12, AC 1016: To Huitlaktima.

Location: City of Chitlacan, Azcan Empire. HW

Description: Otziltipac's army, now doubled by reinforcements from Chitlacan, takes the southern road leading from the capital to Huitlaktima, the main stronghold of the followers of Atzanteotl.

Meanwhile, Chupicuaro's army has reached the city and is preparing its defenses for an attack, bringing in available warriors from nearby towns and villages. (See Fe. 20, Fe. 21; Am. 1, Am. 3.)

Fyrmont 13, AC 1016: Oceansend Responds.

Location: City of Oceansend, Kingdom of Oceansend, Tranquil Coast. NW

Description: At dawn today a soldier of Oceansend, bearing a banner of truce, rides out from the main gates to meet the Heldannic forces assembled outside the city. After handing over a piece of parchment, sealed by wax, he rides back to the city. The document is sent to Wulf, who then reads it aloud to those standing around him.

The message is very brief, stating that Oceansend will never give up the freedom it has fought so hard to regain, and that the city will never willingly accept Heldannic rulership over the region. Also, should the Heldannic Knights invade Oceansend, they will have to face the retaliation from all the members of the newly founded Norwold Confederacy (a list of all the dominions in the league follows). After standing silently for a few moments, Wulf burns the document, and orders those around him to prepare to lay a siege. (See Fy. 10, Fy. 12; Fy. 15, Fy. 19.)

What This Means: Oceansend's King, Olaf Yarrvikson, fought hard last year to regain the city-state's independence from the Heldannic Knights, which conquered it in the years following the Great War. He is not about to surrender it to anyone, and hopes the reinforcements from the Norwold Confederacy will arrive soon.

Fyrmont 13, AC 1016: Ordana's Elves.

Location: Barony of Ironwood, Final Range. NW

Description: After two weeks of absence, during which he left the ruling of his barony to a council of clan leaders, Elarianthas Blackblade returns to his dominion and proclaims that the Faith of the Ancestors, the religion he created for the elves, is now headed by the Immortal Ordana. The news does not bring much reaction from the elves who follow that religion, as they expected that the pantheon would get a head some day. (See Va. 14, Th. 22; Fy. 18, Sv. 8.)

What This Means: Lord Blackblade made a pilgrimage to the southern continent, as far south as his magics could bring him, in search of the ancestral homeland of the elves where he hoped to find lost lore that would help him in his quest to make the foretold future of the elves come true. Although he never found it [*the place was most likely destroyed after the Great Rain of Fire; after all the destruction brought by the cataclysm was enough to prompt the migration of the entire elven race, so there is little chance anything remains at all. Ed.*], his quest brought him to a very ancient place of worship, a shrine to the Immortal Ordana. There, he fell into a deep slumber during which the Immortal appeared to him in his unnatural dreams, giving him clues, and more. Reinforced in his beliefs by the vision, he teleported back to his dominion to the other side of the world to carry on the tasks assigned him by the Immortal.

Fyrmont 13, AC 1016: Calling All Pirates!

Location: Barony of Caerdwicca, Thyatian Empire, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: There is a sudden influx of migrants to the Barony of Caerdwicca, as pirates and rogues that had been living on the Alphantian isles and plying their trades begin to move in. Their homes have been taken over by Commander Broderick's forces, and they must find a new place to operate from. Uthgaard McRhomaag, ruler of Caerdwicca, has put the word out to all lowlifes that they are welcome in the ports of his domain, and they have answered the call. (See Nu. 16, Va. 12; Ei. 8.)

What This Means: Of course, all those pirates will have to pay hefty tithes to the baron in order to make use of his ports, so it is not as if this is hurting McRhomaag in any way. The fleet of ships under the baron's command grows ever stronger, and piracy in the southeastern Sea of Dawn will be at an all time high.

Fyrmont 14, AC 1016: The Most Miserable Place on Mystara.

Location: Town of Dubbo, Kingdom of Surshield, NACE, Bellissaria. AS

Description: Residents of the town of Dubbo are greeted by an unusual—and unwelcome—sight today. Early in the morning, dozens of characters straight out of Alphantian fairytales and children's stories emerge from the sea... and immediately start sacking the town and assaulting the people. The minuscule militia is unable to combat the threat, and people begin to leave in droves, heading out of the town limits. Oddly enough, the fairytale characters don't follow. (See Fe. 18, Fy. 9.)

What This Means: The storybook characters are in fact specially created golems, that once were part of a children's attraction on Gaity. They were deactivated following the Week of No Magic, and have been locked away in storage ever since. The chaotic magicks of the burrower has reactivated them, however, and has warped their original programming so that they now seek to destroy humankind, rather than nurture it.

They escaped the island weeks ago, in search of a new home. Now they plan on taking over Dubbo and remaking it as it suits them.

What the PCs Can Do: Surshield is an anarchy, and lacks a strong, organized military presence. There will undoubtedly be a need for adventurers to go and reclaim the city from the golems. This is a chance to have some fun and outright hack and slash adventuring, as the PCs face off against golems of every size and shape imaginable—all in the forms of characters they grew up hearing about as children! Though most of the golems are unintelligent, there may be a few with more developed reasoning capacities to thwart the adventurers.



Fyrmont 14, AC 1016: The Battle of the Three Lords.

Location: City of Jandak, Kingdom of Huyule, Hulean Empire. SC

Description: By a foggy morning, the armies of Rehmin, Hosadus, and Ustalam finally meet in the plains north of Jandak. As they rush from two different directions, the Hulean troops brought from Khuur are forced to battle the two groups at once. If at first the battle was engaged in an orderly fashion, it rapidly degenerates into a senseless carnage. Fog, mud and blood prevent the soldiers to distinguish allies from enemies as the three groups are opposed to one another. Mercy is neither asked nor granted. Charges of cavalry pit the swift nomadic riders against the heavily-armored Grouzhinians or the sneaky humanoids raiders. In the air, dragons are opposed to flying barges full of skeletons and wizards, flashes of lighting are regularly seen as well as a multitude of *fireballs* and other magical niceties. The Hulean wizards unleash creatures of the darkest planes on the battlefield caring little about who they will destroy. The issue of the battle is uncertain until the horns and drums of the Huleans are clearly resounding on

the battlefield. At first, mistaken field commanders among the nomads and mountaineers think that the Master is calling for retreat, yet the horns and drums are those of the elite Hulean forces back from Sind and northern Hule. Massive magical juggernauts and hordes of humanoids are added to the battlefield. The bloodbath ends up late in the night, when a mighty red dragon soars out of the melee and sets up toward the city of Jandak, destroying almost everything on his way; once over the city, the winged reptile disappears among the high towers and minarets. (*See Fe. 13, Fe. 24; Fy. 15, Am. 13.*)

What This Means: Plainly, it means what it is: the plain north of Jandak will be remembered as one of the worst tragedy of the recent times (even by the Great War standards). [*For further information, see Zoran Dragovic's analysis of the situation. Ed.*]

Fyrmont 14, AC 1016: A New King on the Throne.

Location: City of Wendar, Kingdom of Wendar. OW

Description: In a tense meeting inside the royal palace of Wendar, the representatives of all Wendarian communities listen to Bensarian's shocking news about the recent events. He tells them all that Gylharen's death was caused by the Alfheim Avengers' very leader, Beasthunter. Gylharen had already been suspecting the Long Runners of hiding the avengers among their ranks but he could not imagine how far went their corruption. Now that the wizard king is dead, a new one must be elected in this time of crisis, a fair ruler, a wise man and a competent politician. After a short debate, all members of the council agree that for the time being no other person is more appropriate than Bensarian himself. The sage quickly accepts the position, specifying that it will temporary until the current situation is cleared.

In the quick ceremony that follows, Bensarian is crowned Prince-Regent of Wendar, and his first act is to outlaw all Long Runners currently living in Wendar. A bounty is also placed on Beasthunter's head and the army dispatched to capture all Long Runners. (*See Fe. 4, Fy. 7; Fy. 27, Sv. 4.*)

What This Means: Bensarian explained to his assistants that Beasthunter, who they thought a good elf, was indeed the avengers' leader. He let him believe he was helping them, but in fact he wanted to frame both him and Gylharen, thus catching two birds with a stone. However, he explains further, he did not reveal Gylharen was a puppet of the Church of Idris because he thought this would have only brought major chaos, and this is not necessary. When the waters will calm and the proofs will be clear, then he will make the news public.

This way Bensarian's plan has been accomplished. He lured his investigators into believing every single word he said, and now it's too late to revert what has been done. He is on Wendar's throne, and this is a major stroke for Idris. Wendar's troubles are only at the beginning, though, and the Alfheimers will soon get their share of problems.

Fyrmont 14, AC 1016: Alphatian Decree.

Location: Confederate Capital of Ionace, NACE. AS

Description: The NACE Council has King Verothrics issue a decree citing the founding of a new Randel homeland. He issues a call for all Randel nationals stranded throughout the world to unite at the new kingdom. He also invites other Alphatian nationals that support the Randel philosophy, particularly those Alphatians native to Eadrin. (*See Fy. 9, Fy. 11; Am. 18, Sv. 3.*)

What This Means: Following the Great War, many Alphatians were stranded abroad. Being militarists, most of the Randel nationals hired themselves out as mercenaries or accepted commissions in the armies of various kingdoms of the NACE. Verothrics wants his scattered people together yet being a realist he also invites others that are capable of adapting to the Randel way of life. Since Randel and Eadrin were on good terms and shared a great deal of history he has targeted them to immigrate to Veroth.

Third Week

Fyrmont 15, AC 1016: Hopes Dashed.

Location: City of Oceansend, Kingdom of Oceansend, Tranquil Coast. NW

Description: Three cargo vessels silently sail out of Oceansend's harbor in the hope of securing more supplies from the County of Ersenbal, a friendly dominion located on the northernmost island off the coasts of Norwold. Before they venture far from port, however, a Heldannic *warbird* swoops down from the clouds, and proceeds to destroy them in five sweeps over the area. The defenders are dismayed to see that even the open seas are closed to them. (*See Fy. 12, Fy. 13; Fy. 19, Am. 10.*)

What This Means: Wulf does not wish to take any chances in his siege of Oceansend. Knowing full well that there are many regions that could come to the city's aid, he wishes to take it as soon as possible, so he arranged to have a *warbird* made available during the siege. Now that it has been made clear that any ships leaving Oceansend will be attacked, the resolve of the defenders should falter soon.

Fyrmont 15, AC 1016: No Dwarven Demobilization.

Location: City of Denwarf-Hurgon, Kingdom of Stoutfellow, Floating Continent of Alphatia. HW

Description: Queen Buthra Bofadar announces that unlike the Shiye Elves and the kingdom of Limn, her kingdom will not downsize its fighting forces. The dwarven queen also announces that her people will begin mining operations in Neatharum. (*See Th. 11, Th. 27.*)

What This Means: The dwarves had contemplated downsizing their standing army, but Empress Eriadna's influence and promises of mineral rights in Neatharum have swayed them. The downsizing of the Shiye and Limn have caused a bit of a panic in the empire. The dwarves are quite content to maintain their army as long as they get the mining rights in Neatharum.

Fyrmont 15, AC 1016: The Aftermath.

Location: City of Jandak, Kingdom of Huyule, Hulean Empire. SC

Description: The battle has left few unshaken, and the following day is dedicated to the count of the victims on every side. The first to be counted as missing are the two leaders of the invading armies, as both Rehmin and Ustalam Banshybek can't be found anywhere. The Master has won his gamble since his troops have taken the control of the battlefield in the end. The nomads have been routed and disorganized, but they are still in the region's countryside licking their wounds and trying to regroup. Rehmin's troops have suffered high casualties, but have been able to retreat in a not-so-disorderly fashion. Decisively defeated, the Grouzhinians head to their homeland, cursing the name of Rehmin; his own army is disoriented and demoralized, most of them have nowhere to go but to run away from the Master's legions. Thousands of corpses are left on the field. (*See Fe. 24, Fy. 14; Am. 13, Sv. 9.*)

What This Means: The Master has been able to destroy his two enemies in one deadly blow. However, no one knows where are the two leaders or if they have attained their secret objectives. The empire has been saved, but is in dire condition: the northern part of the country has been ravaged by the invading parties, raiders are set loose in the countryside and will need to divert resources away from the stabilization of Hule's possessions, two strategic colonies have reclaimed their freedom, a foreign power has extended its sphere of influence onto the empire's territory, and the populace's confidence in the Master has dropped to the lowest levels. In brief, Hule has won but the price paid for this victory is high.

Fyrmont 16, AC 1016: Beasthunter Heads North.

Location: Forest of the Curse, Kingdom of Wendar. OW

Description: In a tense and private meeting with the high ranking officers and heroes of clan Long Runner, Beasthunter tries to defend himself from the accusations moved by the Wendarian government. He tells his comrades about Bensarian's revelations and their common plan, and then concludes that the whole thing has probably been set up to give the Long Runners the guilt for a coup. He knows that this is but the beginning of hell for all Long Runners who will remain in Wendar, and orders his brethren to leave the country as soon as possible. He then resigns his position as clanmaster, leaving his wife the reins of command, and announces his intention to return to Denagoth to lead the crusaders still there back home [*to Canolbarth. Ed.*.] Many of the officers side with Beasthunter and follow him, together with their followers, but the great majority of the Long Runners prepares to leave Wendar heading south. (*See Fe. 4, Fy. 7; Am. 20.*)

What This Means: Beasthunter knows he has done a faux pas that will never be forgotten by the elves. His last hope now to regain his honor is to maintain the oath he did to the clanmasters' council and rescue all the elven crusaders held prisoners in the Great Forest of Geffron by the Shadow Army. Using their magics, he still hopes his small warband of less than 200 elves will succeed in this impossible mission.

Fyrmont 16, AC 1016: Rendezvous near Dragon River.

Location: Dragon River's mouth, south of Hopeland, Wyrmsteeth Mountains. NW

Description: Representatives of many Norwold lords as well as nobles have come to this meeting point in order to know more about their seneschals and generals' fate. A small crowd is waiting up high in the Wyrmsteeth, near the mouth of a thunderous river, when a lonely messenger riding a hippogriff appears in the sky. The rider wears a heavy hooded cloak, black trousers and high boots, and has no distinctive features visible. After landing, he addresses them from a higher ledge in Alphatian: "Hear me, Lords of Norwold! My master has sent me to deliver you this message: know ye that your vassals are well and alive for now. But if ye want them back, ye have to bring here five thousand pieces for each of the captive fellows. Those who refuse will never see their vassals again. We shall meet again here in a month! Begone now!"

After saying these last words, he simply mounts back on his hippogriff and flies away, leaving an angry crowd behind. (*See Fy. 8, Fy. 9; Am. 16.*)

What This Means: The duke is only trying to gain time and upset the lords. He is torturing the captives to obtain information about their dominions' defenses and other vital intelligence before he strikes. He has also arranged to have all the lords out of their dominions so his minions can cause some mischief before they return.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are present to the meeting, they can try to stop the fellow and question him. However, if they try to attack or approach him by *flying* or by climbing to his position, he will immediately use his *amulet of teleportation* to escape to the Black Duke's castle. If they somehow manage to trap him, however, he will be unable to speak of his master, and if forced, he will die horribly because of a *geas* the Black Duke put on him.

Fyrmont 16, AC 1016: Qeodharans Attack.

Location: Barony of Odinia, Southern Bay Marches. NW

Description: An imposing fleet of twenty longships crowded with Qeodharan troops lands on the northern and eastern coasts of the Barony of Odinia, razing the countryside and laying siege to the towns they find on their path. Totally caught by surprise, the people of Odinia are not able to repel the invader and the commanders order a hasty retreat to the western part of the country. The absence of the seneschal and of Odinia's lord, High Priest Ulf Karlsson (momentarily at the meeting point at the mouth of the Dragon River), makes it a lot more difficult to coordinate the troops' movements and take clear decisions. (*See Fl. 8; Fy. 26, Sv. 18.*)

What This Means: Exploiting the forced absence of the lord of Odinia, the Qeodharans have been told to attack the south-eastern coasts of the Great Bay by the emissaries of the Heldannic Knights, who are in fact Talitha's minions. They will try to establish a bridgehead in this dominion and another one on the northern edge of the Great Bay in order to block all possible ways of escape to the Norwold fleet. From this vantage point they will then begin raiding

the coasts of the bay and march inside the enemy's territory, hoping the Heldannic Knights will give them a hand from the south.

What the PCs Can Do: If they live in Odinia, they will have to face the invasion by themselves, trying to rescue as many villagers as possible and to coordinate the defense. If they are powerful enough, they may also confront the landing forces in an open conflict, using magic and stealth to severely reduce their numbers. They are unlikely to prevent them from establishing a bridgehead, however, because of the surprise factor.

Fyrmont 17, AC 1016: Young Star Killed.

Location: City of Kelvin, Kingdom of Karameikos. OW

Description: Dimitri Stepanov, young Karameikan hardball player, is killed by Alfheim Avengers just outside Kelvin. Red-Arrow darts and a message reading "Alfheim Free—Shadow Elves go home" are found on his body. (*See Fe. 13, Fe. 15; Sv. 17.*)

What This Means: Another despicable act of the Alfheim Avengers. News of this murder also reach the NACE, where hardball is the national sport, though it does not cause any reaction there.

Fyrmont 17, AC 1016: Legates Arrive.

Location: City of Beitung, Kingdom of Ochalea. SD

Description: On the appointed day, the kings of Ochalea and the Pearl Islands go down to the harbor to welcome Thyatis's envoys. But no ships sail into port. A hush comes over the city when instead, a squadron of six Thyatian imperial *skyships* accompanied by a flight of griffon-mounted Knights of the Air overfly the city from the west before settling into the harbor. This, coming as it does on the heels of Thyatis's recent (if modest) success against the Twaelar, stuns the assembled multitudes. The emperor's envoy Vivianna Romanones, regally garbed and attended, greets Teng Lin-Dieu and Nurokidu Nuar warmly, immediately assuming control over the situation. The trip from the harbor to the palace is a virtual parade as throngs fill the street to gawk. Some even raise welcoming cheers, viewing the Thyatians as possible saviors. (*See Fl. 25, Fy. 11; Am. 10, Sv. 1.*)

What This Means: The situation in both Ochalea and the Pearl Islands is very unstable. Following the NACE's expansion into the Alatians fear (secretly stoked by Eusebius's agents) swept both islands. Many look on the period of Thyatian control prior to the Great War fondly, disappointed by the fruits of freedom. While none are awed by the mere presence of *airships*, all are stunned that the Thyatian Empire would dispatch a strong air fleet on what is merely a diplomatic mission. What they do not realize is that Eusebius is gambling on a show of strength: the force sent to Beitung represents almost all of the empire's active aerial assets. Eusebius is putting on a bit of theater, hoping it will help convince the rulers to accept his terms.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs can be present as guards (or participants) with either the Thyatian envoys or as representatives of Ochalea and the Pearl Islands. Many, especially within the NACE, will be interested in getting information on the talks themselves, and may hire the PCs to spy for them.

Fyrmont 17, AC 1016: Tremors!

Location: Norwold Confederacy Territories. NW

Description: Many nations belonging to the confederacy experience strange tremors which cause some villages to collapse and many cracks in the earth to open. After some investigation, the nature of the tremors is revealed: apparently an unknown species of huge burrowing monster is at work. Those that experience the earthquakes immediately reports to their lord asking for his or her protection and the extermination of the threat. Some of the lords personally take the matter into their own hands, while others commission the task to a band of brave adventurers. Others yet are still on their way from the Dragon River and the commoners must cope with the problem by themselves. (*See Fy. 9, Fy. 16.*)

What This Means: The cause of the tremors are Alphaks's earthquake beetles [*see M2 Vengeance of Alphaks or DMR2 Creature Catalogue 2. Ed.*], which have been placed by the Immortal right under the domains of the most powerful Norwold rulers (excluding Odinia, the Warring Baronies near Oceansend, the Foresthomes and Alpha itself) to keep them occupied with something else than the current war. An entropic artifact produces them regularly, and if somebody doesn't stop it soon, a veritable army of giant borrowers will rampage throughout Norwold turning it into a cracked wilderness. However, since many of the ruling nobles are still on their way home from the Dragon River, they won't be able to face the problem personally, and this will only cause things to worsen. Unless a brave group of heroes decide to intervene, of course.

What the PCs Can Do: It's time for a beetle hunt! But these beetle are far from being huge stupid walking worms: they are huge dangerous voracious monsters with some very nasty powers (among which a dragon breath) and it won't be easy to overcome them. However, Alphaks likes to toy with mortals, and so has sent a small red imp in each of the troubled dominions with a key to destroying the earthquake beetles. If the heroes will accept the red imp's challenge and solve his puzzles, he will give them the key to destroy the artifact that produces the beetles. But this does not mean that the already existing monsters will stop from burrowing and causing earthquakes in the continent! [*For more details on this, see M2 Vengeance of Alphaks. Ed.*]

Fyrmont 18, AC 1016: Orcland Recognized.

Location: City of Darokin, Republic of Darokin. OW

Description: In a narrow decision, the Council of the Republic votes to recognize the autonomy of the region known as Orcland. The diplomatic envoy had returned and submitted their report many weeks ago, but it took much politicking and deliberation before the council could arrive at a decision.

The region formally recognized as Orcland essentially consists of the hills north of Aengmor all the way to the border with Rockhome; the official measurements will be determined over the course of the next few weeks. Diplomatic overtures to Orcland are officially opened. Of course, curtailing humanoid raids into Darokin is a key requirement of this act. Tlatepetl agrees that his humanoids will not raid Darokin (though neighboring regions are exempt, as far as he is concerned). (*See Ya. 13, Kl. 4.*)

What This Means: Official recognition by Darokin is a big step for Tlatepetl and his allies. As for Darokin, they have really lost nothing by this act. Orcland was really only Darokin's by default (no one else wanted it). Now that they have opened diplomatic relations with Tlatepetl, they have theoretically curbed humanoid raids in the vicinity. Additionally, they are able to better keep an eye on events in the region, and potentially have an ally against dangerous shadowelf activities. Nevertheless, Darokin keeps its troops at Forts Nell and Hobart at full strength.

Fyrmont 18, AC 1016: Tristilia Resigns.

Location: City of Faraway, Province of Verdan, Republic of Esterhold, NACE. AS

Description: The secessionist magistrates of Verdan put Governor Tristilia in minority, and she is forced to resign. (*See Fl. 11, Fe. 13; Fy. 23, Am. 3.*)

What This Means: The moderate magistrates fear the worst, as the secessionists can now elect one of their members as the new governor.

Fyrmont 18, AC 1016: Faith's High Priest.

Location: Barony of Ironwood, Final Range. NW

Description: In a move that surprises all elves of Norwold, Elarianthas Blackblade announces that the Faith of the Ancestors, the religion he created in his barony of Ironwood, shall now be led by Zoltan the Treekeeper. The followers of this faith, whose numbers have, strangely, increased hugely over the last weeks, react quite positively to the announcement. (*See Th. 22, Fy. 13; Fy. 20, Sv. 8.*)

What This Means: This is yet another move by Lord Blackblade to carry out the task given him by the Immortal Ordana during his pilgrimage to Davania. The most surprised is Zoltan himself, who did not expect anything like that. The human treekeeper, who already is the spiritual leader of many clans north of the Great Bay, is a priest of Ilsundal, who always refused to recognize the legitimacy of Blackblade's new religion. The fact that the baron named Ordana as the head of the faith's pantheon only puts Zoltan, who didn't see it coming, in an even more awkward position. If he accepts to lead the church, Zoltan will likely become the preeminent spiritual leader of the Norwold elves (even though this does not mean they will all automatically recognize him as such).

The change in attitude in the various elven clans of Ironwood, who are not naturally disposed to becoming so suddenly followers of a new faith, was favored by the ascension of S'hastarl, the ruler of the neutral dragons of the Wyrmsteeth, to guardianship, an event carefully prepared by Ordana.

Fyrmont 19, AC 1016: Underocean Debates Begin.

Location: Confederate Capital of Ionace, NACE. AS

Description: King Juliast's representatives appear before the Alphatian Council, and the debate about Underocean's fate begins. Most of the day is spent as the representatives are questioned about Underocean's inhabitants, their origins, culture, and the size of their kingdom, in order to determine the potential threat or help the tritons represent. Some council members are impressed when they are informed that Underocean secretly aided the resistance against Zandor a few years prior. (*See Fe. 17, Fy. 3; Am. 4, Am. 11.*)

What This Means: Underocean's fate is truly on the line. The tritons are unable to mount another exodus only a few years after their retreat from Undersea. If pressed, the tritons will be forced to fight, and even if they are not destroyed by the superior Alphatian force, the aquatic beholders and the devilfish will fall upon their weakened people.

Fyrmont 19, AC 1016: The Siege Tightens.

Location: City of Oceansend, Kingdom of Oceansend, Tranquil Coast. NW

Description: For five days the Heldannic Knights have been besieging the city of Oceansend, and already the populace is showing signs of strain. The besiegers outside the city walls continue their offensive, lobbing many boulders with their catapults and casting offensive spells at the city walls. In some places, the walls become so weakened by the sustained attacks upon them that they almost collapse, and it is only through tremendous effort that they are kept intact.

In a private meeting in one of the cellars beneath the castle, King Olaf meets with his advisors, and they conclude that the city cannot hold out for too much longer. (*See Fy. 12, Fy. 13; Am. 10, Am. 13.*)

What This Means: Oceansend has only been free of Heldannic rule for about a year, not long enough to build up food stocks once more, or to repair some of the damage sustained during the fight for independence. Also, the struggle to remain free has taken up a lot of Oceansend's resources, both in terms of manpower and otherwise. Many other dominions in Heldland also revolted, and during the year some of them tried to assert their own dominance in the region. As a result, Oceansend is much weaker than it would have been otherwise. The defenders must also contend with Heldannic Knights who can cast clerical spells—a factor that was not present when the city regained its independence.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are with the Heldannic Knights, the PCs could perform reconnaissance operations for Wulf and the other senior knights, gaining information about Oceansend's defenses and morale. Likewise, if they are on the side of Oceansend, the PCs will be busy helping to hold off the invaders and ensure that despair does not set in among the defenders. They could also perform mission of their own, venturing behind Heldannic lines to cause disruptions.

Fyrmont 20, AC 1016: The Dragonlord Kills Quentin Jax.

Location: Barony of Dragonard, Icereach Domains. NW

Description: The Dragonslayers (Kelter Zerben and his party) arrive in the capital city of Dragonard and demand an audition with Baron Quentin Jax over a matter of capital importance regarding the Wyrmsteeth dragons. Lord Jax immediately receives them and during the meeting Zerben accuses him of being an evil dragon bent on enslaving human people and tricking the Norwold lords. He then unsheathes his mighty *Wyrmslayer* and attacks the surprised baron. After only a few strokes, Jax's body lies lifeless on the floor, when the guards storm the meeting room and witness the grisly scene. Suddenly, Jax's corpse changes into that of a great gold dragon, whose size causes the whole exterior wall of the castle to crumble. Soon all servants start running away from the collapsing building in panic. Siren the Sorceress immediately casts a *disintegrate* spell on the dragon and rushes the companions to find a safe place outside the castle.

After Zerben and his friends reach a safe spot, the Dragonlord immediately turns towards Siren looking for explanations, but his astonished gaze meets that of a pitch black wyrm standing in the woman's place. The dragon immediately flies away, but not before mocking the whole group with a malicious grin and staring coldly into Zerben's horrified eyes. Neither Alminthrar the Archmage nor Ceowulf the priest attempt anything against the dragon, because they know she owns a *ring of spell turning*. (See Fy. 6, Fy. 18; Fy. 23, Am. 1.)

What This Means: Quentin Jax was indeed a dragon, but not an evil one as Siren pretended to know (in fact, Siren has tricked the whole group since their arrival in Norwold). Instead, he was Jarth'yis, the acknowledged ruler of all lawful dragons of Norwold, and by killing him the Dragonlord has just caused the greatest schism in draconic society since centuries. Unknown to him, the chaotic ruler and the neutral ruler both disappeared as well just a few days before: the first one (Raxandraghyr—who lived near the Barony of Wyrmhart) simply consumed herself during her last attempt to become a guardian dragon spirit, while the second (S'hastarl—who dwelt in the northern tip of the Wyrmsteeth, near the dominions of Ironwood and Odinia) actually succeeded in the same quest and disappeared from the Prime Plane to serve the higher wyrms in the Draconic Planes. Now the Draconic Council is in complete turmoil and this bodes ill for all Norwold.

As to who Siren really was or why she acted that way, this remains a mystery for the present.

What the PCs Can Do: If they accompany the Dragonlord in his quest they may simply witness the treachery of Siren, but it is unlikely they will be able to prevent the disaster.

Fyrmont 21, AC 1016: New Gnollish Sortie.

Location: Town of Buenos Viente, *Baronia del Grande Carrascal*. SC

Description: Despite the defections from the gnolls' ranks, Marshal Vupilor Watak orders a new sortie to break the siege of Buenos Viente, counting on the gnolls' ferocity to fight to the last end rather than surrender to an enemy. The marshal leads the troops herself, with the help of her lover Hernán Costa. The fight is brutal, but despite all the blood spilled the gnolls cannot break the goblin lines and the battle is a stalemate, which considering the current situation is a victory for Karaash's horde. (See Kl. 25, Fy. 9; Fy. 22, Am. 17.)

As the gnolls are in a desperate deadlock, the sounds of battle are covered by those of horns, followed by the charge of the Cimarron cavalry armed with flintlock and wheellock pistols as well as *red steel* swords. Sir John of the Wain leads the force that cuts through the goblin ranks without trouble, inflicting great casualties to the horde. Several goblins flee the battle scene, and when Birkko is shot dead, the horde scatters for good.

What the PCs Can Do: Participate in this epic battle!

Fourth Week

Fyrmont 22, AC 1016: Freedom Warriors Strike South.

Location: *Mumlyket* of Sindrastan, Kingdom of Sind. OW

Description: The resistance army, consisting of Nagpuri and Gunjab troops, backed by some forces provided by Darokin, begin their march to Sindrastan. Their objective: to reclaim Sayr Ulan from the Master's forces.

It is not long before word of this army reaches Sayr Ulan, and the Hulean troops march out to meet the resistance forces. (See Th. 19, Fl. 13; Am. 3, Am. 12.)

What This Means: With Gunjab and Nagpuri free, and Peshmir tying up the forces of Kadesh, the next stop for the resistance is to liberate the capital city of Sayr Ulan.

Fyrmont 22, AC 1016: Gaity Annexed.

Location: Kingdom of Gaity, NACE, Alatian Islands. SD

Description: Commander Broderick, currently stationed at Aegopoli with a large force, receives directives from the council to annex the island of Gaity and restore peace to the place.

Shortly after, he disembarks with his troops on the war-torn island. Against the military machine of the NACE, the feuding nobles have no choice but to bow before the Alphatian might and acknowledge their new overlords. Despite Broderick's best efforts, wars still continue to be waged and assassinations to be carried whenever the Thyatian petty lords can get away with it.

Thyatis does not react to this hostile action by the NACE [*the Treaty of Helskir recognizes only voluntary annexations as legitimate. Ed.*] (See Fe. 10, Fy. 18; Am. 14, Am. 25.)

What This Means: The Retrievers of the Alphatian Artifact Agency are worried at the fact that the Bearer of *Fiendslayer* did not report and may have died fighting the burrower on Gaity. As the first party of Retrievers sent there reported no signs of the artifact, before being killed by a local baron's men, they decided that further investigation would be in order. They fear that a local lord may have the artifact in his possession.

The agency has a great sway over the council indeed, for it can have it vote for military aggression against an independent nation at the risk of provoking a war with another empire. However, Emperor Eusebius is not willing to go to war with the Alphatians over such a minor issue as Gaity, especially with the events going on in Helskir and the brand new Thyatian Quarter in Aegopoli.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs who are Thyatian lords in Gaity will certainly react to this invasion.

Fyrmont 22, AC 1016: Imperial Raid.

Location: City of Bluenose, Kingdom of Arogansa, Floating Continent of Alphatia. HW

Description: Imperial troops assault the popular tavern, The Merry Mermaid. The sounds of a pitched battle are heard throughout the block, some coming from below the streets. Later, troops begin emerging from the tavern as well as from the sewer manholes, bringing with them the bodies of their fallen fellows as well as several not wearing imperial uniforms; other troops carry out load after load of assorted items. The bodies and items are loaded aboard wagons and taken away. The Mermaid is locked up and a sign posted declaring that it will remain closed pending imperial notification. (See Ya. 12, Kl. 3; Am. 17.)

What This Means: The following of Alphaks is outlawed and punishable by death. This raid is part of the empire's crackdown on the following of Alphaks. Information gathered from Karyndra and by Alphatian agents have uncovered that The Merry Mermaid is a front for a group of Alphaks followers. Imperial troops are sent in to destroy the following's meeting place. Though a success, the raid proves more difficult than expected as the cultists put up a strong defense, taking full advantage of the catacombs and sewers beneath the tavern. The cultists are eventually struck down as the imperial troops offer no quarter.

What the PCs Can Do: Given the nature of the assault, PCs may be hired to supplement the imperial troops. Their particular skills should come in real handy. Conversely, PCs may find themselves, perhaps unknowingly, defending the cultists—perhaps the PCs have been hired as bouncers for the tavern or may be friends with some of the cult members.

Fyrmont 22, AC 1016: Treaty of Buenos Viente.

Location: Town of Buenos Viente, *Baronia del Grande Carrascal*. SC

Description: Marshal Vupilor Watak and Sir John of the Wain sign the Treaty of Buenos Viente. With it, Cimarron recognizes the gnollish barony and its claim to El Grande Carrascal, and both parties are bound by a pact of non-belligerency. (*See Fy. 9, Fy. 21; Am. 17, Sv. 9.*)

What This Means: Cimarron is now the strongest supporter and ally of the gnollish barony.

Fyrmont 23, AC 1016: New Governor?

Location: City of Faraway, Province of Verdan, Republic of Esterhold, NACE. AS

Description: The assembled magistrates of Verdan try to elect a new governor, but no majority emerges. Verdan remains without a governor. (*See Fe. 13, Fy. 18; Am. 3, Am. 4.*)

What This Means: The moderate magistrates of both Alphatian and Jennite origins lobby hard for restoring Tristilia to her position, but the extremist Alphatians refuse to support her this time and support their own candidates without compromise, while no secessionist Jennites accept to support her.

The secessionist Jennites, although a majority of the magistrates, are divided and do not support the same factions. The candidate that gets most votes from the secessionists is Draeh, a friend and supporter of rebel leader Talin's, though he can't achieve majority. Draeh is well-known for his hatred of Alphatians ("I will kick every last Alphatian out of our ancestral lands."), advocates violence to achieve his vision, and publicly admits he does not accept the elections' results ("The Alphatians are not part of this land; they shouldn't get to vote at all." and "The results in the other so-called provinces would be the same as those in Verdan hadn't the Alphatians prevented the Jennites they still keep as slaves from voting.").

Fyrmont 23, AC 1016: Dragonard Stormed.

Location: Barony of Dragonard, Icereach Domains. NW

Description: A flock of gold and white dragons fly over the skies of Dragonard, and wherever they cast their shadow nothing but debris and mutilated corpses remain. Horrified and scared, the people of Dragonard flee as fast as possible to the nearby lands of Leeha, Kameloth and Siegeria, bringing the news of the dragons' raids and massacres. King Sieger von Duhn immediately sets out of his own to discover what is happening and prevent his kingdom from becoming the dragons' next target, asking his friends Adik de Chevas and Arcadius to do some researches as well. (*See Fy. 6, Fy. 20; Am. 1, Am. 26.*)

What This Means: The lawful dragons have received the news of their master's death at the hands of the Dragonlord and have now retaliated against the people of Dragonard, looking for Kelter Zerben, who is nowhere to be found. The rumor that the Dragonlord is also responsible for the mysterious disappearance of the other two draconic lords is spreading faster, and it will only be a matter of days before all the dragons of Norwold become aware of the return of the Dragonlord and of the breaking of the ancient Draconic-Alphatian Treaty.

What the PCs Can Do: If they know King Sieger he could ask them to investigate in his place, or if they are in the same area when the troubles begin they might want to go investigating by themselves. They will soon discover that the dragons are out to avenge themselves and to kill the mysterious Dragonlord and that there are far more wyrms in Norwold than what they have ever thought.

Fyrmont 24, AC 1016: Home Burgled.

Location: City of Corisa, Milenian Empire. HW

Description: The home of Dionios and Sephone is reportedly robbed while they are away at a theatrical performance. Aside from a few jewels and personal papers, little is reported missing. The authorities investigate the matter intensively, but have no leads. (*See Fe. 13, Fy. 3; Am. 5, Am. 9.*)

What This Means: This whole event is part of the investigation initiated by Senator Krameos. The burglary was orchestrated by the following of Halav. Items stolen were minimal, but demonstrate the lavish spending that Dionios is doing on Sephone. Likewise, their absence reinforces the robbery facade. Using their influence, the investigating aristocrats use the robbery investigation as a cover to give the estate a further thorough look-over, using their own agents and those from the Academy of the Arcane.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs involved in the matter can be part of the investigation of the robbery. Likewise, they could be sent in to do the robbery, or both. What the robbers and investigators find in their searches of the estate is up to the DM. It is advised that some clues be found.

Fyrmont 24: Slagovich Counters.

Location: Village of Kastr. SC

Description: Zuberi leads a marine landing against the Hojahan garrison at Kastr. Leading better-equipped troops, Zuberi has overrun the village within hours. No mercy is shown to the defenders. (*See Th. 6, Ya. 26; Ei. 9.*)

What This Means: This is the Slagovian response to the earlier takeover of Kastr by Hojah. Slagovich has now freed up its southern overland trade route. The cold war between Hojah and Slagovich is quickly heating up. Zuberi is quickly becoming Hojah's public enemy number 1 and the Hojahans begin thinking of ways to plot his downfall. For his part, Zuberi is becoming increasingly frustrated by not being allowed back to Slagovich. He is still in love with Tatyana, the cousin of *Margrave* Miosz II of Slagovich, but the *margrave* does not approve of the match and is thus determined to keep Zuberi at arms' length from the city.

Fyrmont 25, AC 1016: Orb of The Great One Stolen!

Location: Shrine of the Great One, Wyrmsteeth Mountains. NW

Description: An unknown black dragon by the name of Syrkas is admitted into the holy chamber of the Shrine of the Great One as part of her quest. During the solemn ritual officiated by the Great One's priest, Syrkas casts a *stun symbol* on the orb, stunning all dragons present. Then, taking advantage of the situation, she *paralyzes* the wyrms and steals the orb, one of the sacred artifacts of the Wyrmsteeth dragons. She then transforms in front of their eyes into a raven-haired human woman and before *teleporting* away, she mocks the dragons by saying that the Dragonslayers will take care of the Great One's orb. (*See Fy. 20, Fy. 23; Am. 1, Am. 27.*)

What This Means: This is another major deed of Siren the Sorceress, former member of Kelter Zerben's Dragonslayers. Siren is not a dragon, but nonetheless she managed to be admitted inside the holy shrine, a magical place that is barred to non-wyrms. Siren then used her magical powers to overwhelm the puzzled dragons and to spirit away one of the most important artifacts of the dragons, the *Orb of the Great One*. The orb is a spherical pearl 30 feet in diameter crafted by the Great Dragon and gifted to the Wyrmsteeth wyrms to preserve balance and peace. With the last pin holding the wyrms together removed and the draconic earls dead, the Wyrmsteeth dragons are now on the verge of a civil war. And since humans are responsible for this situation, the dragons' wrath will fall on them as well!

As for Siren, she is a cunning, powerful wizard following her master's orders. She is in fact one of the members of the most secret and deadly sects worshipping Idris: the Onyx Ring. As part of this order, she has been initiated to the mysteries of dragonkind and can now *polymorph* into a true dragon without being affected by *dispel magic* spells [*like the members of the Glantrian Circle of Dracology. Ed.*]. Siren was ordered by the High Priestess of Idris to infiltrate the Dragonslayers and wait for the opportunity to stir trouble in Norwold. After misleading Kelter Zerben and his friends to assassinate the gold dragon Jarth'yis, she completed her plan by infiltrating the draconic shrine and stealing their precious artifact, being sure to put the blame on the Dragonslayers. She has now *teleported* to Denagoth, in a special chamber protected against magical scrying, where she will wait for the outcome of her machinations and for new orders from the ring after informing them of her accomplishments.

Fyrmont 26, AC 1016: Inspiring Ceremony.

Location: City of Rafielton, Colony of Aengmor, Shadow Elves' Territories. OW

Description: During a ceremony in Rafielton commemorating last year's peace treaty, Jorodrin Fadel sees for the first time a *soul crystal* (actually he sees one of the *radiant soul crystals*). In the past years he has heard a lot of different rumors about *soul crystals* and the magical energy commanded by the shamans.

Suddenly he has a new idea: what if we manage to merge the energy of the *Tree of Life* with that of the *soul crystal*?

A joint group of treekeepers, shamans and mages of both races immediately starts to work on the issue. (See Kl. 10, Kl. 24; Am. 16, Ka. 28.)

What This Means: Mixing the magical power of the *Trees of Life* and the *soul crystal* (i.e. the *Radiance* produced by the *Chamber of the Spheres*) could be the key to saving Canolbarth Forest, but the task is not an easy one, because both sides refuse to reveal their religious secrets.

Fyrmont 26, AC 1016: Odinia Conquered.

Location: Barony of Odinia, Southern Bay Marches. NW

Description: After only ten days the Barony of Odinia falls to the Qeodharan troops. Baron Ulf Karlsson never arrived in time to guide his people and they soon lost faith in front of the steady advance of the savage Qeodharan raiders. Today at noon the soldiers stationed in Wiudengrad, the capital of the barony, finally surrender after five days of siege and in a fortnight all remaining resistance inside the dominion are subdued. The survivors of Odinia's army flee faraway to the southern lands of Vylstagrad and Stamral or east towards the Barony of Ossian, looking for a safe place to hide. (See Fl. 8, Fy. 16; Sv. 18, Sv. 24.)

What This Means: This is the first great victory for Baron Norlan of Qeodhar, and it will surely bolster the morale of his troops. He has now gained a solid foot on Norwold and from there his march towards Alpha will begin.

Baron Ulf Karlsson never arrived to his dominion because he was treacherously imprisoned by the Black Duke while traveling through Ossian only a few days before. He is now held captive in the same dungeon as the kidnapped seneschals.

What the PCs Can Do: Even if they fight to their best, it will be soon clear that the war is a lost one for Odinia, which hasn't got as many troops as Qeodhar and not even as well trained. If the PCs fight bravely they may postpone Odinia's fall by up to one week, thereby buying some time for nearby dominions.

Fyrmont 27, AC 1016: Prison Camps for Alfheimers.

Location: Forest of the Curse, Kingdom of Wendar. OW

Description: All the Long Runners captured by the royal army following Bensarian's decree are brought inside special reserves patrolled by the Wendarian militia. The elves have been stripped of all their magical possessions and must now reside inside these areas until their position regarding the Alfheim Avengers' terrorist acts has been cleared. So far, no interrogation has started yet. (See Kl. 24, Fe. 4, Fy 14; Sv. 4.)

What This Means: The prison camps have officially been devised to keep the Long Runners in check, but Bensarian knows the truth far better. Wendarian humans seem considerably pleased with the news and applaud the new king, while the Genalleth elves simply see this as a temporary measure caused by the circumstances. They still think Bensarian will act wisely—after all, he is the most respected and talented sage of Wendar. Among the other Alfheimers, the Mealidils start to pack their things up and head southwards, following their clanmaster's example.

Fyrmont 27, AC 1016: An Unusual Sight.

Location: City of Seashield, Sea-Kingdom of Aquas, NACE. AS

Description: Citizens of Seashield watch in amazement as a platoon of Seashield troops drill outside of the dome alongside several merrow. What is amazing is that the troops are wearing chain mail armor and move about as if they were in a normal environment. The maneuvers last for several hours until a *submersible* arrives, the troops board it, and leave the area. (See Fy. 2, Fy. 10; Am. 5, Am. 12.)

What This Means: The NACE has found that waging a conventional battle underwater is difficult and requires a great deal of assistance from magic. Several mages have banded together and assembled their enchanting skills to outfit a platoon of troops that will serve as a test bed to evaluate the best use of magic for such troops.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs adept and equipped at underwater combat may find themselves recruited as advisors to the NACE's efforts to improve their underwater fighting skills.

Fyrmont 27, AC 1016: The Hunt Continues.

Location: Approximately 170 miles southwest of Outpost of Vanya's Rest, Aryptian Coast. DV

Description: The Heldannic Knights continue their pursuit of the raiding party, their quarry manifesting themselves to attack and then quickly falling back into the wilderness. The chase has drawn the knights steadily westwards, far away from Vanya's Rest. (See Fe. 28, Fy. 6; Am. 2, Am. 3.)

What This Means: The Meghaddara's plan is working beautifully: the knights continue following them with great enthusiasm. The Meghaddara have decided to lure the knights into what they call "the forsaken land." Normally the Meghaddara avoid this region like the plague because of its long, dark history of swallowing up trespassers. However, the Meghaddara are beginning to suffer from the chase, both in morale as well as in numbers. They muster their nerve and hope that whatever "demons" inhabit the land will take notice of the more highly visible knights than the less conspicuous Meghaddara.

The knights also are wearing down, the weeks of riding and frequent fighting taking their toll. However, their morale is still good, as in their minds, the pursuit has become a game of sorts. The knights know very little of the area they are heading into, and the general idea is that they are being drawn into the homeland of the raiders. The knights plan to do some raiding themselves before returning to Vanya's Rest.

What the PCs Can Do: Besides surviving, there is very little the PCs can do. The knights are too enthusiastic about catching their prey. More precisely, they have been too long in the field to turn back without a definitive sign of victory. If the PCs voice suspicions of a trap, their statements fall upon deaf ears, or worse are seen as defeatism; the knightly devotion is too great. Not being a knight, the hunter, Dieter von Kleindorf, may be the only member to take their opinions with any objectivity; in fact, Dieter has his own suspicions but knows voicing them to the knights will do nothing.

Fyrmont 28, AC 1016: Naval Battle in the Strait of Todstein.

Location: Strait of Todstein, Great Bay. NW

Description: The naval forces of Draken approach the Strait of Todstein which connects the Great Bay to the Alphantian Sea. Lord General Mage Beriak, Count of Draken, sent it to attack the Qeodharans stationed in Odinia and to try to send reinforcements to the besieged city of Oceansend. The fleet, composed of three war galleys and six small galleys, clashes with the Qeodharan patrol line at the mouth of the Great Bay. The battle lasts until the last rays of the sun shine on the sea. At the end of the day, two war galleys and four galleys head back to Draken, while the Qeodharan longships hide in the thick fog which surrounds the strait. Floating on the dark waves are the remains of three Draken galleys and six Qeodharan vessels. (See Fy. 19, Fy. 26; Am. 6.)

What This Means: Although officially this battle was a stalemate for both parts, the Qeodharans clearly prevented the forces of Draken to raid their coasts and to pass through the strait, thus winning their day, albeit at the cost of several ships.

Lord General Mage Beriak could not send reinforcements sooner because of a series of problems plaguing his dominion (first the earthquake beetles and then a series of sabotages in his docks, which delayed the preparation of his fleet). Now that he has tested the enemy's forces, he understands that he needs reinforcements from Ericall's navy to break the Qeodharan blockade and will immediately issue a plea to his king about this matter.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are with Draken's navy, they could engage in the battle and maybe alter its final outcome.

Topic of the Month: The Truth behind the “Battle of the Three Lords”

[In exclusivity, a special report by Zoran Dragovic. Ed.]

For six years I have been traveling the lands situated between the Black Mountains and the mighty Yalu River. For six years, I was asking myself the same question: why the forces opposed to the Master and the Hulean Empire weren't able to unite to overthrow the dark man of Greatrealm? Six years during which I have put my life in great perils to accumulate clues, evidences and half answers. Now that the history has accelerated in the Hulean region, and with the sum of knowledge I have reaped on the matter, I have been able to decipher the real plot behind what is now called “The Battle of the Three Lords.”

To understand more what is at stake behind this year's conflict in Hule, one need to know the principal protagonists of the conflict. What we have is three power-hungry beings, three characters who have sacrificed the life and ideals of thousands of their followers for an outcome that has yet to be understood. Those three beings, the Master, Rehmin (formerly known as the dragon Remindan), and Ustalam Banshybek all are seeking Immortality. Unfortunately, for the region's population, their paths were sent to collide violently.

The first one, the Master, is a well-known villain throughout the Old World for his invasion of Sind and the attack against Darokin in the course of the events now known as the Great War. If his military actions are well known, his ultimate goals are less clear for most scholars and philosophers. The evidence I have unearthed are that this being of unknown nature (some sources indicates that he might be a leech coming from a long-forgotten civilization or the reincarnation of the original Hosadus) is looking toward Immortality along the Path of the Fiend under the tutelage of Bozdogan. However, in more than 400 years of unchallenged reign, the Master hasn't been able to fulfill the last condition imposed by his quest for Immortality in Entropy [*according to the Tsa'alian Ubar Doragirk, the Chengouch Book of the Lost Souls. Zoran.*]: he hasn't been able to permanently bring a entire culture to the worship of entropy. Even if the Temple of Chaos is thriving in the Hulean Empire, in his long reign over the empire the Master hasn't been able to spread the worship of chaos in the surrounding communities in such a way as to permanently change their customs. In Sind, the old ways are still followed by most of the population [*yet, a Kyurduk hermit once told me that the new faith in Gareth was, in fact, an attempt made by Bozdogan to obtain new followers through deceit. However, I haven't been able to investigate on this issue. If the old man was right, then, as the faith in Gareth will grow out of the action of the Master in Sind and bring changes to the Sindhi civilization, the Master will be able to fulfill this last requirement on the Path of the Fiend. Zoran.*]; in Olgar, the Church of Traladara has been strong enough to regularly defeat the Hulean armies; in Monzag, the Way of the Law, not the Temple of Chaos, is replacing the druidic ways of the former Sendaryan tribes; briefly, the Master has failed to bring profound religious changes around him.

Rehmin, on the other hand has more fluid goals and objective. When I met him, in AC 1012, I found a charming but severe strategist, a cunning diplomat and an unforgiving leader. I haven't been able to trace Rehmin's history before the moment he arrived in Kyurdukstan as a Sindhi bandit willing to destroy Hule and the Master, but converging reports and the fact that his army was constantly helped by powerful dragons brought me to think that Rehmin is the human form of the great dragon king Remindan, which was ousted from his lands earlier in the century. Remindan was already on his path toward Immortality as an Epic Hero [*I figured this out from a cross-analysis of accounts about the legendary origin of Rehmin found in the Arbashad Na-Meyati (the Kyurduks' legendary tale of Rehmin roughly translated as The Road to Unity), discussions with the warrior-priests of Ksharya (Karaash) in Hayebil, and scrolls found in the archives of the Great Guild of Grouzhina. Zoran.*]; though this is an unusual path for a red dragon, this path was clearly fit for a dragon as Remindan, who always preferred the strategy and resulting bloodbath of great wars and the diplomacy as done by humankind to the boring politics of dragonkind. This is supported by the

fact that his *red steel* scimitar Schumiktar has earned an important reputation as being the best blade west of the Great Waste. Rehmin has also left his *dauphin*, Marik Dostar, at the head of a unified Kyurdukstan allied with Grouzhina. Shortly, Rehmin has woven a legend around himself, his friends and belongings. But, according to His priests in Hayebil, Karaash has asked Rehmin to fulfill a last great quest in His name: to free the humanoids of Hule from the Master's control. This information puzzled me for about two years since I wasn't able to figure how a lone man would be able to free the hordes of humanoids at the service of the Master, humanoids not even willing to quit the Master's service. The answer came when I learned about the existence of the Throne of Hosadus, but first, let's resume our description of the main actors in the battle.

Ustalam Banshybek is the less known character of the recent war for the people of the Old World, in fact many have ignored his existence until Sindhi merchants begun to spread the rumor about a new nomadic invasion in Hule. Various sources provided me with the evidence that this Douzbak hermit is no one else than the legendary King Dorfin [*for more about King Dorfin and Cymorrik, the two previous incarnations of Ustalam, see the Kzenanet Dzavor (Book of Ancient History) of the Sublime Octagon Order of Dvinzina, a translated copy of which is in the hands of Lucien Chassebois in Darokin City. Zoran.*] in his third reincarnation along the Path of the Dynast. His first task in this new body was to save the country he founded in his first life, Douzbakjian from the combined threat of decadence and the invading humanoids. After having installed at the throne a distant branch of the royal Douzbakjian family, he took upon himself to build a new nomadic empire strong enough to defeat Hule as asked by Vanya, his current sponsor to Immortality. [*Since candidates to Immortality are asked to travel through time, it is difficult to define exactly when a quest begins. So, it is possible that Dorfin was the second identity of Cymorrik or the inverse, but it is unlikely that Ustalam Banshybek is the first manifestation and will travel back to time to become Dorfin and Cymorrik, although the worshippers of Khoronus that I've interrogated on this matter provide me with competing versions. Zoran.*] However, even though his first goal was the destruction of Hule, the entire race for Jandak doesn't hold with his interests, since he should have done more damage than the mere progression in the Hulean lands to be sure that the Master's empire would be destroyed. This leads us again to Jandak, the final objective of the three forces.

I've learned that deep below Jandak is buried the Throne of Hosadus, a powerful artifact that was given to the liberator of Hule by Loki weeks before his death two thousands years ago. According to the *Djemettir Dan-Çölik Shudër* (Hulean Codex of Human-Humanoids Relations), this artifact was meant as a powerful beacon for the humanoids and also as a keeper of the alliance between the two groups. It is a powerful creation of Entropy that helps explain why humanoids and humans have been living together without much troubles in the area over the centuries. Still, I haven't been able to experiment or even see the throne myself, then it might just be another Hulean legend, but many sources cite the existence of "an alliance passed between Hosadus and the beastmen" [*in Jorin su Tarnıç na Huyule (Tales about the Creation of Hule, Bulzanian Patriarchs' Learning Book). Zoran.*] or "Hosadus sitting on his throne welcoming hordes of creatures of Entropy offering their allegiance at the feet of Bozdogan's son" [*inscriptions at the base of Hosadus's Mausoleum near Jandak. Zoran.*] Yet I wasn't sure about the existence of this artifact until I heard about the race between Ustalam and Rehmin on their way to Jandak. Indeed, what would mobilize two quasi-Immortals looking forward to the destruction of Hule? Why Jandak and no other city? Why were they taking the chance of having the Huleans fighting from their rear?

The solution lies in the Throne of Hosadus. For the Master, it is a central requirement for his power. If the artifact disappears, social tensions between humanoids and humans are likely to undermine his quest on the Path of the Fiend and the solidity of the Hulean civilization. For Rehmin, the destruction of a powerful entropic artifact is a condition for acceding to Immortality. It is likely that Karaash will be delighted to see the throne destroyed since it forces His fellow humanoids to comply to rules dictated by the magic of other Immortals. Finally, Ustalam-Dorfin-Cymorrik would definitely put an end to the Hulean rule with a single powerful blow if he were to destroy the artifact, thus fulfilling for the third time his quest of destroying the Hulean Empire.

The only questions left are: Has the Throne of Hosadus been destroyed by the contending Immortals? And, if yes is the answer, who has done it?

EVENTS: AMBYRMONT

First Week

Ambymont 1, AC 1016: Treasured Position.

Location: City of Glantri, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: The position of treasurer is awarded in a meeting of the Council of Princes today. Juliana Vlaardoen walks away with the title, beating both Malachie du Marais and Kol in the voting session. (*See Ya. 1, Fe. 9; Am. 10.*)

What This Means: Malachie du Marais is not terribly concerned about losing, for he does not yet realize that Juliana is in the early throes of manipulation by Dolores and the Black Eagle. Dolores encouraged Kol to run for the position, but deliberately did not vote for him (and encouraged others, such as Angus McGregor and Morphail Gorevitch-Woszlany, not to do so), so that she could secretly back Juliana but not raise Jaggar and Malachie's suspicions. Now Juliana gains some power and prestige with the council, and Dolores's opponents remain at the same levels they were before.

Ambymont 1, AC 1016: Dragonwars!

Location: South of the Great Bay. NW

Description: All human lands south of the Great Bay experience devastating raids conducted by flocks of dragons who rampage through the country exacting revenge and slaying people for the sheer pleasure of it. Some of the dominions are more targeted than others, and soon their lords either take the matter into their own capable hands or look for brave heroes who can protect their villages.

The dragons do not seem to war only against humans but also among themselves, as if they were locked in the middle of a civil war. Another thing soon becomes clear: they are looking maniacally for something or someone, and they will not stop before they have found it. (*See Fy. 23, Fy. 25; Am. 26, Sv. 3.*)

What This Means: Considering the old Draconic-Alphatian Treaty broken, the dragons have declared war on the humans to submit them to their own will or cast them out of their ancestral gaming fields. This means they do not care on whose side they are fighting: be it Heldannic Knights or the confederacy states, or independent dominions, they plunder and raze the land equally, bent on teaching mortals a lesson on might and fear.

The dragons however, are also deadlocked in an inner strife, since without the old leaders judging over draconic matters, each faction is trying to gain power to be the next ruling dragon in the Council of Norwold. This means they are constantly trying to show their might to their enemies and adversaries to gain new allies and extend their chain of command, also plundering the humans to increase their hoard and powers.

Most important of all, the dragons are looking for the lost Orb of the Great One, presumably in possession of Kelter Zerben and his Dragonslayers. All wyrms know that whoever finds it or kills the Dragonslayers will surely be hailed new hero of the Wyrmsteeth, possibly becoming one of the three new Draconic Earls of Norwold. For this reason, the Dragonslayers are now wanted dead or alive.

[The Draconic-Alphatian Treaty, signed five centuries ago during the time of the second Dragonlord, was in fact a truce forced upon the Alphatians after all their strongholds in Norwold and more than a third of their fleet were destroyed by the dragons. The Alphatians never abided to that treaty, as they resumed their settlement of Norwold soon after and accelerated it when Empress Eriadna gave the region to her son Ericall to rule. For more information on that subject, see the Dragonlord Chronicles. Ed.]

What the PCs Can Do: Fight for survival!

Ambymont 1, AC 1016: Approaching Huitlaktima.

Location: City of Huitlaktima, Azcan Empire. HW

Description: Otziltipac's army, with warriors from both Titlapoca and Chitlacan, arrives within viewing distance of Huitlaktima. The priests of Quetzalcoatl have the army's advance stop while they consult the soothsayers to interpret their Immortal's will. (*See Fe. 21, Fy. 12; Am. 3, Am. 14.*)

Ambymont 1: Uproar in Parliament.

Location: City of Oldsbury, Kingdom of Bellayne. SC

Description: In the quarterly meeting of the Bellaynish parliament, questions are raised by a number of members demanding the repeal of the laws promulgated by James II. A heated discussion ensues between pro-monarchs and a large group of parliamentarians sympathetic with the nomads (they are styling themselves the Wyndham party). One of the scribes slips quietly away to bring James the news of what is being said in the parliament. James orders a company of soldiers into the parliament and arrests all of the members of the Wyndham party on charges of treason. (*See Kl. 17, Fy. 7; Am. 12, Sv. 4.*)

What This Means: James has been looking for an excuse to get rid of the more outspoken members of the parliament for a while. As far as he is concerned, a parliament is fine, as long as it does nothing more than rubber-stamp his decisions.

Ambymont 2, AC 1016: Smaggeft Retaken.

Location: City of Smaggeft, Kingdom of Rockhome. OW

Description: After almost three weeks of steady siege warfare, the goblinoid forces occupying Smaggeft are driven out. The survivors, led by Duric, Bifia, and Psa'gh, use underground passages to retreat into the mountains; they hope to join up with Thar and his forces in Kardal. The allied dwarven and Western Defense League armies head break into the city above and below-ground and mop up any remaining invaders, and free the hostages taken during the initial capture of the city. The allied army will remain in the city for a while, recuperating, before moving on to tackle the town of Kardal. (*See Fe. 22, Fy. 6, Am. 22, Sv. 7.*)

What This Means: This is a major coup for the dwarven army. With Smaggeft retaken, there is only one remaining stronghold of goblinoids on dwarven soil—the town of Kardal. It will be tough to crack, however, as Thar has been steadily fortifying and building his forces.

Ambymont 2, AC 1016: A Startling Revelation.

Location: The Forlorn Lands east of Divergan Lands, Aryptian Plains. DV

Description: Continuing their chase, the Heldannic Knights come across a strange totem. When examined by Dieter von Kleindorf, the huntsman advises them to turn back, telling them that the party is in lands it should not be in. Full of bravado, the bold knights ignore his warning, and Dieter refuses to accompany them any further. He cannot explain what there is to fear, or what creatures are ahead of them. Herr Dietrich at first tries to cajole him, then he threatens him. Dieter finally agrees to accompany the knights. (*See Fy. 6, Fy. 27; Am. 3, Ei. 6.*)

What This Means: The knights are deep within “the forlorn lands.” The totem is a marker of Divergan patrols. In his travels in and around Vanya’s Rest, Dieter had heard tales of this area and the people that lived beyond it to the west but he had not realized they were in it until he saw the totem. The tales he had heard spoke of supposed demons, malicious forest creatures, and dark magics that swallowed up those that enter. That the tales were so vague and were told with such conviction reinforced his belief in them. Dieter cannot convince the knights of the danger, and he will admit to not having any concrete information to that effect—all he can produce are the vague tales. Dieter eventually complies as he is curious, and he feels safer surrounded by the knights’ numbers rather than turning back alone. He doubts Dietrich would cause him any harm.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs will obviously be the ones to realize that a real danger is all about the expedition—that Dieter is concerned should add to the predicament. As with Dieter, the PCs will not be able to deter the knights from continuing. The PCs can ride beside or walk with the hunter to talk the matter over, their conversation must be done with care, however, lest they be branded as traitors or defeatists. They may be ridiculed, threatened, or chastised, but not physically punished or harmed: Dietrich dismissed Dieter's warnings, but he realizes that he still needs everyone. He will bring these matters before the castellan when they return to Vanya's Rest.

The PCs should have a good respectful outlook towards Dieter. The DM should really play up his reaction to realizing where he was, and his desire to turn back. If the PCs have not bonded with him yet, they should do so by now—the hunter's skill will be vital to their survival soon. Dieter will at least try to convince them of the situation and try to subtly get them to trust him: as an adventurer himself, he is well aware that their skills will be helpful if trouble does surface.

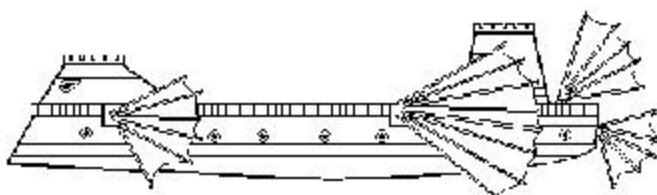
Ambymont 2, AC 1016: The Flying Doom Strikes.

Location: City of Alpha, Kingdom of Alpha, NACE, Southern Bay Marches. NW

Description: In the darkened skies over Alpha Harbor a mighty flying ship of unknown origins and design appears and starts bombarding the ships of the navy stationed in the port. After an hour, half of the flotilla is sunken, while the rest is seriously damaged, and the flying vessel retreats into the clouds and disappears. (*See Fl. 2I, Fy. I; Am. 12, Am. 16.*)

What This Means: Alphaks's gift for his minion, the Black Duke, has finally been delivered and immediately used to prevent Ericall from sending his ships against the Qeodharans, who are marching eastwards. Even though Ericall tried to put up a resistance, backed by Madiera's spells, he couldn't do much to counter the *skyship*'s devastating artillery. Once satisfied, the captain of the *Flying Doom*—the name of the *phaseship*, a special vessel that can blink in and out of this plane of existence—, retreated into the clouds and headed north, ready for the new orders. [Phaseships were first introduced in module M1 Into the Maelstrom Ed.]

What the PCs Can Do: If they are in Alpha during the bombardment, they can try to protect the docks and to storm the ship, even though it is well defended by groups of undead and evil pegataurs. The ship will not sustain too much damage, and if threatened seriously, the captain will order a hasty retreat.



The Flying Doom

Ambymont 2, AC 1016: Name Change.

Location: City of Andaire, Kingdom of Jafilia, Floating Continent of Alphatia. HW

Description: Empress Eriadna announces that the kingdom of Jafilia will have its name changed Alphas'ar, in honor of one of the Alphatians' greatest rulers. The imperial city will retain its current name of Andaire.

What This Means: Eriadna acted in haste in naming the kingdom after the suicide of the Neathar tribeswoman, Jafilia. It has recently been pointed out that the word "Jafilia" resembles one of the slang terms for a type of zzonga product. She has since decided to rename the kingdom in honor of Emperor Alphas, the term Alphas'ar translating easily to Alphas the Air Mage. The choice is a good one as Alphas was the name of several central figures in Alphatia's lineage of emperors.

Ambymont 3, AC 1016: The Hunters Become the Hunted.

Location: The Forlorn Lands, Aryptian Plains. DV

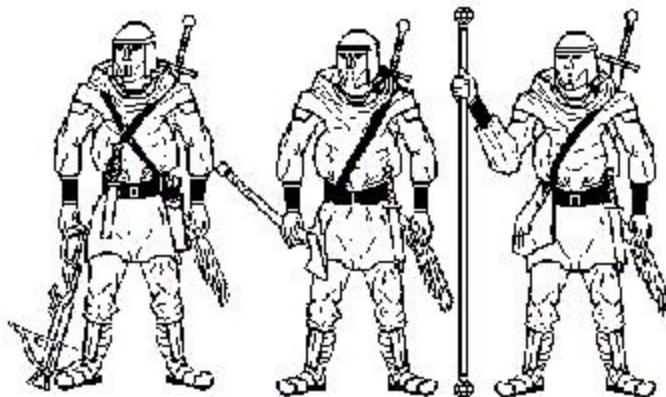
Description: With the dim glow of dawn, the Heldannic Knights are awakened by the sounds of battle. Assembling in haste, the knights venture forth to investigate the disturbances. What they discover are the bodies of Meghaddara raiders that they themselves had been pursuing.

As they examine the bodies and try to assess the situation, the knights themselves are attacked. They are cut to shreds and only a small portion of the knights are able to pull back to safety. This small band falls back and heads back to Vanya's Rest. (*See Fy. 27, Am. 2; Ei. 6.*)

What This Means: Both the knights and the Meghaddara have been ambushed by several Divergan war parties. The Meghaddara were cut down to a man. However, the knights with their heavy arms and armor were able to momentarily stand up to the attackers, allowing an outlying section of knights to escape. Of the fifty knights, only fourteen survive the ambush.

The knights that escaped did so at the order of *Herr* Dietrich. The expedition leader, *Herr* Dietrich, falls in the ambush while trying to provide a delaying force for the survivors. Among the survivors is Dieter, the huntsman.

What the PCs Can Do: Ideally, the PCs should be in the group of survivors or at least be in a position to join the survivors. By now the PCs should be well acquainted with Dieter. The party's main task is to get back to the safety of Vanya's Rest, while in a constant run from pursuing Divergan skirmishers.



Ambymont 3, AC 1016: A Noble Pupil.

Location: City of Glantri, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: Young Prince Erian of the Shadow Elves is sent to Glantri City to study at the Great School of Magic. (*See Fe. 10.*)

What This Means: Erian is eager to travel and see the world. After long pondering his royal parents decided to give him a proper magical education in one of the many schools of the surface world. The Great School of Magic was chosen because Shadow Elves and Glantrians are allied since the days of the Great War; moreover Karameikos was considered too dangerous for the prince, due to the large number of Alfheim exiles (and Alfheim Avengers) that live in the area, and other countries unsecured as well.

Prince Erian will be followed in Glantri by a discreet, but experienced, escort of Second Shadow members.

What the PCs Can Do: Shadowelf PCs may be sent to the Great School of Magic in disguise to act as "sleeping bodyguards" for Prince Erian. PCs of a different race may instead be hired to kill or kidnap (again!) the young prince.

Ambymont 3, AC 1016: Terror from Above.

Location: *Mumlyket* of Sindrastan, Kingdom of Sind. OW

Description: In the northeastern hills of Sindrastan, battle has finally been joined. The Master's forces and the resistance armies clash in a series of bloody battles. Both forces are roughly stalemated, and the battles have waged for weeks.

On this day, however, things turn dark—literally. A tremendous shadow slowly overtakes the battlefield, but overhead not a cloud is in sight, only the tremendous shape of the flying city of Serraine!

The city hovers hundreds of feet in the sky, raining magical and mundane attacks down on the resistance armies. The attacks, however, are not nearly as devastating as the damage to the resistance armies' morale; the mere sight of the city is enough to rout regiments of Sindhi forces. The resistance is forced to retreat, and the land-bound forces of the Master whittle away at their enemies' backs. (*See Va. 19, Fy. 22; Am. 12, Sv. 2.*)

What This Means: Serraine proved effective in limiting the revolts among the southern *mumlykets*, so the Master decided to bring it to the fray in the north. The Master's forces and Serraine will follow the resistance army and attempt to prevent it from rallying again once it reaches Nagpuri.

Ambymont 3, AC 1016: New Governor.

Location: City of Faraway, Province of Verdan, Republic of Esterhold, NACE. AS

Description: After days of negotiating, lobbying, arguing, and sometimes physically assaulting, the secessionist magistrates of Verdan rally under the banner of Talin and elect his representative, Draeh, as the new governor of the province.

The three extremist Alphatian magistrates immediately protest and challenge this decision. The new governor has them arrested. (*See Fe. 18, Fy. 23; Am. 4, Am. 14.*)

What This Means: Though he's a rather learned and literate for a Jennite, Draeh hates Alphatians with a passion, and advocates violence to drive them all out of Jennite lands.

The moderate magistrates are not pleased with that choice and fear the worst, and the prompt imprisonment of the three magistrates, however extremist they may be, is not to reensure them.

Ambymont 3, AC 1016: Big Battle at Huitlaktima.

Location: City of Huitlaktima, Azcan Empire. HW

Description: Otziltipac's army resumes its advances, but instead of heading for Huitlaktima, they change their course and head east toward Yuzihuapac and Atacoatli, two cities that remain dominated by the clergy of Atzanteotl. Puzzled by the move, Chupicuaro decides not to pursue immediately but let the rebels a few days' advance, before sending his warriors after them and coordinating a two-fronts battle near the eastern cities. (*See Fy. 12, Am. 1; Am. 14, Am. 28.*)

What This Means: On this Movement day [*according to the Azcan calendar. Ed.*], the soothsayers have urged Otziltipac's officers to move on and not engage into battle. The priests, who have had visions in their dreams, interpreted them as a sign to march onto the two eastern cities. They will bypass the numerous towns and villages they encounter in the way, focusing on the two cities only.

Ambymont 4, AC 1016: Into the Great Waste.

Location: Plain of Fire, East of Sind. OW

Description: The Great Migration passes beyond Gunga Keep, out of the boundaries of Sind. They are headed westwards, towards an unknown destination. Loaded up with booty from raids in Sindhi territory, Hool and Nizam-

Pasha attempt to rally their troops and reinstill within them a sense of the great destiny that awaits them when they find the sacred Blue Knife. (See *Fl.* 3, *Fe.* 8; *Ei.* 12.)

What This Means: The Great Migration, which set out with such clarity of purpose two years ago, in 1014, has begun to lose sight of its goal. The lack of any real idea as to their ultimate physical destination does not help in this. Hool has been praying to Wogar nearly every day in hopes of gaining a better idea as to his goal. Thus far, the only real sense of purpose has come, oddly enough, from Nizam-Pasha. In a trance his shamans claimed was evidence of Ranivorus's doing, he proclaimed that they should head west, into the vast desert. There, he claimed, they should find allies in the last place they would think to look.

Ambymont 4, AC 1016: Independence.

Location: City of Faraway, Province of Verdan, Republic of Esterhold, NACE. AS

Description: The first official act of Draeh is to announce that Verdan is now independent from both the Republic of Esterhold and the NACE, and wants to have nothing to do with the Alphatian imperialists and slavers anymore. He announces that Verdan will consequently cease to send taxes to the republic, and that the independent kingdom will have its own army.

His second act is to have the three Alphatian extremist magistrates executed, with the message that all Alphatians had better leave Verdan, if not Esterhold altogether. (See *Fy.* 23, *Am.* 3; *Am.* 14, *Ka.* 13.)

What This Means: The Alphatians are unlikely to let Verdan go like that, and Draeh knows it. Actually, he hopes the Alphatians will confront him and the other "rebels" (now in power), as that is what he wanted all along.

Ambymont 4, AC 1016: Underocean Debates Continue.

Location: Confederate Capital of Ionace, NACE. AS

Description: The Alphatian Council continues its discussion on Underocean. The council is more favorable to the idea of leaving Underocean alone, and even to the possibility of an alliance with them, than it was previously. (See *Fy.* 3, *Fy.* 19; *Am.* 11, *Sv.* 8.)

What This Means: The council is beginning to realize the benefits of an alliance with the tritons. The tritons would be able to supplement the *submersible* fleet, and it would be relatively easy for them to carry messages through the Sundsvall Maelstrom.

Ambymont 5, AC 1016: Skyships Over Alchemos.

Location: City of Alchemos, Kingdom of Meriander, NACE, Bellissaria. AS

Description: Citizens of Alchemos witness the arrival of two Alphatian *skyships* landing near the university. From a distance curious citizens watch as boxes are carried from the university buildings and loaded aboard one of the *skyships*. It is noted that Drulivia seems to be overseeing the loading and is quite cordial with the Alphatian officers. (See *Fy.* 10, *Fy.* 27; *Am.* 12, *Sv.* 27.)

What This Means: Since *The Torpin* has been nationalized, the NACE has taken possession of Drulivia's sealant concoction and any related documents; the council has sent *skyships* to secure these items. Drulivia's presence is to oversee the stowing of the items to insure their safe arrival.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs trusted by Drulivia may find themselves hired to escort the putty and the research notes. With *skyships* involved, the duty should be rather uneventful but this escort duty will take the PCs to the construction facilities of *The Torpin* where they may be asked to join that effort.

Ambymont 5, AC 1016: Treachery at Work.

Location: Barony of Ossian, Southern Bay Marches. NW

Description: Some Qeodharan longships packed with an invasion force land in the Bay of Ossian, a couple of hundred miles south of Alpha. The local militia puts up no resistance, and the troops disembark and resupply, readying to launch an assault into Ericall's territory. (*See Fy. 26, Am. 2; Am. 11, Am. 14.*)

What This Means: It is now clear that the Black Duke is helping the enemy, but unfortunately Ericall has bigger troubles at the moment. He cannot count on his navy to protect his coasts, but given the fact his harbor is now a complete mess, at least the enemy won't try a direct landing. He must strengthen the forces patrolling the countryside to avoid unpleasant surprises.

Ambrymont 5, AC 1016: Missing Prisoner.

Location: Agrisa Fort, Milenian Empire. HW

Description: Troops bringing the female prisoner her meal, discover that she is not in her cell. The guards that were outside of the cell are found dead, their throats sliced. The troops scour the fort looking for the prisoner, but to no avail. Several women are arrested as incriminating evidence is found on them or in their rooms. Later, patrols are dispatched to search the surrounding countryside. (*See Fy. 3, Fy. 10; Am. 9.*)

What This Means: Members of the Cult of Matera have heard of this mysterious female warrior. The order has sent word to its operatives within the fort to gain her freedom and safe passage from the fort. Several of the wives of some of the officers are affiliated with the order and do their part with dagger and poisons; one even goes as far to murder her husband who had been the cellblock sergeant. By the time the garrison is alerted, the prisoner is well outside of the fort. The conspirators are not as lucky; inexperienced and hasty, several do not cover their tracks and incriminating evidence is found.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs at Agrisa Fort may be hired or ordered to track the escapee. Likewise, those PCs affiliated with Krameos's investigation may be sent to the fort to look into the matter.

Ambrymont 6, AC 1016: Sambay Under Siege.

Location: Town of Sambay, *Mumlyket* of Jalawar, Kingdom of Sind. OW

Description: The port town of Sambay comes under naval assault in the afternoon. A fleet of ships, flying Yavdlom colors, sets up a blockade outside the port limits, preventing ships from coming or leaving the town. Within hours a messenger arrives, bearing word from the attackers that the true ruler of Jalawar, Rani Drisana Madhar, has returned, and requesting the surrender of the town. *Rajah* Inay Paramesh refuses to surrender, and his navy clashes with the intruders.

The fighting continues for over a week, but finally Paramesh is forced to surrender. The *rani* is welcomed back into the town with open arms by the citizenry. With her capital back in her control, the *rani* has a base from which to begin rooting out the remnants of Hulean forces in Jalawar. (*See Am. 12, Am. 17.*)

What This Means: Rani Madhar was overthrown by *Rajah* Paramesh back in 1005, when forces from Hule invaded Sind. She fled to the Yavdlom Divinarchy, where she has been in hiding for years. With recent political upheavals in Sind, she was able to acquire allies among the Yavdlom people to help her regain her throne. The *mumlyket* of Jalawar has been one of the cornerstones of support for the Master's forces in Sind, with its ample agricultural resources. With Jalawar lost, the Master's forces will have a much harder time in Sind.

Ambrymont 6, AC 1016: Beriak's Pleas Go Unanswered.

Location: County of Draken, Kingdom of Alpha, NACE, Northern Bay Marches. NW

Description: Frustrated by the continual raids staged by the lighter and faster Qeodharan vessels against his ports and warships, General Mage Beriak asks the neighboring state of Latela for support against the invaders and demands the immediate sending of their faster and more maneuverable lightships, to be used in the patrolling of the

coastlines. The answer from Baron Longtooth arrives quicker than expected, telling the mage that Latela cannot afford to send away its main military defense in times of dire need such as these. (*See Fy. 26, Fy. 28.*)

What This Means: After the bombardment over Ericall's royal navy, Beriak knew he would have had to search elsewhere for reinforcements. Asking Latela, which is his closest neighbor, he thought he could have gotten the vessels he needed to stop the Qeodharan pillaging on his coasts. He was hoping that Baron Longtooth could have understood that if Draken fell to the Qeodharans, his country would be next. However, Baron Longtooth and the ruling family of Latela do not want to take an active or compromising role in the war, should the Norwold Confederacy loose in the end. For this reason, they are trying to protect their interests, secretly conducting negotiation with the Black Duke in case his faction wins the war, while also belonging to the confederacy. Up to now, they have been able to avoid direct intervention on the side or against one part or the other, and this has reduced their troubles significantly.

Ambrymont 7, AC 1016: Buildup in Polakatsikes.

Location: Dominion of Polakatsikes, Heldannic Territories, Meghala Kimata Plains. DV

Description: Polakatsikes is abuzz with the sounds of construction, barked orders, and frenzied movement. Knights and locals rush about, building storehouses, digging pit traps in the fields outside, and repairing damaged sections of the town's wall. Wolfgang Stummel walks about Polakatsikes, overseeing the entire operation. The activities stop only when the sun sets. (*See Va. 21, Fl. 26; Ka. 12.*)

What This Means: The Heldannic rulers of Polakatsikes, having determined that Mivosia is bound to attack them sooner or later, have decided to improve the city-state's defenses. Remembering the reasons for their own success in conquering the town, the knights are ensuring that adequate, well-protected food stores are present, and that the land outside the town's wall is filled with as many hidden traps as possible to hinder any assault. Wolfgang knows that, with only 175 knights and 100 men in the Southern Legion of Vanya, he will need all the advantages he can get until reinforcements from Vanya's Rest can arrive.

Although the Southern Legion has been training hard, they are still not professional soldiers, and Wolfgang is unsure how effective they will be in battle. He also knows that, at best, he could call up about 600 locals to act as competent auxiliaries. Still, he also feels that Vanya is with him, and that, in a pitched battle, the knights could come out victorious, though he would like to minimize losses as much as possible.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are present, the PCs will have a lot of work to do, either by helping with the defenses, scouting for signs of Mivosian activity, or training locals to act as auxiliaries.

Second Week

Ambrymont 9, AC 1016: Ersenbal Raided.

Location: County of Ersenbal, Tranquil Coast. NW

Description: The villages on the western coasts of Ersenbal (the big island north-west of Oceansend, just north of the Isle of Dogs) experience raids from drakkars bearing Ostlander colors. Rumors also spread of a group of white dragons ridden by an imposing red-bearded northman always following and protecting the Ostlanders in their pillaging. Many commoners abandon their villages and run to the capital city of Ersenbal to get the protection of their lord, Count Martigan. (*See Am. 28.*)

What This Means: Oberack the pirate wizard is responsible for these raids. He is currently stationing with his raiders in the Swordcoast as guest of Lord Maximus and wants to keep his crew and the Ostlanders who are following him in training. For this reason he's begun sacking the nearby county of Ersenbal, also hoping to force his lord, a renowned Alphatian wizard with a generous Thyatian bounty on his head, on the battlefield. Oberack wants to

confront Count Martigan to impress his crew and get the reward from the Thyatians, but he is going to be disappointed, since Martigan is not currently in Ersenbal but away on some faraway outer plane for a quest.

As for why Maximus I is hosting the pirate wizard's flotilla in his harbor, it is clear: Maximus didn't want to become Oberack's next target and so opted for giving him free asylum for as long as he wished to stay.

Ambymont 9, AC 1016: Imperial Investigators.

Location: Agrisa Fort, Milenian Empire. HW

Description: A mounted party arrives at Agrisa Fort. Among them are Senator Tibernos, General Tythus, and High Magus Amnethon. Tythus assumes control of the fort while Tibernos and Amnethon initiate an investigation. (*See Fy. 10, Am. 5.*)

What This Means: The incident at the fort immediately drew the attentions of the investigating committee, who quickly sent their own people to look into the matter. General Tythus has a great deal of interest in one of "his" forts having its security undermined. His presence and command of the fort will minimize obstructions to any investigations.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs involved in the investigation may be accompanying the three as troops or as hero types. The extent of their findings is up to the DM.

Ambymont 10, AC 1016: Gossip in Glantri.

Location: City of Glantri, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: At the opening of a new play at the Metropolitan Theater, gossip runs rampant when Princess Juliana Vlaardoen is seen being escorted by Ludwig von Hendriks. There have been rumors that the two had been seeing one another for months now, but this is the first time they have been seen together in public. According to the gossip, the two were very cozy together—some say that the princess had her eyes on the Black Eagle more than the play! And many were surprised that the princess's uncle was nowhere to be seen, for he almost always accompanies her on public forays. (*See Fe. 9, Am. 1.*)

What This Means: Juliana is falling hopelessly in love—with a little magical assistance—with von Hendriks. She all but ignores her uncle Anton these days, which causes him to be more than a little suspicious. Oddly, though, the pairing of the Black Eagle and Juliana will be viewed in a popular light by the public—who better to be in love than a single princess and a national hero?

Ambymont 10, AC 1016: Haptuthep and Hunakoi.

Location: Village of Kenaton, Valley of Kings, Kingdom of Thothia, NACE, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: The lich Haptuthep, in his guise as Haptuthep II, appears to the hunakoi (stone giants) of Kenaton, and makes them an offer of alliance. The hunakoi are reluctant, as they bear no ill will to Ramenhotep and Thothia. Haptuthep sweetens the deal by offering to deal with the aranean threat to their village.

The hunakoi agree that if he can stop the araneas, they will join his army. (*See Kl. 4, Fe. 5; Sv. 18, Ka. 12.*)

What This Means: Haptuthep's plotting continues. He knows that the araneas have been making incursions into the Valley of Kings lately—both to consolidate their hold on the region and to send their agents into Thothia. He is confident that he can stop their invasions, however, and he sees a means to gain a new ally in the process.

Ambymont 10, AC 1016: Dawnsea Concord Signed.

Location: City of Beitung, Kingdom of Ochalea, Thyatian Empire. SD

Description: After lengthy negotiations, the rulers of Ochalea and the Pearl Islands agree to relinquish their claim to independence and surrender their title as kings. Both realms will rejoin the empire as exarchates, autonomous dominions following the model of Westrourke. Slavery is completely outlawed in both, however, with all sentient subjects of Ochalea and the Pearl Islands being given status as Thyatian citizens. Thyatis agrees not to conscript or draft the citizens of either land into its armies, but Ochaleans and Pearl Islanders will be welcomed to serve in the imperial armies as volunteers. The empire agrees to dispatch forces to help eliminate the pirates and brigands plaguing the region. Thyatian colonists will be welcomed in both islands. (*See Fy. 11, Fy. 17; Sv. 1.*)

What This Means: Ochalea and the Pearl Islands have exchanged an uncertain liberty for protection and stability. Neither nation wanted to fight a war with either Thyatis or the NACE that they would be bound to lose, and the people of the islands stand to gain much by this agreement. The daily life and freedoms of the inhabitants will be almost unchanged, the only notable difference in their lives being an increase in prosperity as commerce resumes and banditry is reduced, and the presence of Thyatian bases. Teng Lin-Dieu and Nurokudu Nuar are willing to let Thyatis handle foreign relations, as both are essentially isolationists more interested in serving their people than dealing with outside governments. Eusebius plans to send many colonists to both realms over the coming years to strengthen their ties to the empire.

Ambymont 10, AC 1016: Oceansend Falls—Again.

Location: City of Oceansend, Kingdom of Oceansend, Tranquil Coast. NW

Description: After more than a week of bitter fighting along its walls, and a relentless blockade of its harbor, Oceansend finally succumbs to the Heldannic assault. Many defenders, weakened by hunger, willingly surrender. By midday, the Black Lion of the Heldannic Order is flying once more over the castle. Many of the residents of the city are surprised not to receive ill treatment at the hands of their conquerors, though isolated incidents do occur. Oceansenders are even more surprised to see, later on, the disciplining of those knights who did inflict needless harm upon the people.

Once the majority of the fighting is over, Wulf summons those administrative heads of the city, including King Olaf, that can be found, and orders them to sign a pledge of service of the knights, or be exiled from Oceansend for life. While most opt to leave the city unharmed, a small handful makes the pledge. Olaf does not have this luxury; he is instead imprisoned, but treated well as is due someone of his social standing. Once this is done, Wulf orders a proclamation be made to the people, to the effect that Oceansend is once more part of the Heldannic Territories, and is both subject to all its laws and a beneficiary of the order's protection. (*See Fy. 1, Fy. 19; Am. 13, Am. 19.*)

What This Means: Oceansend's period of independence is over, and it is once more a dominion of the Heldannic Territories. In line with the new policy towards conquest that is developing among the knights, the defenders of Oceansend were shown remarkable leniency. Few citizens were killed after the fall, and those public officials who refused to swear loyalty to the city's new rulers were given the opportunity to leave in peace. While there are some elements among the knights who wish to see Olaf dead, Wulf realizes that to do so would jeopardize his army's position in the region. Instead, he decides to keep Olaf prisoner, and possibly ransom or exile him at a later date, whichever option is the most expedient politically.

What the PCs Can Do: If they sided with the knights, the PCs could find themselves making sure the populace does not rise up against the knights. If they were among the city's defenders, they might already become involved in plans to free Olaf, or to weaken the conquerors' hold on the region.

Ambymont 11, AC 1016: Murkits Succumb.

Location: Plain of Grass, Ethengar Khanates. OW

Description: Manghai succeeds in bringing the last of the dissenting Murkit tribes under his command when he defeats the troops of Ortu Khan in battle. The Murkit clan is now whole once more, and Manghai can turn his attentions to uniting the other clans under his banner. (*See Fl. 11, Fl. 16; Ka. 28.*)

What This Means: For the past few months, Manghai has been warring with factions within his own clan that have not agreed with his rule. Chief among these were followers of Ortu, cousin to the former Golden *Khan*, Moglai. Ortu had long sought to steal away the leadership of the Murkits, and saw his opportunity upon the death of Moglai *Khan*. Unfortunately, his ability to lead and the strength of his followers was significantly less than that of Manghai *Khan*, and he lost his bid to leadership.

Ambymont 11, AC 1016: Underocean Debates End.

Location: Confederate Capital of Ionace, NACE. AS

Description: The Alphatian Council enters into another day of debates over Underocean. Nearly a majority of the council now favors an alliance with Underocean. However, the proclamation of Alphatia's claim to the Alphatian Sea released earlier this year is used as a basis by a few holdouts to stall the proceedings. They are left without a leg to stand on when the tritons offer a shocking proposal: they inform the council that Underocean is willing to join the NACE as full member. A few protests are made at the idea of allowing non-Alphatians into the confederacy [*although the Thothians, whose role was pivotal in creating the NACE in the first place, have been esteemed members for years. Ed.*], but the protesters are outvoted. (*See Fy. 19, Am. 4; Sv. 8, Ei. 1.*)

What This Means: King Juliast was beginning to get worried over the stall in the proceedings. He sent orders to the delegates to offer to join the NACE if they deemed necessary.

Ambymont 11, AC 1016: Battle at Regent's Pass.

Location: Regent's Pass, Kingdom of Alpha, NACE, Southern Bay Marches. NW

Description: While some Qeodharan ships are staging hit and run raids off the western coasts of the Alphan peninsula, the main body of the Qeodharan army tries to invade it by taking Regent's Pass from the southwest. There they are met by the garrison manning the keep, who fight valiantly even though outnumbered. When their commander, Sire Rodnox, is captured on the field, all seems lost for the Alphan soldiers.

However, a new contingent of soldiers enters the fray unexpectedly, causing much terror and confusion among the Qeodharans. An army of small red-skinned, horned beings begins attacking the invaders using magic, strange weapons and even biting and clawing, causing many of the Qeodharans to fall to the ground poisoned. The Qeodharan field commander orders a retreat by the end of the second day of siege, and the troops head for Ossian. (*See Am. 2, Am. 5; Am. 14, Am. 17.*)

What This Means: The Redhorn diaboli arrived just in time to save the day for the Alphan soldiers. Contacted by Madiera after the attack on Alpha, they swiftly assembled their army and marched towards the pass to help the Alphan garrison defend it, knowing that the invaders would probably have tried to take it. They turned up to be the proverbial ace up Ericall's sleeve, as few remembered that Redhorn is only forty miles away from Regent's Pass.

What the PCs Can Do: They can either fight with the garrison, maybe preventing the capture of Sire Rodnox, or be the ones who guide the diaboli's counter-attack against the Qeodharans.

Ambymont 12: Jailbreak.

Location: City of Oldsbury, Kingdom of Bellayne. SC

Description: Troops loyal to Lord Mortimer "the Defiant", Earl of Penwick, manage to break the arrested parliamentarians out of Oldsbury Prison in a daring assault before dawn. They are spirited away to the town of Norchester in Penwick before the army can respond. When in Norchester, the parliamentarians join the Earl of Penwick in demanding the abdication of King James II. Elements of the army loyal to the parliament or sympathetic towards Wyndham join the rebels in Penwick. King James II rallies his supporters as well, including most of the royal Bellaynish army and resolves to crush this insurrection before it spreads. (*See Fy. 7, Am. 1; Sv. 4, Sv. 16.*)

What This Means: Civil war has broken out in Bellayne between the supporters of Wyndham and the supporters of the king. Although King James believes he can crush the rebellion quickly, the Wyndham party is strong and the war is likely to drag on for some time. Both sides set about rallying troops.

Ambrymont 12, AC 1016: Battle in the Skies.

Location: Mumlyket of Nagpuri, Kingdom of Sind. OW

Description: Serraine is suddenly beset as a dozen metallic beasts appear and assault the city with devastating firepower. On closer inspection, it is seen that the beasts are in fact *skyships*—the long disused Volospin's Dragonflies of Doom. They are soon joined by two more *skyships*, one coming from the south (the Flying Barge of Sayr Ulan), and one that looks much like a giant red and yellow Heldannic *warbird*. Together, the *skyships* cause much damage to the flying city and the nagpa, never very warlike, simply do not have the manpower and the skill to take down the *skyships*. They manage to destroy 3 of the ships, but turn tail and fly the city out of the battle as fast as they are able, having sustained some serious damage to their drive somehow. The ships do not pursue, but take the battle to the Master's forces. The Master quits the field, sending his troops to lockdown Sayr Ulan, now that Chandra has tipped his hand. (See Fy. 22, Am. 3; Sv. 2.)

What This Means: Upon first hearing of the flying city's presence in Sind, agents of Darokin immediately set about finding a means to combat this threat. They approached Glantri, known to have several airships they recently used against the Ethengars. The Glantrians would not allow their newest ships to be used in combat not directly affecting the nation, but they did find another alternative. They hired out the contingent of *dragonflies*, at an exorbitant rate, to the freedom forces of Sind. The somewhat unreliable and overly expensive *skyships* were recently recommissioned (too late to aid in the Ethengar war), and Glantri hopes to refill its coffers after last year's war. The destroyed *dragonflies* will cost the freedom forces even more.

The additional vessels are the Flying Barge of Sayr Ulan (commissioned by the *rajadhiraja* many years ago), and the *Transforming Gargantoid* of Ferdynand Lillipot (currently transformed into its yellow and red *warbird* shape—see AC11: *The Book of Wondrous Inventions*). Ferdynand joined the assault merely to test his vessels capabilities.

The damage to Serraine's jet-drive was caused by Erik van Helsing and rebel gnomish forces that did not evacuate the city during last year's takeover.

Ambrymont 12, AC 1016: Explosions Rock a City.

Location: City of Alchemos, Kingdom of Meriander, NACE, Bellissaria. AS

Description: The city of Alchemos is rocked by a series of three explosions, at the university, the palace, and one of the army barracks. Damage at the university and palace are light and there are few injuries. However, the explosion does cause the barracks to collapse; twenty soldiers are injured, six perish. After touring the damage and visiting the wounded, an outraged King Hubertek orders an investigation. (See Fy. 27, Am. 5; Sv. 27.)

What This Means: With the events in Notrion and the return of Siaron as Queen of Lagrius, elements of the NACE fear the council is exhibiting a definitive preference to the spellcasters of the NACE. A group of radicals have taken matters into their own hands, by planting explosive substances in establishments that they see as supporting a magocracy. With the university and military targeted, Hubertek has the army's might and the university's magic in the investigation.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs in the kingdom may find themselves hired to investigate the bombings. They may also find themselves hired by the bombers to act as bodyguards and to smuggle them out of Alchemos. PCs arriving in the city may find themselves under investigation as possible suspects.

Ambrymont 12, AC 1016: Doom Falls on the Plains.

Location: Barony of the Free Plains, Southern Bay Marches. NW

Description: The combined forces of Baroness Allisa Patrician and Lord Brogahn of Ublaat-Nor, currently stationed in Allisa's Barony of the Free Plains and ready to march westwards against the treacherous Barony of Ossian, is thrown into chaos when the Flying Doom (a flying *phaseship*) pops up out of nowhere and starts attacking them from above. The army soon disbands and many squadrons scatter to the four winds to avoid utter destruction under the *phaseship*'s artillery. After causing much amok and many losses, the Flying Doom disappears once again cursed by both Allisa and Brogahn. It remains in the area, however, suddenly reappearing to thwart any attempt to reorganize the forces made by both nobles. (See Fy. 1, Am. 2; Am. 16, Am. 21.)

What This Means: The Black Duke discovered that Ericall asked for reinforcements and was expecting the troops of Lady Allisa and Lord Brogahn, so he moved to intercept them and to damage them as much as possible. This way he hopes to have gained enough time to take Regent's Pass once and for all.

Ambrymont 12, AC 1016: New Ties for a New Era.

Location: City of Tarthis, Kingdom of Nithia. HW

Description: Ramose, *Pharaoh* of Nithia, declares that, as a first step to thanking the Empire of Selhomarr for its intervention in the recent upheavals suffered by the Nithian people, he will send a cadre of diplomatic emissaries to the distant nation as a sign of friendship, and as a hope for a new era of greater cooperation.

Reaction to the announcement is mixed, but generally hopeful. (See Th. 24, Ya. 5.)

What This Means: Ramose has taken the first steps to repay the political debt he owes Emperor Tamaris of Selhomarr for his aid in the recent campaign to depose Senkha and restore him to power. Although considerable distances separate the two nations, he feels there are benefits to be had in building stronger ties. Sending an ambassador is the first step, but he hopes, over time, that the Selhomarians will see Nithia as a friendly nation with similar interests to their own. The fact that having Selhomarr as an ally may cause the Milenians to think twice before attacking Nithia has not been lost on Ramose, either; some of his advisors are urging him to develop contacts with key Selhomarian officials, to bring the empire "on side."

One likely development of this is the establishment of more regular trade between the two nations, and possibly other exchanges.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are of a high enough level, and if they performed bravely during the war against Senkha's forces, the PCs may be rewarded by being given a diplomatic posting to Selhomarr, opening them to the intrigues and adventures of that far-off realm.

Ambrymont 13, AC 1016: *Skyship* Yards Open on Terentias.

Location: Grand Duchy of Terentias, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: After the evacuation of Aegos, the Thyatians began contemplating where to rebuild the *skyship* yards they removed from the island. Research materials were relocated to Borydos for use at the main base there. But as the Borydos Naval Shipyards are a covert research site, a more typical base was needed—one at which an academy for the training of *skyship* crews could be established, as well as a construction site. Retebius was considered, but they were already overburdened training new Air Knights. Terentias was finally selected because its people are already familiar with (normal) shipbuilding procedures, and its location on the other side of Thyatis from Borydos would reduce the possibility that both bases would be captured simultaneously. (See Fl. 12.)

What This Means: The Thyatians will continue the process of constructing a fleet of *skyships*. Construction on a new class of vessels, somewhat improved versions of the first ships the Thyatians constructed, will begin in the next several weeks. An academy for the training of *skyship* engineers and crews and instruction in tactics (as well as coordination with other types of troops, including Air Knights) will be built on Terentias. Plans are put in motion for the opening of construction yards in Thyatis City, but those won't be started until next year.

What The PCs Can Do: Players loyal to Thyatis and familiar with *skyships* might find work here.

Ambymont 13, AC 1016: Barony of Shebb Vanishes.

Location: Barony of Shebb, Tranquil Coast. NW

Description: Marching northwards along the coast after the conquest of Oceansend, the Heldannic Knights invade the Barony of Shebb, located on the southern fringes of the Tranquil Swamp and just east of Oceansend. They encounter no resistance and all the small hamlets they find in their way are empty and abandoned. Arriving in the location where the capital city should stand, they find nothing, just a barren area with some leftovers and conspicuous traces of many people coming in the area from the countryside. Even the port facilities are missing, and after some inspections only traces of strong magical dweomers are detected. After making sure that no threat lingers in this territory, the knights formally declare the conquest of the Barony of Shebb and proceed westwards. (*See Fy. 19, Am. 10; Am. 19, Sv. 1.*)

What This Means: Seeing that the knights were winning their battle against Oceansend, Baron Shebb Woolsey asked his friend and magist, Knolimer Knolin, to devise some escape plan should the “fanatics of Vanya” come and get their territory as well. The mage, in a flash of inspiration, began to work on a strange magical incantation at the beginning of the siege of Oceansend, and completed it only a couple of days ago. With this spell, the wizard miniaturized the city after the baron had amassed all his subjects inside its walls, and after storing it in a special force field, he put it in his pocket and *teleported* away to another safer location. There he restored the city and its inhabitants to their normal size and they resumed their life away from the knights’ threat.

Ambymont 13, AC 1016: Fiend on the Run.

Location: Kingdom of Huyule, Hulean Empire. SC

Description: A powerful creature of Entropy set loose during the Battle of the Three Lords brings destruction and terror in the countryside of central Hule. (*See Fy. 14, Fy. 15.*)

What This Means: Joramurak, a groaning fiend, was unbound from his planar existence by a powerful Hulean wizard during the battle. While under control of the magic-user he wreaked havoc in the ranks of the nomads and mountaineers. However, his summoner was slain during a duel of high magic with a Kyurduk mage; since then, Joramurak has been free of wandering and bringing chaos in the Prime Plane, which he becomes increasingly amused by.

Ambymont 14, AC 1016: Gnollish Attacks on the Rise.

Location: Black Peak Mountains, Kingdom of Karameikos. OW

Description: Many villages and towns near the Black Peaks have been victims of increasingly aggressive gnollish attacks from the surrounding mountains. The larger settlements, such as Riflian and Threshold, have managed to weather the assaults with a minimal amount of casualties, but several smaller villages have been razed to the ground. King Stefan commissions troops from King’s Road Keep to supplement the town guards.

Additionally, the northern settlements find their medical facilities severely taxed by casualties from the gnollish raids as well as the treasure seekers. (*See Kl. 9, Fy. 12; Sv. 4, Sv. 10.*)

What This Means: The increased adventuring activity has riled up the gnollish clans of the mountains, and they are striking out at nearby human settlements. This is yet another difficulty caused by the discovery of the Lost Valley.

Ambymont 14, AC 1016: Reaction to Independence.

Location: Confederate Capital of Ionace, NACE. AS

Description: A hostile declaration of independence like that of Verdan could not go unquestioned. After long discussions with the council, Favian Vern makes an official declaration in the name of both the Republic of Esterhold and the New Alphatian Confederate Empire: the independence of Verdan declared by Governor Draeh is illegal and

unconstitutional; Verdan remains a province of Esterhold, which is a member of the NACE. Governor Draeh is stripped of his functions as both governor and magistrate.

As soon as the news is known in Verdan, rebel Jennites start fights both in Faraway and in the Verdan countryside, justifying their raids by the Alphatians' untrustworthiness—they cannot even hold true to the democratic principles that naturally led the Jennites to power and to independence, blatantly showing that they are not ready to accept equality. (*See Am. 3, Am. 4; Ka. 13.*)

What This Means: Draeh has drawn the Alphatians into the trap he had prepared for them: seize power through the rules the Alphatians have set themselves, and use that power to force them to invalidate the elected Jennites and their decisions. With just a little propaganda aimed at their illiterate fellow Jennites, it was easy for the rebels to convince them that the Alphatians were not ready to play by the rules and let them decide their own future, but instead wanted to keep them under their rule and enslave them.

After months of relative calm, the Verdan province is again in chaos.

Ambrymont 14, AC1016: Ne'er-do-well Volunteers.

Location: Kingdom of Ne'er-do-well, Alatian Islands. SD

Description: From the pirate city of Crossroads, capital of Ne'er-do-well, King Koryn the Harpist announces that his kingdom volunteers to join the Alphatian confederacy. A representative will be sent to Ionace in a matter of days. (*See Fe. 18, Fy. 22; Am. 25.*)

What This Means: With the recent takeover of neighboring Gauty, and with Alphatian troops still present in the Alatiens, King Koryn quickly drew the conclusion that his nation was the only one still independent in the region. Not aware of the agency's motivations, but well aware of the treaty that has just been ignored, he concluded that Ne'er-do-well might well be the next one in line for an invasion.

Ambrymont 14, AC 1016: The Regent Brigade Barricades.

Location: Regent's Pass, Kingdom of Alpha, NACE, Southern Bay Marches. NW

Description: The Qeodharans attack the Alphan garrison at Regent's Pass again. This time however, they have been reinforced by a contingent of undead warriors provided by the Black Duke, who are sent to meet the diaboli front line. Immune to the poisonous natural attacks of the diaboli, the undead engage the nightmare creatures while the Qeodharans kill them from the rear lines using arrows and ballista bolts. Lacking the reinforcements from Lady Allisa and Lord Brogahn, the garrison cannot stand the enemies' renewed assault in the open field and the survivors barricade inside the keep. (*See Am. 5, Am. 11; Am. 21, Am. 23.*)

What This Means: The garrison has been seriously beaten back. The Alphan troops were hoping fresh forces would have come from the western baronies, as the diaboli reported after their arrival, but no reinforcements came, and the current garrison couldn't stand the strengthened army of the Qeodharans. The latter, after the initial setback suffered at the hands of the diaboli, accepted the Black Duke's offer of "fighting the fiendish creatures with other fiends" and incorporated undead in the ranks. Although still uneasy at the sight and smell of the zombies and skeletons in their front line, the tactic seems to have worked well, and they now prepare to storm the keep in a couple of days.

What the PCs Can Do: Resist and fight back, if they are in the Regent Keep. Alternatively, they could be sent to Alpha or to the Free Plains to report the bad news and ask for reinforcements.

Ambrymont 14, AC 1016: Feathered Serpents Attack.

Location: Road east of Huitlaktilma, Azcan Empire. HW

Description: From the warm jungle around emerge dozens of feathered serpents, who attack Chupicuaro's army from the flanks and from above. The serpents are driven back, but not before they have inflicted several casualties

and disorganized the column. The officers are unable to impose a forced march to catch up, as the soldiers are afraid of falling into another trap and proceed carefully. (*See Am. 1, Am. 3; Am. 28, Sv. 13.*)

Third Week

Ambrymont 15, AC 1016: The Overlord's Plan.

Location: City of Alpha, Kingdom of Alpha, NACE, Southern Bay Marches. NW

Description: Contacted via magical means by Madiera, some of the most powerful rulers and champions of Norwold come to Ericall's castle, answering the call of Overlord Ethendril h'Caramore. After informing them of the situation in the Barony of the Free Plains and at Regent's Pass, h'Caramore explains the heroes his plan. Each of them is assigned a specific mission to complete, one their special powers and skills will be most useful for. The overlord stresses the fact that those who accept the duty are not allowed to quit the field until the problem is solved. Should they need assistance or discover new vital information, however, they have to contact him immediately to arrange a new course of actions. At the end of the meeting many of them travel the faster they can towards the assigned area, while others return home and get ready for their duty. (*See Am. 12, Am. 14; Am. 16, Am. 17.*)

What This Means: Ethendril h'Caramore has come to the conclusion that Norwold's future is in the hands of its rulers, and that if the armies are not powerful enough to repel the invaders, then a well assembled group of hard seasoned heroes and adventurers are the right solution to the whole problem. Thus he has called all the reliable and most powerful individuals of the Norwold Confederacy and asked them to openly take the matter into their own hands. After settling the last things in their own dominions, they will head for their next destination as soon as possible.

Currently, the problems h'Caramore wants to be solved are numerous: the Qeodharan invasion of Odinia, the siege of Regent's Pass, the treachery of Ossian, the blockade of the Strait of Todstein, the Heldannic invasion, the Flying Doom and the Dragonwars.

The main problem for the Norwold lords is that they cannot begin to work on their problem right now, since their seneschals are still missing and they cannot leave their dominion in the hands of untrained people. They are waiting for Ambrymont 16th, when the meeting with the seneschals' kidnapper is due; then, after ransoming the kidnapped people, they will turn to face the problems the overlord has assigned them.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are among Norwold's most famed heroes or rulers, they will surely take part in this heroic action and can decide which of the current problems in Norwold they want to address.

Ambrymont 16, AC 1016: Elvish Alliance.

Location: City of Glantri, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: The shadowelf ambassadors in Glantri reach a secret agreement with Carlotina Erewan. She offers her help in healing the forest (Erewans being masters of the Runic secret craft) in exchange for the shadow elves' help, should Kol's goblinoids or the evil shadow elves from the City of Aengmor ever threaten her principality in the future.

A dozen of Erewan mages are immediately dispatched to Rafielton to help saving Canolbarth Forest. (*See Fe. 10, Fy. 26.*)

What This Means: This is a good political achievement for Carlotina, because she now has a powerful ally against her dangerous southern and western neighbors, but she also has another reason for helping the shadow elves: the life of her Tree of Life, a daughter tree, depends on the mother tree that is currently in Canolbarth.

Ambrymont 16, AC 1016: Battle on the Flying Doom.

Location: Dragon River's mouth, south of Hopeland, Wyrmsteeth Mountains. NW

Description: Many Norwold Lords meet at the mouth of the Dragon River to ransom their henchmen. After fending off the attacks of a few young wyrms who chose to attack the wrong party, the lords are suddenly ambushed by a shower of arrows, ballista and catapult bolts. Those who manage to survive must then confront a flying squadron of well-armed and well-trained pegataurs, which descends on them from the clouds. After dispatching a few pegataurs, some of the Norwold lords (those who can fly) head for the clouds. There they discover the Flying Doom (the Black Duke's *phaseship*), ready for another volley of rocks and arrows, and they immediately board it and engage in close melee.

At the end of the battle, the ship crashes wrecked by spells on the mountain below, but the Black Duke manages to *teleport* home before it is too late. After a thorough investigation of the crash site and a quick talk with the dead captain's spirit, it becomes obvious that the Black Duke is working for none less than Alphaks! The information is immediately reported to Ericall. (*See Fy. 16, Am. 2.*)

What This Means: The Black Duke staged this meeting to divert the lords' attention from the other parts of Norwold and to try to eliminate them all at once. However, the Norwold lords have shown their might once again, and their combined forces have destroyed the seemingly unstoppable Flying Doom, causing the Black Duke to lose his most precious weapon. Yet, the duke still holds the seneschals imprisoned in his fortress, and this gives him a last card to play.

What the PCs Can Do: Show their bravery and kill the baddies!

Ambrymont 17, AC 1016: Eastern Allies.

Location: Mumlyket of Jalawar, Kingdom of Sind. OW

Description: Two legions of Darokin's 5th army, backed by mixed Atruaghin forces, join up with the army of Rani Drisana Madhar. Though little more than token troops, they serve to demonstrate to Hulean forces that the Sindhi revolution has the full support of the republic. (*See Am. 6, Am. 12; Am. 26, Sv. 2.*)

What This Means: Darokin is doing what it can to aid the revolution, and has supplied some troops to assist in the liberation of Jalawar. There are various representatives of Atruaghin clans, as well; these troops are mostly holdovers from last year's war with the Tiger Clan who have not yet disbanded, and are eager for the spoils of war. Some few troops are representing the interests of the Bear Clan, which has begun efforts at more extensive diplomatic relations with Darokin.

Ambrymont 17, AC 1016: Regent's Pass Falls.

Location: Regent's Pass, Kingdom of Alpha, NACE, Southern Bay Marches. NW

Description: After three days of siege, the garrison of Regent's Pass finally surrenders to the Qeodharans and the creepy undead's assaults. Seeing no sign of relief troops or help from the outside, and having contracted a debilitating disease, they are forced to submit to the invaders and are carried away in chains. Many of them end up in Ossian, while others are taken to Odinia. All the diaboli save a few specimens (whom the Black Duke wants for his personal studies) are executed on the spot. (*See Am. 11, Am. 14; Am. 21, Am. 23.*)

What This Means: The garrison could not resist much longer, since they were few in numbers and some of them had shown signs of a magical disease probably inflicted by the undead in the Qeodharans' army. They hoped the enemy would have cured them instead of killing them all, and so surrendered. Unfortunately, all the soldiers found sick were swiftly killed and burnt in a big pyre, along with the "fiendish" diaboli. Now that this keep is secured, the Qeodharans can start preparing the major invasion of the Alphan peninsula, which is effectively cut off from the rest of Norwold now.

What the PCs Can Do: Through their actions, the siege could still be prolonged and maybe broken. If captured, they could still try to flee, maybe freeing other soldiers with them.

Ambymont 17, AC 1016: A Feeble Attempt of Revenge.

Location: City of Bluenose, Kingdom of Arogansa. Floating Continent of Alphatia. HW

Description: While strolling the streets of Bluenose, Karyndra and Tazzal are attacked by a trio of ruffians. Before help can arrive, Tazzal has dispatched each of the assailants. (*See Kl. 3, Fy. 22.*)

What This Means: The attack is another attempt by Alphaks to get at Karyndra. Unlike His previous attempt, a depleted follower base hinders Alphaks—the previous raid on His followers has virtually eradicated them. The few surviving followers are widely dispersed, some even in hiding. Alphaks is forced to send what He can to do the job; these amateurs are no match for Tazzal's mace and spells.

Ambymont 17, AC 1016: We Are All Children of Pflarr.

Location: Town of Buenos Viente, *Baronia del Grande Carrascal*. SC

Description: The lupins who fought alongside the gnolls to defend the barony from the goblin horde discover that the Long Legs officers are actually a separate race from the gnolls, the Hutaakans. Realizing the intellectual ascendancy they have over the gnolls, they hypothesize that the Hutaakans may actually be the true worshippers of Pflarr among the gnolls. The lupins try to gain acceptance into Buenos Viente and make contact with the Hutaakan priests of Pflarr. (*See Va. 3, Ya. 16; Sv. 9, Ka. 14.*)

Ambymont 18, AC 1016: Race for the Crown: to the Victor...

Location: Century Hills, Duchy of Hattias, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Stellmann Grimm has labored persistently at promising dig sites throughout Hattias for over three years, searching for the Crown of Thyatian Emperors. His morale had begun to sag at the beginning of the year, and in near despair he almost gave up. Justinus's failure to discover the crown re-invigorated Grimm. Today, his persistence pays off as Grimm's diggers uncover the fabled crown along with a few other lost antiquities from the Hattian rebellion. Eager to announce his vindication, Grimm packs up the crown and other interesting items and sets out for Port Hatti, intent on rubbing his accomplishment in the faces of the pretentious scholars of The City. (*See Fl. 6, Fl. 10; Am. 22, Am. 27.*)

What This Means: Grimm's success may prove the empire's ruin. Word will quickly reach the ears of those who want to use the crown for their own ends.

Ambymont 18, AC 1016: The First Skirmish.

Location: Kingdom of Qeodhar, NACE. AS

Description: While on patrol along the southeastern coast of Qeodhar, a small patrol of soldiers is ambushed by a group of screaming Antalians, armed with swords and axes. Not expecting anything out of the ordinary, the soldiers are caught off-guard, and are dispatched quickly. (*See Fe. 14, Fy. 8; Sv. 15, Ei. 4.*)

What This Means: This is the first of several attacks against lone patrols of Norlan's soldiers. The Antalians stay within their own territories, but they manage to keep their enemies from venturing too deeply within their lands, and to gain a considerable amount of weapons and other equipment.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are on the side of the Antalians, they might be participating in this developing guerrilla war. They could also be serving as spies for the *jarls*, keeping track of troop movements, and ensuring that no enemies escape. If the PCs are working for Norlan, they could be spying on the Antalians, while posing as supporters. In this way, they could be discretely feeding information to the authorities about the Antalians' activities.

Ambymont 18, AC 1016: A Meeting of the Minds.

Location: City of Blueside, Kingdom of Lagrius, NACE, Bellissaria. AS

Description: The rulers of the various Bellissarian kingdoms come together in Blueside for a council-sponsored meeting. Representing the council is Ragmon of Thothia and Commander Broderick. After dining and some casual socializing, Ragmon has the Bellissarian rulers take their seats to begin the discussions.

Ragmon announces that Veroth will buy its grain from Notrion, and that as a consequence the financial aid given Notrion by the NACE will be stopped at the end of the year. He refers to it as a logical continuance of the past trade relations between Randel and Notrion. Broderick adds that the Veroth troops will be integrated into the NACE's armed forces; however, with their reputation of militarism they will assume a heavier role in NACE's defense.

Next on the agenda is the matter of the Surshield raiders. Ragmon suggests dividing Surshield into three smaller kingdoms. He offers that Gratia will remain as ruler of a smaller, more manageable Surshield with Spearpoint as its capitol. Pending the discovery of a suitable ruler, a military governor will govern the kingdom bordering Dawnrim. The remaining kingdom will be left as an anarchy; the ruler of that kingdom will come from that populace.

The premise of subdividing existing kingdoms draws serious debate. King Teskilion leads the opposition by citing his fears that other kingdoms may find themselves subdivided in the future. Ragmon states that he should have concerns as the council has debated dividing several other kingdoms, but the Thothian also tells him that there are no immediate plans to do this elsewhere. Surshield is a special case; one that Teskilion himself brought to the council's attention. Since Gratia does not oppose this move, the opposition against it wavers and it is approved.

Ragmon then brings up the matter of Bellissaria's defense and turns the matter over to Broderick. He notes the general lack of defenses and strongly urges military cooperation between the kingdoms. He suggests that the kingdoms make efforts to train together when possible and urges the construction of forts in strategic positions.

Broderick motions to Verothrics and his entourage to offer their input on the matter. Verothrics points out some strategic spots to erect forts and also stresses cooperation between the Bellissarian kingdoms. He points out the participation of Horken and Dawnrim forces in Zandor's attack upon Surshield in AC 1012; with cooperation, Bellissaria could have easily stood up to Zandor and Seashield's forces. (*See Fy. 11, Fy. 14; Sv. 3, Ei. 11.*)

What This Means: The council organizes this meeting to bolster unity between the Bellissarian kingdoms. The subcontinent has found itself the heart of the Alphantian holdings; as such, it has to be unified. The rise of Veroth at the expense of Notrion has stirred up some discord on Bellissaria. Most of the issues discussed have already been decided upon, this forum allows the council to get some feedback.

Ambymont 18, AC 1016: Giants March over Chitine.

Location: Duchy of Chitine, Kingdom of Alpha, NACE, Western Bay Marches. NW

Description: Small warbands of fire giants cross the borders with Chitine from the west and begin to lay siege to and destroy a few towns and villages, accompanied by red dragons and packs of hell hounds. The Knights of Chitine do their best to fend off these raiders, but since their leader, Duke Ney, has transferred the bulk of the army to the Alphan Peninsula in order to protect Alpha, they soon start to lose ground. Messengers are sent to Leeha, Siegeria and the Barony of the Elms to rally other troops. (*See Am. 25, Sv. 5.*)

What This Means: The leader of the fire giants, Coiger de Mory, a power-hungry cleric of Rathanos, has decided to launch his offensive at his neighbor while he is busy with other problems far away. Coiger is not an acknowledged Norwold ruler, but the Black Duke has enlisted him on his side to throw more chaos into the war. Coiger has chosen the best moment to strike, and if things go well, he will not stop here.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are with the Knights of Chitine or are passing by in Chitine, it is time to show how powerful they are by repelling giant warbands and red dragons before they sack and burn hapless towns.

Ambymont 19, AC 1016: Kildorkak Negotiates.

Location: Kildorkak Lands, Tranquil Coast. NW

Description: A delegation of the Rocktooth dwarves of Kildorkak meets the Heldannic Knights stationed in the foothills of their mountain (some one hundred miles northwest of Oceansend). They offer the knights their manpower and skills in producing fine weapons, armors and other items in exchange for their independence. They accept to provide the Heldannic Knights with all the items they shall need, provided they renounce to invade their stronghold. *Oberherr* Friedrich Karlsberg, in charge of the negotiations, agrees with the dwarves' proposal, but firmly states that even though the knights won't march over Kildorkak, it will be now be considered a subject state of the Heldannic Territories. As such, they shall accept an Heldannic overseer, who will report monthly on their state of things to the high priest. After much debating, the dwarven clan leader signs the treaty of alliance with the knights. (*See Am. 10, Am. 13; Sv. I, Sv. 15.*)

What This Means: The Rocktooth dwarves are a proud and stout lot, but they are not stupid. Seeing how Oceansend fell to the knights, and judging the forces the Heldannic Knights were able to muster on the battlefield through some spies' reports, the dwarves calculated that they could have stood against them no more than a month (considering the fact they could have exploited their better knowledge and use of their mountain territory). Trying to prevent this useless waste of dwarven blood and to arrange a beneficial agreement with the knights, the clan leader and the elders chose to negotiate the submission. On their part, the knights showed to be surprisingly more receptive and tolerant than what expected—a clear sign of Wulf's new policy and reform in the order.

Ambyrmont 20, AC1016: Beasthunter Joins Durifern.

Location: Enoreth Shrine, Forest of Geffron, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: While traveling through the western part of the Forest of Geffron, the small warband led by Beasthunter stops at the holy shrine of Enoreth. To their deepest surprise, they are met by none others than Durifern and his scouts, who greet the warband once they recognize each other. Durifern explains that Enoreth Shrine is their new hideout inside Geffron, and from there they are launching raids against the Shadow Army patrolling the woods as well against Drax Tallen. They have not been able to free many crusaders so far, but with Beasthunter and his Long Runners' magic, their chances will improve. Both leaders are stunned at learning the news regarding the situation in Wendar and the elves' alliance with the undead, but they swear to change the situation or to die trying. (*See Ya. 25, Fy. 16.*)

What This Means: The Alfheimers currently warring against the Shadow Army in Geffron numbers about 1,500, with another 300 vampire elves under Sylarion's banner. Together they could be able to inflict serious losses to the Shadow Army, especially now that it lacks the guide of a competent tactician like the Shadow Lord. Their hit and run tactic is now the best way to exploit their natural tie with the forest, and the elves know it. A long winter awaits them, the honor crusade is not finished yet.

Ambyrmont 21, AC 1016: Regent's Pass Reconquered.

Location: Regent's Pass, Kingdom of Alpha, NACE, Southern Bay Marches. NW

Description: The combined troops of Lady Allisa Patrician and Lord Brogahn march on Regent's Pass and quickly lay siege to it, disposing of the undead guards thanks to the help of Blind Wooster and his apprentices' clerical powers. By the end of the day the Qeodharans manning the keep are outnumbered and they surrender to the assailants; the battle has been swift and not really bloody. The keep is once again in control of Ericall's loyal forces. (*See Am. 14, Am. 17; Am. 23.*)

What This Means: Once the Flying Doom's threat was erased, Allisa and Brogahn were able to assemble their army of cavalrymen and footmen and march rapidly towards the keep. The Qeodharans had not expected such a rapid turn of the tables and were caught by surprise, since the body of their army was still on its way from Odinia to Regent's Pass. Now they will have to change their plans and invade Alpha by sea, since the army of the Free Plains and Ublaat-Nor is too well positioned and well trained to be defeated in a short time, as Norlan would like.

What the PCs Can Do: Participate in the conquest of the keep.

Fourth Week

Ambymont 22, AC 1016: Race for the Crown: ... Goes the Spoils.

Location: Town of Port Hatti, Duchy of Hattias, Thyatian Empire. OW

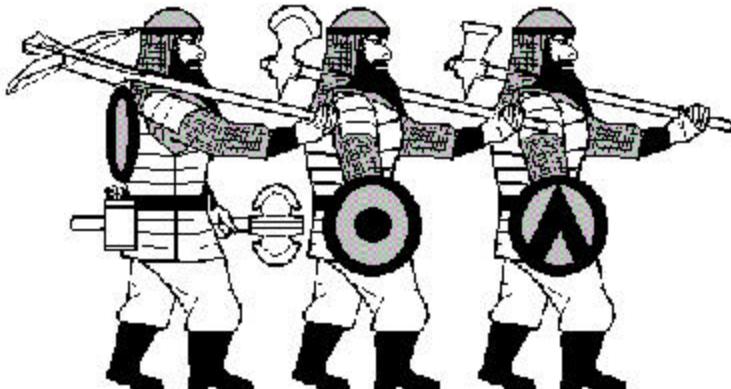
Description: Stellmann Grimm arrives in Port Hatti late in the afternoon. Though eager to get to the city, he decides to stay overnight in local accommodations and make a grand entrance tomorrow morning. He sends word ahead and books a room, drinking into the night and bragging while his men guard his discovery. Late that night a group of Hattian Storm Soldiers burst into the inn, slaughter Grimm and his men, and make off with the crown and other booty. By morning imperial constables are searching for the Storm Soldiers, but without success. The Hattians do their typical “I know nothing” routine, common when Storm Soldiers are involved in crimes on Hattias, and actively hinder the imperial constables. (*See Fl. 10, Am. 18; Am. 27, Sv. 10.*)

What This Means: Hansel Oesterhaus directly commanded the Storm Soldiers. Word of the crown’s discovery reached Heinrich Oesterhaus’s ears almost immediately after it was uncovered. He immediately dispatched Hansel to recover it. Heinrich begins to unleash a plot, which will have widespread consequences for Thyatis, Hattias, and possibly all of Mystara. However, Hansel’s use of brute force rather than stealth, may alert the emperor of a potential threat: had the crown simply disappeared, few would have believed Grimm discovered it in the first place. Heinrich is enraged by his “son’s” mistake.

Ambymont 22, AC 1016: Assault on Kurald.

Location: City of Kurald, Kingdom of Rockhome. OW

Description: The allied forces, having rested and recuperated, reach Kurald after marching for several days. The attack on the fortified town begins in earnest. (*See Fy. 6, Am. 2; Sv. 7, Ei. 4.*)



Ambymont 22, AC 1016: Bad News from the West.

Location: City of Raven Scarp, Thyatian Empire, Thyatian Hinterlands. DV

Description: A small group of armed men enters Raven Scarp today at noon. They bear clear signs of a brutal fight and are tired after traveling for weeks. Questioned by the captain of the guards on duty, they explain that they are the sole survivors of the group that accompanied Lord Vitalis, a newly appointed baron, to his dominion. After reaching their destination, they were ambushed by some Hinterlanders and the group split: from what they know, nobody else has made it back to Raven Scarp. After hearing the news, General Leilah, Commander of Raven Scarp, sends a letter to the Vitalis family in Thyatis to inform them of the tragic events. (*See Fe. 20, Fe. 25; Sv. 16, Sv. 17.*)

What This Means: Lord Vitalis's dominion was located in the Jackal tribal lands. Unfortunately, some of the carriers and scouts he hired were Jackal tribesmen infiltrators in Raven Scarp: their plan was to set up traps and ambushes for the newcomers like Baron Vitalis to prevent them from colonizing and invading their lands. Lord Vitalis and his entourage were caught in the trap unprepared and all contacts between this group of survivors and the rest of the party were lost soon afterwards. The mercenaries believe all other members of the expedition have been killed or enslaved by the Hinterlanders, and they will not return to that place.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs can either choose to remain with Lord Vitalis and protect him or to join those mercenaries who decide to escape and return to Raven Scarp.

Ambymont 23, AC 1016: Massacre at Regent's Pass.

Location: Regent's Pass, Kingdom of Alpha, NACE, Southern Bay Marches. NW

Description: A flock of dozens of white and crystal dragons attacks the troops stationed at Regent's Pass during a mild snowstorm, destroying the keep and slaughtering hundreds of soldiers before the barons order a general retreat westwards. At the end of the day, only draconic shadows lurk over the pass and a great crystal wyrm solemnly seats over the ruins of the old keep. (*See Am. 17, Am. 21.*)

What This Means: The dragons of the Wyrmsteeth have watched the events happening in Regent's Pass from the distance in the past week. Now a draconic clan living nearby has decided to intervene and claim the land where the humans have fought each other so fiercely, believing it to hold something very important and valuable (at least that's what the mysterious female voice told the draconic clan leader in his dreams). The Draconic Earl Zyntharxim of Kiussen now controls this part of the Wyrmsteeth and will not tolerate any invasion, human or draconic alike.

This is both a boon and a disadvantage for both adversaries in the war. On the one hand, the army of the confederacy cannot march on Ossian anymore, since the way is blocked by the dragon-infested Wyrmsteeth. But on the other hand, the Qeodharans have now lost all hopes of reclaiming Regent's Pass, since the dragons are far stronger than the armies of Lady Allisa and Lord Brogahn are (as they have shown on the field). A stalemate has occurred in this area.

What the PCs Can Do: It is highly unlikely the PCs will be able halt a flock of 30 dragons from taking the pass, so they had better leave before it is too late.

Ambymont 25, AC 1016: Broderick Leaves Alatians.

Location: Kingdom of Gait, NACE, Alatian Islands. SD

Description: With the situation clearer in the Alatians, Commander Broderick leaves the archipelago and heads for the Alphatian Sea. A large contingent remains garrisoned at Gait in an effort to restore peace to the island. (*See Fy. 22, Am. 14; Sv. 19, Ei. 8.*)

What This Means: Arogansa and Eagret Islands were scheduled to be secured as part of an effort to claim all the loose islands in the Alphatian Sea started at the beginning of the year. After most such islands were reclaimed, the effort was delayed because of the Treaty of Helskir that required military efforts to be diverted to Aegos.

Ambymont 25, AC 1016: Reinforcements Arrive in Chitine.

Location: Duchy of Chitine, Kingdom of Alpha, NACE, Western Bay Marches. NW

Description: Reinforcements from Leeha and Lord Quillan of the Elms arrive in Chitine to help the Knights of Chitine repel the brutal invaders. Only Siegeria refused to send troops, answering to the messenger that they need the army to counter the dragons' raids on their villages. With the help of the added soldiers, the knights are able to stop the giants' advance while waiting for the return of General Ney. (*See Am. 18; Sv. 5, Sv. 13.*)

What This Means: Coiger does not want to show all his real strength for now, but he is slowly preparing to deal the winning blow to the Duchy of Chitine while it is still vulnerable.

King Sieger von Down's reason for not sending troops was not completely true, however. Indeed he needs them to protect his people from the dragons, but he has also sealed a pact of non-intervention in the area with the Black Duke's messenger. In return, the Black Duke agreed to give Sieger his seneschal back once the war was over and also extend his lands to the nearby Dragonard and Leeha should he send his army in battle against the Norwold Confederacy. Up to now King Sieger has only remained neutral, also because his old time friend Count Shuren is working for Ericall and he does not want to stab him in the back.

Ambymont 26, AC 1016: Dark Skies over Hopeland.

Location: Town of Friedenburg, Barony of Hopeland, Wyrmsteeth Mountains. NW

Description: The Dragonslayers (Zerben's company) return in Friedenburg, the capital city of Hopeland, running away from Dragonard. They find a wrecked city and citizens who run for their lives, panicking at every cloud that casts its shadows on the ground. After a private talk with the demoralized Baron Day, they offer him their help to chase off all the invading dragons and begin their little war to protect Hopeland, trying to put an end to the great chaos they have caused. (*See Fy. 20, Am. 1; Sv. 20, Ei. 10.*)

What This Means: Ever since the beginning of the Dragonwars, the skies of Hopeland have witnessed the passage of dozens of different dragons, and the valleys below have echoed with the cries and shouts of the victims of the great wyrms' ruthlessness and ferocity. Baron Day has fought valiantly to defend Friedenburg and the countryside, but many of his followers have died at the dragons' claws and the once proud Claw Brigade (the elite force of Hopeland) has now been reduced to but a handful of loyal and brave fighters. With the arrival of the Dragonslayers the situation is going to change a little bit, but as soon as the dragons will notice that the Dragonlord is in Hopeland, a even more terrible wrath will descend upon those valleys.

What the PCs Can Do: Fight alongside the humans to defend their settlements, trying to put an end to the Dragonwars in the meantime.

Ambymont 26, AC 1016: Reinforcements Sent.

Location: Town of Magden, Kingdom of Birgidir, Hulean Empire. SC

Description: To counter the growing troubles in Sind, the Master has decided to send some of his recently reorganized troops. Even if these troops are far less powerful than the tremendous hordes sent during the invasion of 1005, they still represent considerable manpower. (*See Am. 6, Am. 17; Ei. 3, Ei. 15.*)

What This Means: The Master has decided that he will not abandon Sind without a good fight and without plundering the last riches of the desert nation. It is also a good way for him to reward his most loyal troops, which helped him turn the tide of the recent battle to keep his empire together.

Ambymont 27, AC 1016: Storm Soldier Enclave Raided.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Officers of the imperial guard raid the headquarters of the Storm Soldiers in Thyatis City during one of their weekly meetings. They arrest all present, killing a few who try to resist. They discover evidence of a variety of crimes, and all in custody are soon tried for various offenses. Hansel Oesterhaus is not among either the captives or the dead. (*See Am. 18, Am. 22; Sv. 10.*)

What This Means: Eusebius sent the imperial guardsmen in the hope that the crown would be recovered. Evidence for most of the crimes the Storm Soldiers are charged with, while plausible (assault, killing of foreigners), was planted by the guardsmen. It isn't as though the Storm Soldiers are innocent, but they are practiced at leaving no witnesses or evidence. But Eusebius needed an excuse, so he invented one.

Ambymont 27, AC 1016: Dragon Trap.

Location: Idris Tower, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: After a common meeting of the members of the Onyx Ring, the order decides to further advance its plan for the Wyrmsteeth region. Following the proposal of Karyan, one of the youngest and most ambitious members, they plan to lure the Immortal Dragon Rulers to the Prime Plane and trap them inside the Orb of the Great One. This way, the Cult of Idris will remain the only one preaching draconic superiority in Norwold, and Idris will finally be worshipped also by the Wyrmsteeth dragons, who will unite under Idris's banner to exterminate the humans and demihumans responsible for the disappearance of the Dragon Immortals. The ring immediately informs the high priestess of their plan and together they begin to alter the orb and stage the trap for the Great One and his sidekicks. (*See Fy. 25; Sv. 16.*)

What This Means: Karyan's ambitious plan is simply too alluring for the Onyx Ring and the high priestess to dismiss it without trying. They now have an excellent opportunity to stage it and all the means to execute it, so they will arrange for what will be remembered as their greatest master stroke. If everything goes as planned, this year will celebrate Idris's predominance over the whole northeast of Brun.

Ambymont 28, AC 1016: Qeodharans Get a New Ally.

Location: City of Alpha, Kingdom of Alpha, NACE, Southern Bay Marches. NW

Description: Alpha's skies are once again threatened by an aerial menace when a group of five large white dragons swoop down on the highest towers of the city and destroy a few roofs, causing the collapse of one of the city guards' towers. An imposing blond bearded man rides the biggest of the dragons, and flying over Ericall's palace he mocks the king and his guards, throwing a *fireball* in the crowd before disappearing into the clouds. (*See Am. 9; Sv. 7, Sv. 10.*)

What This Means: This is but the first of the pirate mage Oberack's raids on Alpha and the nearby lands. The Qeodharans have managed to hire the pirate for a hefty sum to keep the confederacy occupied with his roguish assaults while they organize a new strategy to storm and conquer Alpha before the end of the year. They contacted him and his marauders earlier and they sailed northwards, stopping in the Barony of the Swordcoast awaiting orders. After the destruction of the Flying Doom, the Black Duke and Ejrik Bergstrom (Admiral of the Qeodharan Navy) felt it was time to play this ace up their sleeve and had Oberack and his pirates sail northwards. They hope that Oberack will act as a replacement for the Black Duke's flying ship.

Oberack, counselor at the court of Ostland, came to Norwold with his flying ship and a small flotilla of pirates to plunder and raze in the old Ostlander tradition. He is not interested in the Norwold War, he just took the opportunity to sail once again and feel the elation of raiding in order to forget the problems (i.e. the civil war) he had to face in Ostland in the past year.

Ambymont 28, AC 1016: Battle at Atacoatli.

Location: City of Atacoatli, Azcan Empire. HW

Description: The followers of Quetzalcoatl storm the gates of the city of Atacoatli, a notoriously Atzanteotl-supporting city. Battle lasts the better part of a day, and goes on in the ensuing days, but the unprofessional militia and forced conscripts are no match for Otzilipac's military. Within a few days the followers of Atzanteotl either lay dead or are forced underground, and the main temples are desecrated. (*See Am. 3, Am. 14; Sv. 13, Sv. 19.*)

What This Means: Without the support from the military of Fort Zitapan, this was an uneven match. The clerics of Atacoatli did send for support, as the approaching army had long been spotted, but the officers prudently avoided taking sides, as many of them abandoned faith in Atzanteotl after last year's shameful sacks of the Azcan cities by Neathar and Malpheggi warbands and the ensuing inappropriate reaction from the priesthood. Some fanatics do desert and boldly fight at the side of the Atacoatlan clergy, but there are too few of them to make any real difference.

TOPIC OF THE MONTH: *The Thyatian Reformation*

By Vivianna Romanones

Insightful observers have for some time been aware that the Thyatian Empire was not as vigorous as it once was. Maladministration and venality among some elements of the nobility and within the government itself made “Thyatian” a byword for corruption in some nations. This decline was first noted in Thyatis itself after the Alphatian Spike Assault of the mid 10th century AC.

When Emperor Thincol took the throne he did his utmost to reverse this process, and a resurgence of Thyatian strength began. The recent Great War swept away the gains of his rule, however, and exposed for all to see the dissolute self-centeredness of some of the most prominent families of Thyatis. These people showed an almost Alphatian sense of narcissism, evidencing none of the traditional Thyatian virtues which made the *imperium* strong in the past. Their lack of interest in the commonwealth made the defeats during the early stages of the war almost inevitable. Though Thincol did his best to set things right, promoting able commanders and weeding out the dissipated and worthless ones, he could not work fast enough to prevent retreat and near disaster.

Many thought that in the aftermath of the war the empire would be able to right itself. Its most inimical enemy, the foe of all free Mystarans, was gone. But the humiliation at the hands of the insignificant Thothians showed that Thyatian society still was not working right. Thothian knaves were even able to deploy weapons of mass destruction within the Thyatian heartland itself, something not even the Alphatians had managed to do—or even been wicked enough to do. This embarrassment convinced many of those who at first refused to believe there was anything wrong within the empire that strong steps needed to be taken to restore it to its former greatness.

The rise of a new, dynamic emperor determined to not only restore the empire but to overhaul it and initiate much-needed reforms has caused tensions in Thyatian society. He has purged the senate of dead wood and put public-spirited men in charge of the imperial civil service. The Thyatian military is being reorganized and modernized; it will be a smaller but stronger force, better able to defend the empire’s interests in a dangerous world.

Laws had not been enforced properly, because many judges were corrupt. While it is inarguable that Thyatian slaves live better lives and have greater legal protections than even the servant class of Alphatia, some think that the institution of slavery has no place in today’s Mystara. Emperor Eusebius has walked a middle ground, insuring that the legal rights of slaves are observed. Intemperate judges who ignore the law have been removed from office. The rights of Thyatian citizens are being re-emphasized with a new concentration on local government through republican institutions.

Though Thyatis is known as a center of trade, Thyatian mercantilism suffered in recent years by comparison to nations like Minrothad, Darokin, and even lowly Karameikos. Eusebius has adopted programs to support the development of a strong internal trading network within the empire, and to encourage enterprise beyond it. The new Mesonian Millworks, adapting Darokinian methods combined with Thyatian efficiency and ingenuity, is one of the surest signs of Thyatian resurgence. The imperial tax system has been changed, with an eye on encouraging reconstruction and discouraging inefficiency.

The emperor knows that though Thyatian methods were necessary to save the world from enslavement by the Alphatians, the expediency this required ironically made the *imperium* unpopular in many nations that nonetheless benefited from our vigilance. Now that the Alphatian threat has disappeared, he is interested in forging better relations with the Mystaran family of nations, through honorable diplomacy.

But though the emperor’s reforms are popular among the common Thyatian people, not all are contented. Many powerful families that were stripped of title and position are grumbling. Some see the emperor’s reforms as a threat to the very traditions he seeks to preserve. Many are not happy with the new, efficient administration—especially those that built their fortunes on graft and corruption. How these tensions will work themselves out remain to be seen, but it is likely that some of those who want to retain their prerogatives will be willing to stoop as low as treason.

But for the patriotic and intelligent, there is no choice. The emperor’s reformation is long overdue. The traditional Thyatian virtues can only be preserved by adapting to a changed world and by uprooting corruption and restoring civic pride.

EVENTS: SVIFTMONT

First Week

Sviftmont 1, AC 1016: Peace and Prosperity?

Location: Kingdom of Ochalea and Kingdom of the Pearl Islands, Thyatian Empire. SD

Description: Over the coming weeks in a series of well-publicized strikes, Thyatian ships and soldiers strike at the hives of outlaws plaguing the island states. Furthermore, the harbors of Ochalea and the Pearl Islands see as much traffic in three months as they did all last year, as Thyatian ships heading towards Davania *[skirting the Twaelar-infested center of the Sea of Dread. Ed.]* and Bellissaria on trade missions make stopovers. Life in the islands improves suddenly and steadily. (See Fy. 17, Am. 10.)

What This Means: Since imperial agents had ties with many, if not most, of the bands of pirates it was almost absurdly easy to track them down. Crack Thyatian forces, hardened in the Great War and the fights against the Twaelar, were able to defeat the undisciplined buccaneers quickly. Those pirates who can flee go south into Davania or east towards the Minaean Coast. The bands fleeing east include many groups who were sponsored directly by the emperor, a quiet payback for the aid the NACE supposedly gave to the Twaelar.

What the PCs Can Do: Parties interested in swashbuckling adventure on the high seas will find their hands full. They can either be detailed to hunt down a particularly ruthless and crafty pirate leader, or if fighting on the other side they will find themselves faced with elite Thyatian maritime forces backed by both priestly and wizardly magic in lavish quantities. Mercantile players can now open up trade routes to the islands; they will find the upside lower than before, but the potential for huge losses decreases dramatically as well.

Sviftmont 1, AC 1016: The Heldannic Knights Parlay.

Location: City of Alpha, Kingdom of Alpha, NACE, Southern Bay Marches. NW

Description: A Heldannic *warbird* (Sturmkondor class) swoops over Alpha and demands an audience with King Ericall. After the Alphans overcome their initial distress, they accept to let the *warbird* land outside the city walls and escort a small delegation of knights to Ericall's palace. There the Heldannic Knights inform Ericall that the High Priest of Vanya has decided to stop their advance and sign a truce with the Norwold Confederacy states. In exchange for their exit from the war, the knights demand the northern lords to acknowledge their rulership over the lands conquered so far east of the Wyrmsteeth Mountains (including the Final Range), from Landfall to Kildorkak, and to renounce to all claims over that territory. The knights give Ericall and his subjects two weeks to evaluate this proposal. Then they will meet again in the neutral capital of Littonia on the fifteenth day of the month to either sign the truce or to declare war against the Norwold Confederacy. The knights then return aboard their *warbird* and fly southwards. (See Am. 13, Am. 19; Sv. 15.)

What This Means: Wulf von Klagendorf has judged this to be the right moment to stop the Heldannic advance in Norwold. The confederacy is slowly losing ground against the Qeodharans and the dragons, and they have been virtually cut off from southern Norwold by the knights themselves. The high priest knows that it would be a bad move to advance northwards in this moment, for crossing the Wyrmsteeth would surely attract other unwanted attention on the dragons' part. So he has decided to halt the campaign for the time being and to tighten his control over the conquered lands (which still harbor small bands of fundamentalists and renegades), and he hopes that the difficult situation that Ericall is experiencing could help him to strengthen his claims over Norwold. This is meant to be only a temporary truce to Wulf, and once the winter becomes milder, the knights will probably resume their march if the right conditions are met.

Sviftmont 1, AC 1016: A Cooperative Counter Strike.

Location: North of City-State of Ukoy, Krugel Horde Territory. HW

Description: An orcish encampment is rocked by the war cries of elves and Neathar raiders. The two people sweep down upon the unsuspecting orcs and wreak grievous damage upon them. The raiders fall back from their assault with few losses, leaving behind the dead and dying orcs, bounders, and war ponies. (See Sv. 25.)

What This Means: Icevale elves and Neathar tribesmen have come together in retaliation to the orc raids of last year. The Neathar and Icevale had originally entered into this act of vindication separately but the war parties had discovered each other weeks ago and decided that it would be beneficial to join forces. After eliminating the orc sentries, the raiders are able to enter the encampment virtually unopposed. They are swift and accurate with their vengeance, leaving few orcs alive. With some of their own wounded, the elves and humans pull back from the encampment, then soon afterwards part ways and head for their respective homelands.

What the PCs Can Do: Icevale or Neathar PCs may find themselves involved in the raid and the egress back home. Likewise, orcish PCs may be called upon to enact the horde's revenge.

Sviftmont 2, AC 1016: Sayr Ulan Under Master's Control.

Location: City of Sayr Ulan, *Mumlyket* of Sindrastan, Kingdom of Sind. OW

Description: The Master's forces in Sindrastan have all converged on the capital city of Sayr Ulan. Once more, Hulean forces have the city under a tight lockdown. The Master figures that the effectiveness of the resistance's *skyships* will be much reduced here in the city, where innocents can be hurt. *Rajadhiraja* Chandra Ul Nervi and a small force of loyal men are besieged in the palace, as the Master's forces attempt to bring him to justice.

Elsewhere, the Master's forces tighten grip on held territories. (See Am. 17, Am. 26; Ei. 3, Ei. 15.)

What This Means: The Sindhi revolution is reaching a peak. Having built up over the course of time since the Hulean occupation, their rebellion has hit its mark, and the Sindhi are attempting to regain their homeland. This battle in the streets of Sayr Ulan will be a very important one, if only for its symbolic significance—Sayr Ulan is the capital of Sind, and the victors of this battle will likely be the winners of the entire war for freedom.

Sviftmont 3, AC 1016: Veroth Troops March.

Location: Kingdom of Veroth, NACE, Bellissaria. AS

Description: Troops from Veroth are sent to establish a fortress at the mouth of the Lagrius River. At the same time, other military men are sent abroad to other kingdoms of the NACE to act as military advisors. Another body of troops departs for Ionace to act as an official guard detachment to the NACE Council. (See Fy. 14, Am. 18; Ei. 1.)

What This Means: These deployments are a result of the defense measures discussed on Ambymont 18. The fortress at the mouth of Lagrius River is actually a pair of fortresses, one on each side of the river. They will oversee the security of the river and will be garrisoned by three nationalities of troops: a mixture of Notrion and Veroth troops will garrison the fort on the Notrion side, and a mixture of Veroth and Dawnrim troops will garrison the other fort, on the Dawnrim side.

Several platoons of Verothian troops have been sent to Ionace to serve as an honor guard to the NACE Council, a carry-over from a similar contingent stationed at the pre-war imperial capital. Aside from being a ceremonial unit, the troops' officers will act as military liaisons to the council.

Also departing from Veroth are several advisors. These soldiers are to evaluate the armed forces of the NACE then offer advice to areas that need it. They are also tasked with working out plans for future cooperative training maneuvers between the forces. Several rulers have voiced their disagreements in receiving advisors, seeing it as being classed as amateurs and the Verothians as the professionals.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs may find themselves participating in any of these deployments. How they fit into the scheme of things, depends upon their histories. This could be a great opportunity to "retire" an aging PC from

adventuring. Though the days of dungeon crawling may be over, the adventure has but begun, as PCs may find the monsters of Alphatian politics more exciting and dangerous than any goblin horde or dragon's lair.

Sviftmont 3, AC 1016: Dragons vs. Warbirds vs. Dragons.

Location: Southern Wyrmsteeth Range. NW

Description: After constant reports of draconic incursions into the Heldannic territories north of Landfall, a squadron of two light *warbirds* is sent to investigate and dispose of the problem. The two *warbirds* are attacked as soon as they start flying over the foothills of the Wyrmsteeth by a flock of small white dragons led by a great crystal wyrm. The two *warbirds* fend off the attack using their *blight belchers*, then engage in aerial combat using their armaments to injure the dragons.

The battle seems to be turning in favor of the more numerous dragons when another large group of black wyrms appears in the sky. This new flock unexpectedly turns against the white ones, engaging in a furious melee combat, and the two *warbirds* are able to escape the fray and hide in a small crevasse watching the outcome of the battle. The crystal dragon is forced to flee along with a few followers, while the black wyrms start circling the area looking for the *warbirds*. When one of the Heldannic ships exits its hideout to meet the dragons and propose an alliance, the wyrms dart towards the ship and attack it, tearing the whole crew apart and looting the wreckage of the *warbird*. The other *warbird* takes advantage of the situation to fly away while the dragons seem distracted in pillaging the ship and eating the corpses, and returns to Landfall to report to the governor. (*See Am. I.*)

What This Means: This is only another event that testifies how extended and fierce the Dragonwars have become. The dragons do not attack only the human settlements of any nationality (Heldannic Knights' outposts and *warbirds* in this case), but they are also bent on each other in a war for supremacy. The white and black wyrms were fighting for territory, and each leader was trying to reinforce and enlarge his chain of command over other dragons. The wyrms use all possible means to gain power and wealth, even luring humans into their lairs to stage ambushes or pitting humans against rival dragons to defeat both once they have weakened each other in battle.

Sviftmont 4, AC 1016: Messenger from the Valley.

Location: Town of Threshold, Kingdom of Karameikos. OW

Description: A strange duo enters the town of Threshold, an Atruaghin tribesman and a bugbear. After some difficulties with the town guardsmen, the Atruaghin man requests to speak with Patriarch Halaran. The matter of their discussion is kept private, but the following day finds Patriarch Halaran arranging a trip to Mirros, the capitol city. The duo will go with him. (*See Fy. 12, Am. 14; Sv. 10, Sv. 12.*)

What This Means: The Atruaghin, a magic-user known as Killing Moon, and his bugbear companion Haarl, have arrived from the Lost Valley. They are members of the expedition that set off to the region in AC 1014, under the patronage of a Darokinian merchant. Upon their arrival in the valley, the group was embroiled in the running war between the Hutaaka and Traldar. The merchant, a halfling named Finnwiddey Nimbletoes, has desperately been attempting to reach some sort of accord with the two groups living in the valley. He had been making some headway, when suddenly treasure seekers began to discover the valley and disrupt things once more. Frustrated, Finn sent Killing Moon and Haarl to try and gain the king's attention and help put a stop to the chaos that has ensued.

Sviftmont 4, AC 1016: Denagoth Sends Ambassadors.

Location: City of Wendar, Kingdom of Wendar. OW

Description: During a state meeting with representatives of the major communities, Bensarian introduces to the Wendarian authorities two ambassadors from Denagoth. Catching everyone by surprise, he solemnly states that he has received a message from the Most High Priestess of Idris, who has appointed the two as official representatives of Denagoth to Wendar. In order to open a new era of peace and diplomatic and economic relationship, the two men carried a chest full of gold, gems and other luxuries as symbol of Denagoth's goodwill. The only request the high

priestess made to Wendar is to deport all Alfheimers to Denagoth, since they are guilty of treachery and assault against the Denagothian realm.

The Genalleth elves openly refuse the peace treaty with Denagoth, reminding all present of the Shadow Lord's treacheries in the past. They leave the meeting without waiting for Bensarian's reply, deeply concerned by the sage's actions. The human authorities, although suspicious, do not see anything really offensive in the high priestess's request, and give their consent. Bensarian thus orders all Alfheimers, without distinction of clan, to be put into prison camps. They will be sent to Denagoth next year using special caravans, after political arrangements are made with Denagoth to insure it will not invade Wendar. The law is passed with only half of the council members' votes. (*See Fy. 14, Fy. 27; Sv. 10, Ei. 18.*)

What This Means: Another major stroke for Idris and Her minions. The high priestess has now changed her policy: seeing that warfare and brute force did not work to conquer Wendar in all the past years, she is now using the subtle art of deception to infiltrate Wendar and change it from the inside. Idris's vengeance against the elven race will be directly helped by the Wendarians themselves, and before they understand what's going on, Wendar will be a Denagothian province.

Sviftmont 4, AC 1016: News of a Father's Survival.

Location: City of Rardish, Kingdom of Randel, Floating Continent of Alphatia. HW

Description: Queen Junna is contacted by Empress Eriadna and told of the survival of her father, King Verothrics, and his founding of the Kingdom of Veroth. Junna is pleased and forwards the news to the kingdom's elite. She immediately writes her father. (*See Fe. 4, Fy. 9.*)

What This Means: Junna is truly glad that her father still lives. As her father, she can use his advice in ruling his kingdom. News of his survival bolsters her rule as most rivals think it unwise to usurp the daughter of their former king. Alive, he can call upon loyalists to avenge any moves against his daughter. Of course, the news is withheld from citizens unaware of Alphatia's true history. Junna also writes her father to ask for advice; given the distance, it will be some time before she gets a response.

Sviftmont 4, AC 1016: Church Sides with Rebels.

Location: Blackheath Castle, Kingdom of Bellayne. SC

Description: Andrew Sewell, parliamentary leader of the Wyndham party, and Archbishop Blythe-Jackson of the Church of Belbion meet at the principal fortress of the Bishopric of Kitting to discuss an alliance against King James II. The archbishop has been visited by Vanya in a dream and told that King James will end up destroying Bellayne unless the church allies with the Wyndham faction to defeat him. The two leaders quickly come to an agreement of alliance: the Bishopric of Kitting will now lend its support to the Wyndham faction. Meanwhile the king marshals his troops in Lemminster; he intends to march north to attack Norchester hoping for a quick victory before winter sets in. (*See Am. 1, Am. 12; Sv. 16.*)

What This Means: The rebels have gained a powerful ally. They now control much of the northern section of the country from Hampstead in the west to Glenswych in the east.

Sviftmont 5, AC 1016: The Fiery Fury Hits Chitine.

Location: Duchy of Chitine, Kingdom of Alpha, NACE, Western Bay Marches. NW

Description: An imposing wave of fire rolls down from the western mountains to flood the plains of Chitine and burn down everything in its path. It is a whole army of efreet and fire elementals which is now marching on the troubled Duchy of Chitine, led by the very Duke Dahish, leader of the efreet community which dwells in the northern volcano in the Arch of Fire. The Knights of Chitine are forced to retreat aghast in front of the destructive force of the enemy. (*See Am. 18, Am. 25; Sv. 13, Sv. 19.*)

What This Means: Coiger de Mory has finally managed to convince the lord of the efreet to join him in his plan of conquest [*Coiger is a priest of Rathanos, after all. Ed.*]. Duke Dahish has marshaled on the field some 500 elemental warriors to be sure of the outcome of the campaign. It will be a hot winter for Chitine.

Sviftmont 6, AC 1016: Alphatian Census.

Location: Confederate Capital of Ionace, NACE, and City of Andaire, Kingdom of Alphas'ar, Floating Continent of Alphatia. AS, HW

Description: The NACE Council decrees that it will initiate a census to discover the properties of the new empire, in the hope that it will provide the NACE with a concise registry of its inhabitants. The council also requests a similar census to be held among the Alphatian nationals living outside the NACE's boundaries; Karameikos agrees to the request.

A similar census is initiated by Empress Eriadna in the Hollow World at the request of the NACE Council.

What This Means: The NACE even more so than Alphatia is really unsure of what its population sizes are. They are also curious to see who survived the Great War. The census will not only answer these questions, it will also do much to improve the economy: knowing how many people live in a kingdom and what they do for a living will be used to revamp their tax and tribute collection organization. Mainly it will insure that the member kingdoms are paying their proper amounts.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs affiliated with the NACE may find themselves recruited to act as escorts through the holdings of the NACE. Along the way, the PCs may find themselves involved in all manners of side adventures.

Sviftmont 6, AC 1016: Quest for the Dragonlord.

Location: Tower of Arcadia, Barony of Arcadia, Icereach Domains. NW

Description: Arcadius, Adik de Chevas and Sieger von Duhn meet in Arcadius's castle to discuss the recent events on Arcadius's request. They have discovered what has happened in Dragonard by questioning some dragons (either friends of the two baron-sages, or prisoners of the king) and agree that the key to end the Dragonwars is finding the Dragonlord and the missing artifact. As to what they will do with him once they catch him, this is still under debate. Also, the three wizards understand that before peace can be restored in the Wyrmsteeth they must facilitate the re-establishment of the ruling hierarchies. Each one has a different idea about this subject, and they part their ways swearing to do all they can to stop this senseless slaughter. (*See Fy. 25, Am. 1; Sv. 20, Ei. 10.*)

What This Means: The three most powerful wizards of Norwold (nicknamed the Caretakers by some rulers) have once again banded together to solve one of the greatest problems Norwold has had to face in years. They are determined to put an end to the war without endangering too much their people and will go to great lengths to ensure that the dragons will not cast Norwold into a geopolitical chaos. They have the power and wits to do it, and Overlord h'Caramore knew this when he assigned this matter to both Arcadius and Adik (Sieger is acting outside the confederacy).

Sviftmont 7, AC 1016: Thar on the Run.

Location: City of Kurald, Kingdom of Rockhome. OW

Description: The allied army finally breaks through Thar's defenses and invades the town. As a last-ditch effort, Thar has a white dragon (servant of the frost giants of Jotunheim) attack the allied forces. Orclander skinwing riders distinguish themselves, however, as they confront the flying dragon single-handedly. Though it inflicts a number of casualties to their ranks, they damage it enough to drive it off.

Fortunately for Thar, the dragon was able to cover for fleeing goblinoids. The orc-king is forced to retreat into the wilderness, where he will join up with the forces of Duric, Bifia, and Psa'gh. The goblinoids are going to have to regroup and rethink their plans of conquest, but they have inflicted a lot of damage on the dwarves.

The dwarves and their allies, meanwhile, spend the next few weeks rooting out any pockets of goblinoid resistance in the nearby countryside. Then they will return to Dengar for much awaited celebration. (*See Am. 2, Am. 22; Ei. 4, Ei. 27.*)

What This Means: The goblinoid offensive in Rockhome has been broken—for now. The masterminds behind the assault are still at large and will be plotting their return very soon. They have managed to inflict a lot of damage to the sparsely populated surface regions of the Klintest Lowlands, and King Everast will have to attempt to make reparations. Strangely, the whole occurrence has revitalized the flagging spirits of the Rockhome dwarves, and reinstilled a sense of national pride within them. Even the belligerent Torkrest and Hurwarf clans have begun to once more feel a sense of responsibility to the monarchy of Rockhome, and a sense of gratitude to their neighboring nations.

The skinwings were the primary means by which Alebane, Tlatepetl, Hutai *Khan*, et al escaped from Oenkmar (along with stolen dwarven lava rafts); several of the Oenkmarian soldiers have brought them along with them. They are not available in large numbers, by any means, but there are a few skinwings among the Oenkmarians. Tlatepetl has begun a breeding project and set his men to capturing more from underground in order to restock the skinwing population.

Sviftmont 7, AC 1016: Nordenhafen Switches Sides.

Location: *Jarldom* of Nordenhafen, Kingdom of Alpha, NACE, Great Bay. NW

Description: During one of his aerial raids against the Norwold lords, the pirate wizard Oberack attacks the island of Nordenhafen. In the following duel with *Jarl* (Baron) Bardeen's army, led by the baron himself, Oberack proves to be a fierce and powerful pirate and the soldiers of Nordenhafen flee in front of his dragons. Left alone on the battlefield, Bardeen Longwalker bows in front of the pirate wizard, acknowledging his superiority, and then humbly asks Oberack to join his crew. The pirate laughs loudly and accepts the old warrior's request, declaring Nordenhafen an Ostlander protectorate. Bardeen then accompanies Oberack and his crew to his castle to celebrate the alliance in the traditional Ostlander ways. (*See Am. 9, Am. 28; Sv. 10.*)

What This Means: Bardeen Longwalker is an old stout Ostlander fighter who chose to carve out a dominion of his own many years ago. For this reason he went to Norwold and swore fealty to Ericall, taking possession of the small island in the center of the Great Bay. However, he soon grew bored with the common problems of a ruler, deeply missing the old days when he was a brave warrior and followed the code of honor. When this new war started, he saw a great opportunity for getting back his youth's excitement, but Overlord h'Caramore assigned him the duty to keep the western Great Bay's waters free of raiders and invaders (which was not so difficult since the Strait of Todstein was blocked). The coming of Oberack finally changed the situation and he felt the joy of the battle once again. The Ostlander pirate wizard reminded Bardeen of the old kinship to his homeland, and seeing him as a mighty conqueror, he finally chose to switch sides and return to serve Ostland. This decision and Oberack's proclamation could have important repercussions in the future political scenario of Norwold.

Second Week

Sviftmont 8, AC1016: The Shadow Lord Shows His Colors.

Location: Guardian Mesa, Unknown location in Mystara.

Description: After recovering six of the seven keys needed to open the gate to the Pits of Banishment, where the Black Staff is located, the heroes working for the elven crusaders and Wendar decide to try and get the last one. One of them offers to stay behind on the Guardian Mesa to keep the keys so far recovered. The group accepts the proposal and enters the last unexplored realm.

Once left alone, the party member pulls another magical key out of his robes and uses them to open a gate that reveals a large black chasm with a floating castle on the other side. Grinning with pleasure, he steps in and begins the difficult trip to the castle's gate. (*See Nu. 24, Va. 9; Ei. 10.*)

What This Means: The wizard left behind by the heroes was the Shadow Lord, who cheated them all by helping them recover the keys to get to the Carnifex' prison. He wants the Black Staff because he thinks it will give him the power to turn Idris's high priestess into one of his undead minions. This way he will finally get revenge for the decades of "slavery" he spent under Idris's yoke, but above all he will get back his phylactery and attain full lichdom.

When the heroes will discover his treachery, they will surely follow him in the Pits of Banishment, hoping to stop him before it's too late.

Sviftmont 8, AC 1016: Underocean Joins the NACE.

Location: Confederate Capital of Ionace, NACE. AS

Description: Underocean officially joins the NACE, becoming the first non-Alphatian member state *[except for Thothia, a founding member. Ed.]*. King Juliast arrives on Ionace to personally sign the NACE's constitution, but leaves shortly thereafter. He first appoints Arantria as his delegate to the council. (*See Am. 4, Am. 11; Ei. 1.*)

What This Means: Juliast left because of the discomfort of remaining on dry land. With the acquisition of Underocean, the NACE has made its desire to control the entire sunken continent of Alphatia one step closer to reality.

Sviftmont 8, AC 1016: Nordalfheim.

Location: Barony of Ironwood, Final Range. NW

Description: On a long-awaited official visit to Ironwood, Zoltan the White announces that he is to become the high priest of the Faith of the Ancestors, the religion originally created by Lord Blackblade as a way of uniting the elven clans. This religion, which is composed of a pantheon of Immortals that have been worshipped by elves in various places and times, is led by Ordana and comprises Ilsundal, Mealiden, Eiryndul and Calitha Starbrow. Zoltan renames this religion the Nordalfheim Pantheon.

During that same declaration, Elarianthas Blackblade proclaims the foundation of a new elven nation in Norwold, the Kingdom of Nordalfheim, to which all elves of Mystara can come and live under the protection of the Immortals of the Nordalfheim Pantheon. Zoltan recognizes the authority of the king, and the two shake hands.

The news of the merger and the new religion is well received by the elves of Ironwood and the Elms, though the feelings are more mixed in the White Oak. The free Foresthomes elves do not recognize the new kingdom nor the new religion, while the Shiye-Lawr are split between their loyalty to Alphatia and this new kingdom that is not so far from their aspirations. (*See Fy. 13, Fy. 18; Sv. 8, Ka. 20.*)

What This Means: 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, paving the way for the creation of the largest elven kingdom since the fall of Alfheim.

Nordalfheim, the northern home of the elves (which in the Shiye dialect rather means home of the northern elves), is constituted of the former baronies of the Elms, White Oak, and Ironwood. Elarianthas Blackblade is the king, Zoltan the high priest, and Quillan the ambassador to the Norwold Confederacy.

Sviftmont 9, AC 1016: Newcomers.

Location: City-State of Kastelios, Serpent Coast. DV

Description: A Thyatian cargo vessel pulls into Kastelios today to restock essential supplies and to drop off assorted trading goods. Among the various occupants of the ship who disembark are a handful of Thyatian families, originally bound for the Thyatian Hinterlands. After taking in the sights of the city for a few hours, some of the families approach the port authorities to find out how to obtain citizenship, saying that they wish to stay.

What This Means: As trade between Kastelios and southeastern Brun increases, so do personal contacts. Many Thyatian colonists have already passed through Kastelios, but word has spread back to Thyatis about the sophisticated city-state on the northern coast of Davania. Some would-be colonists, not so eager to leave the comforts of city life behind, decide to remain in Kastelios and seek their fortune there. This is a trend that will continue for quite some time.

Sviftmont 9, AC 1016: Gifts for the Dragons.

Location: Duchy of Ossian and Qeodharan Territories of Odinia, Southern Bay Marches. NW

Description: The dragons renew their assaults against the humans living near the foothills of the Wyrmsteeth range, and they particularly hit the dominions of Odinia and Ossian. The Black Duke and his Qeodharan allies are forced to retreat from the foothills and amass their forces in the plains and coastlines, leaving the mountain (and its ores) to the wyrms without much fighting. However, before retreating they leave a nice surprise to the amazed dragons: hundreds of maimed or imprisoned Heldanners and Alphatians, who are immediately taken away by the dragons to be either used as servants, slaves, or, in the worst cases, food. (*See Am. I.*)

What This Means: Even though the dragons' attacks are greatly annoying the Black Duke, he has found a way to enjoy and exploit the loss of territory in favor of the wyrms. He is systematically exterminating the prisoners of war captured by the Qeodharans throughout Norwold by giving them to the dragons, hoping that they will be satisfied with the prisoners as snacks and leave his troops in peace. As soon as rumors about this carnage start spreading in Ossian, the people of the duchy (which is still composed mostly of Alphatians) will begin to scheme to overthrow their evil master.

Sviftmont 9, AC 1016: Lupins Enter Sacred Place.

Location: Town of Buenos Viente, *Baronia del Grande Carrascal*. SC

Description: The lupins from Nouvelle Renardie finally manage to meet with Marshal Vupilor Watak, the High Priest of Pflarr in Buenos Viente, who is less suspicious of lupins than most gnolls and Hutaakans. Upon learning that the Nouveaux Renardois honor the Immortal Pflarr, Vupilor is curious as to any knowledge the lupins might have about the Immortal, as she has been trying for quite some time now to puzzle out the past of her people. When it is revealed that the reformist lupins are engaged in the same kind of quest, both sides wonder, without saying their thoughts aloud, whether the two races might have some common origin after all. (*See Ya. 16, Am. 17; Ka. 14.*)

What This Means: Although Pflarr had long abandoned the surface world, various descendants of His original chosen people have been trying to discover their roots, and have worked to restore their customs and worship of old. Pflarr is the most surprised by this turn of event, as the jackal-headed Immortal is not known for his trust in the mortal races. With no help at all from Him, and despite the added difficulty of the *Spell of Oblivion*'s effects, those two mortal groups have managed to actually gather clues and worship Him, to His complete astonishment.

Sviftmont 9, AC 1016: A Nomad Refuge in the Dark Wood?

Location: The Dark Wood, Hulean Empire. SC

Description: Many nomads from the great army of Ustalam Banshybek have sought shelter at the fringe of the Dark Wood. From this refuge, they launch raiding operations against the neighboring Hulean communities in Huyule and Karsun. Residents of the concerned areas start complaining about the inaction of the Hulean military. (*See Fy. 14, Fy. 15; Ei. 6.*)

What This Means: Consistent with the long tradition of integrating invaders in the Hulean society, the Master has decided to leave the nomads alone in this region. Later, he's planning to send missionaries of the Temple of Chaos to convert them and, eventually, curb them into accepting the Hulean way of life and abandoning their violent behavior.

Sviftmont 10, AC 1016: Alfheimers' Second Exodus.

Location: Forest of the Curse, Kingdom of Wendar. OW

Description: Once the word spreads about the newest law that forces all Alfheimers to be confined into prison camps, all the remaining elves of Alfheim living in Wendar start packing things up and leaving the territory. The Genalleth elves come to the aid of their brethren after remaining passive during all this time, and hide them from the royal guards, helping them cross the borders with Glantri, Norwold and Heldann. The second exodus of the Alfheimers has just begun, only nine years after the event that forced them to leave their homeland, Alfheim. (*See Fy. 27, Sv. 4; Ei. 18.*)

Sviftmont 10, AC 1016: Diplomats in Danger.

Location: City of Mirros, Kingdom of Karameikos. OW

Description: Killing Moon and Haarl arrived in the city a few days ago, along with Patriarch Halaran, and have been awaiting an audience with the king. Assassins make an attempt on the diplomats from the Lost Valley, as they retire to their rooms in the Black Heart Lily. Unfortunately for them, Killing Moon and Haarl prove more competent than was originally thought. None of the assassins escapes alive, and evidence left behind points to the Iron Ring as the masterminds behind the attempt. (*See Am. 14, Sv. 4; Sv. 12, Sv. 28.*)

What This Means: The Iron Ring, a criminal organization that formerly operated out of the Black Eagle Barony, has long been interested in the mysterious Lost Valley. When the adventurer turned up months ago, he was immediately kidnapped and forced to reveal its location. They have since sent a group of their own to take the valley, in hopes of reviving their failing organization. This assassination attempt was made in a last ditch effort to keep the king from getting involved with the Lost Valley before they could take it over.

Sviftmont 10, AC 1016: An Emperor for My Crown.

Location: City of Hattias, Duchy of Hattias, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Heinrich Oesterhaus announces the coronation of Thincol Torion's "first son and true heir" as emperor, claiming that the true emperor is he who wears the true crown. He declares that Manfred Torion Dörfer, the man he has crowned emperor, is Thincol's first son, born a year after Thincol's assent to the Thyatian throne. He pledges Hattian support for Manfred. What is surprising to all is the large number of nobles throughout the empire who do the same. (*See Am. 22, Am. 27; Sv. 17, Sv. 20.*)

What This Means: Divinatory efforts and other investigations prove that Manfred is indeed a son of Thincol. They furthermore prove that he was born after Thincol became emperor, but are inconclusive as to when. Manfred is Thincol's illegitimate child, born no more than six months after he became emperor. Even were he born later this would not normally matter: Thincol derived his claim to the throne by virtue of his marriage to Gabriela, not of his own accord. And though Manfred was born before Eusebius, the Thyatian succession does not necessarily fall to the first born, and illegitimate children are normally excluded in any case.

However, Eusebius's actions, his purges of the nobility and reforms, have disaffected much of the upper classes, and they are willing to turn a blind eye to irregularities and support the revolt. Most elected senators and reformist nobles will support Eusebius, as well as the vast majority of the common people. But Thyatis's traditionalists will back the usurper. This faction includes a significant proportion of Thyatis's warriors (though the regular army, always favorable to Eusebius, will largely remain loyal, the fighting orders are another matter). Thanatos has been active rounding up support behind the scenes through the use of agents and dupes to insure solid support for His plans.

What the PCs Can Do: Characters will likely have natural attachments to one side or the other, and may become involved in the coming strife as infiltrators, elite strike forces, or military leaders. Members of the opposing faction will offer a variety of inducements for characters to switch sides, promising favors and prominence if they transfer their allegiance and help win the war. Even non-Thyatians can get involved, as both sides will hire mercenaries and deniable assets to act on their behalf.

Sviftmont 10, AC 1016: Oberack Defeated.

Location: County of Kameloth, Southern Bay Marches. NW

Description: During one of his daily raids over the coasts of Kameloth, Oberack is surprised by the counter-attack of Count Shuren, who stands alone against him and his whole crew of humans and dragons. At the end of a fierce and swift battle where spells and deadly blows run plentiful, Shuren is finally victorious over Oberack, who disappears in an impressive column of fire evoked by the count. Oberack's crew flies back to Nordenhafen after their leader's demise, not noticing the count slowly plummeting to the ground, mortally wounded as well. The peasants who witnessed the duel swiftly come to their lord's assistance, but they cannot save his life. Mourning over the loss of their heroic leader, the peasants take him to the capital for an official funeral rite. (*See Am. 28, Sv. 7.*)

What This Means: Count Shuren, a skilled wizard and a veteran fighter, waited for days the arrival of Oberack over his territory, preparing a thorough assault plan to prevent the raider to escape his trap. In the end, his tactic proved successful, but it cost him his life as well.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs could confront Oberack earlier and defeat him, thus preventing good Shuren's sacrifice. Alternatively they could help the count in his personal battle, although they will have to do it from afar, since he would resent anyone interfering in his personal duel.

Sviftmont 11, AC 1016: Qeodharan Raids Repelled.

Location: Kingdom of Alpha, NACE, Southern Bay Marches. NW

Description: Qeodharan longships stage new raids on the eastern and southern coasts of the Alphan Peninsula, landing and trying to raze the villages and the countryside with hit and run tactics. However, they are met by an immediate and unexpected counter-attack by the Alphan forces led by General Ney and Overlord h'Caramore, which seem to patrol every inch of the coastlines. The Qeodharans are constantly beaten back suffering many losses, while the Alphans count only minor casualties among their ranks. (*See Am. 23, Am. 28; Sv. 18, Sv. 22.*)

What This Means: The Black Duke hoped that the forces of Alpha would have been reduced and scattered after the troubles he stirred up in other Norwold dominions, but he had not predicted that the loyalty of some of Ericall's men could go this far. General Ney, even though informed of the terrible war that is ravaging his land, did not come back with his army and instead remained in the Kingdom of Alpha to defend it, as the oath towards Ericall obliges him to serve his liege as general of his armies. He deeply hopes the war will be over soon, so that he can come back home and defend his people. However, as long as Ericall will need his assistance, his sense of honor tells him to stay and fight for his king.

Sviftmont 12, AC 1016: The Streets of Hapta Run Red.

Location: City of Hapta, Kingdom of Nithia. HW

Description: Townspeople are shocked this morning to discover the butchered corpse of Aman Sethet-Ra, a prominent Nithian merchant, nailed to the wall inside his shop, with his entrails strung onto the floor. The town guard find no other evidence of violence, and no one in the neighborhood can recall hearing any strange noises during the night. The town guard close the case, but declare that they have a good idea as to who committed the crime. The townspeople, visibly shaken, disperse from the scene, and go about their business. (*See Sv. 22, Ka. 5.*)

What This Means: The normally peaceful town of Hapta has never had an incident like this as long as people can remember. Townsfolk will begin to look at outsiders and suspicious-looking people in a different light, now.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are in the town, the PCs can help the town guard investigate the crime.

Sviftmont 12, AC 1016: Diplomats Meet with King Stefan.

Location: City of Mirros, Kingdom of Karameikos. OW

Description: Patriarch Halaran and the adventurers from the Lost Valley have an audience with the king today. During the course of the discussion, both groups relate their concerns about the influx of treasure hunters to the Lost Valley, and the effects it is having both on the lands of Karameikos, as well as the detrimental role it plays in future relations with the valley's inhabitants. The king promises to give the matter much consideration. In the meantime, he will support any actions that Patriarch Halaran decides to take in bringing the adventurer situation under control. (*See Sv. 4; Sv. 10; Sv. 28.*)

What This Means: The king realizes that the Lost Valley situation could have far-ranging consequences, both political and otherwise. He is involved with a lot of delicate situations at the moment, and is hesitant to rush in in any case. He will wait for a bit, and try to calm things down on the Karameikos end of things, before dealing with the inhabitants of the valley.

Sviftmont 12, AC 1016: Littonia Supports the Confederacy.

Location: Town of Gaudavpils, Kingdom of Littonia, Arctic Plains. NW

Description: In a proclamation from his throne in Gaudavpils, King Uldis VI of Littonia proclaims his support for the Norwold Confederacy. He states that Littonia's armies will stand ready to aid any confederacy member in need, and that Littonia will contribute whatever material wealth it can afford to ensure the successful operation of the organization, but it will not join the organization at this time. He concludes by reaffirming Littonia's position as an independent state, but one that is more than willing to help its neighbors in time of need. (*See Fy. 3; Sv. 15.*)

What This Means: Uldis has received letters from Ericall concerning the Norwold Confederacy, and what functions it is to fulfill. While Uldis is more than happy to aid his neighbors in the spirit of friendship, he does not wish to cast his lot with the confederacy in such an uncertain time. He also realizes that the populace would not support a surrendering of Littonia's sovereignty, so membership in the Norwold Confederacy is not an option at this time.

Sviftmont 12, AC 1016: Back from the Dead.

Location: Town of Imolus, County of Kameloth, Southern Bay Marches. NW

Description: During the official funeral held in the capital of Kameloth, King Sieger von Durn suddenly appears over the dead count's coffin in the middle of the church. Under the astonished gazes of the hundreds of people gathered there, he mutters a few words over his comrade's corpse, throwing a cold gaze at the priest celebrating the rite. Then, he points his fingers towards the priest and the army general and unleashes a terrifying spell, which strikes the two all of a sudden, turning them into black basalt statues. Moments later, the count rises from his coffin, much to the astonishment of the standing crowd, which begins to panic and flee in all directions.

King Sieger casts another spell and his voice thunders all over the church, addressing firmly the fearful bystanders: "Count Shuren died to defend you and was later betrayed by these cursed fools," he explains pointing at the two statues "who didn't lift a single finger to help him or to try *resurrect* him, as he had previously ordered. I have come here to see that justice be restored: now behold what happens to traitors and rejoice for the return of your count. As long as we will watch over you, you do not have to fear anything but our wrath!" That said, the king *teleports* away while the puzzled crowd stares at a even more confused Count Shuren. (*See Sv. 10; Sv. 14; Sv. 18.*)

What This Means: When Sieger tried to contact his old friend telepathically and found out he was not responding, he thought him to be in danger. Great was his surprise when he discovered that Shuren was dead and about to be buried. He immediately *teleported* to Kameloth and *wished* the count back to life, then gazed at his lieutenants waiting for an explanation. When he magically noticed that the two men were actually doppelgangers, he petrified them. He is now sure that the Black Duke sent them to cause further mishap in his friend's domain, and wonders if he could have done it with the other Norwold lords as well, including himself. He is now resolute to find this out.

Sviftmont 12, AC 1016: A Matter of Will Power.

Location: Lands of the Gentle Folk. HW

Description: The Alphatian elves report their lack of progress with the Gentle Folk. With but a few exceptions, the Gentle Folk seem completely uninterested in anything resembling a “normal” elven lifestyle. Though they have been at the task for but a few months, the elves are utterly frustrated and are ready to relinquish their task. Sensing their frustration, the group of elves will be brought back to Alphatia and others sent to replace them. (*See Fl. 8.*)

What This Means: The elves are experiencing the resolve of the Gentle Folk’s pacifism and the strength of the Spell of Preservation. No matter what they do, the Gentle Folk show little interest in elven practices. The Shiye elves in particular are totally frustrated by them. There have already been a few incidents where frustration has bred hostility, which has been forwarded to the empress by the clerics. She has opted to recall them before irreparable damage has been done.

What the PCs Can Do: Elven PCs may find themselves commissioned to travel to the Gentle Folk. Likewise, PCs affiliated with either the Alphatia or Koryis Order may find themselves tasked with insuring that the Gentle Folk’s pacifist nature is not exploited.

Sviftmont 13, AC 1016: Bar Room Brawl.

Location: City of Blueside, Kingdom of Lagrius, NACE, Bellissaria. AS

Description: A fight breaks out in a popular Blueside tavern; by the time the city guard intervenes and breaks it up, the establishment is devastated. Investigating the matter, it is discovered that a trio of visitors from Veroth initiated the altercation, starting a quarrel with none other than a local celebrity, Brodicim. What comes as a shock is the divulgence that Brodicim, a non-spellcaster, utilized spells in his defense. Exposed as a mage, one of the Verothian mages issues challenge to a duel. Surprisingly, Brodicim backs down from the challenge. With so many questions looming, the guard decides to hold all combatants in custody pending a full investigation. (*See Th. 8, Fy. 14; Sv. 16, Ei. 19.*)

What This Means: During the Great War, Brodicim had been a Glantrian agent. His clandestine role had been uncovered by Alphatian intelligence just before the sinking. Having fled the mainland, he had escaped justice and the mainland’s destruction. Since his egress, Brodicim has assumed the identity of a commoner. However, the aristocrat in him has caused him to strive for the notoriety he had as a spellcaster, so he has subtly used his magic to build that notoriety—and his bank account. Embolden, he has become more visible than any fugitive should be.

It did not take long for Brodicim to be discovered by Czekostrine’s agents. With all of their evidence lost in the sinking and Brodicim being a celebrity, he has had to devise a strategy. He instructed several of his spellcasting agents to “be insulted” by Brodicim—Alphatian law would protect them. When Brodicim uses his spells to defend himself, he exposes himself as a fraud, then the matter could be settled in a duel.

The plan unfolded as nearly expected—unfortunately, bystanders and the guard intervened before Brodicim could be eliminated and then when one of the Veroth mages issued his challenge to a duel, Brodicim backed down.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs can be working for Veroth, either executing the assassination on Brodicim or keeping tabs on him. PCs may be friends of Brodicim and find themselves at his side during the attack. Or the PCs could just happen to be in the tavern, minding their own business, and be drawn into the brawl.

Sviftmont 13, AC 1016: Hope Comes with the Sun.

Location: Duchy of Chitine, Kingdom of Alpha, NACE, Western Bay Marches. NW

Description: A great army of sollux led by Feudelance (the sollux general) and the priest Lambert Bohn enters Chitine and sides with the knights to fight against the evil fire dwellers in what will be remembered as the Burning War. The fields of Chitine are ravaged by the skirmishes and the temperatures on the battlefields are so high that Chitine experiences the hottest autumn ever, hotter than the warmest summer it has ever had. (*See Am. 25, Sv. 5; Sv. 19, Ei. 13.*)

What This Means: Learning of Coiger's moves, Lambert Bohn, archenemy of the powerful priest of Rathanos (himself a cleric of Tarastia), traveled to the sollux's volcano and informed their leader, Feudelance, of the rival efreet's attack on nearby Chitine. Explaining Feudelance what the real situation was, Bohn was able to enlist his help and that of the Sun Brotherhood to thwart Coiger and Duke Dahish's plans of conquest. However, given the nature of the armies on the battlefield, Chitine will not escape the conflict unscathed. Both Bohn and Feudelance are willing to sacrifice a few villages and peasants should this mean the defeat of the forces of evil—something Duke Ney would probably object at.

What the PCs Can Do: Choose the side they want to fight with and battle in one of the hottest wars north of the tropics.

Sviftmont 13, AC 1016: Knocking at the Gate of Yuzihuapac.

Location: City of Yuzihuapac, Azcan Empire. HW

Description: Otziltipac's military enter the city of Yuzihuapac, expecting another tough fight, but are surprised to find the city gates open. The commoners of the city, though rather hostile, mostly do not initiate fights. Prudently, Otziltipac's officers decide to secure strategic locations within the city but do not attempt to capture the temples yet, in order to avoid violent reactions from supporters of the old clergy right away. (*See Am. 14, Am. 28; Sv. 19, Sv. 24.*)

What This Means: Aware that Chupicuaro's men are on their tails, Otziltipac's military moved on to secure the city of Yuzihuapac despite the risk of upheavals in the still unruly Atacoatli.

The city officials, knowing what happened in Atacoatli and that they will not receive any support from Fort Zitapan, have decided to keep a low profile and let the followers of Quetzalcoatl enter the city, at least for now. They have been informed by advanced scouts of the approach of the army from Huitlaktima, though.

Sviftmont 14, AC 1016: King Sieger Looses His Temper.

Location: Town of Erones, Kingdom of Siegeria, Western Bay Marches. NW

Description: A pegataur sent by the Black Duke arrives at Sieger's castle in Erones, the capital of Siegeria, with an order from his master. The Black Duke wishes Sieger to take an active part in the war or be considered a traitor: as a consequence, his seneschal would be killed and his kingdom become the next target of the duke's magical assaults. The duke also chides Sieger for interfering with his plans in Kameloth and asks for his immediate excuses, accompanied by his declaration of war against the confederacy and the invasion of Leeha. Fuming, Sieger fries the pegataur with one *lightning bolt*, then gives orders to his halfling general, Lavim Hollister, to muster an elite army for war. After that, he leaves the kingdom in the capable hands of his court chaplain, Red Ork, and teleports away. (*See Am. 25, Sv. 12; Sv. 18, Sv. 19.*)

What This Means: Sieger doesn't like it when others tell him what to do, and after exposing the Black Duke's plot in Kameloth he has begun to seriously reconsider his alliance with the Qeodharans. Might this be the proverbial last straw?

Third Week

Sviftmont 15, AC 1016: Unpleasant News.

Location: Town of Farend, Kingdom of Qeodhar, NACE. AS

Description: Baron Norlan of Qeodhar receives a report from his network of spies—the news is not good. Over the past several weeks, several patrols of soldiers have gone missing in the northern and eastern regions of the island, but now he has proof that the Antalian minority, recently expelled to those regions, is responsible for the attacks.

Angrily, he orders a portion of his army to mobilize, and stage several punitive raids on the nearest Antalian settlements. (*See Fy. 8, Am. 18; Sv. 22, Ei. 4.*)

What This Means: Norlan has long viewed the Antalian minority to be a problem in his rulership of Qeodhar. They had always opposed his rule, and now they have become more vocal than ever. He knows that if he allows them to remain a thorn in his side, his status among the other Alphantian rulers will decline, since he will be seen as someone who cannot rule his own realm. As a result, he wants the revolts put down quickly, by any means necessary.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are spying on Norlan, they might learn of this order. If they do, they can warn the nearest Antalian communities to prepare to defend themselves, or help evacuate them. If the PCs are working for Norlan, they might assist in organizing the raiding parties, or participate in the raids themselves.

Sviftmont 15, AC 1016: Peace on the Southern Front.

Location: City of Gaudavpils, Kingdom of Littonia, Arctic Plains. NW

Description: In the presence of King Uldis VI and Queen Laila, the rulers of Littonia (who offered their palace as neutral zone for the meeting), King Ericall of Norwold and a few of his most trusted lords sit at the same table with High Priest Wulf von Klagendorf and his loyal military advisor, *Oberst* Dietrich von Wessel-Bernau. The two parties, after a hot debate, finally reach a compromise and sign a truce that lifts the pressure on the confederacy's southern border. The terms of the treaty are clear: the Norwold Confederacy recognizes the Heldannic Knights' claims over all the lands and dominions they conquered thus far and promises not to try to retake those territories by any means, directly or indirectly. The knights promise to halt their military expansion to the northern lands of Kildorkak, with the free option of annexing the area of the Warring Baronies should they swear allegiance to the Heldannic Territories; the same clause applies to the confederacy. As a result of this treaty, the Heldannic Territories also break all former oaths with the Qeodharans and retreat from the Norwold War. (*See Am. 19, Sv. 1.*)

What This Means: *Herr* Wulf and Ericall got more or less what they wanted with this treaty. The opportunity and time to restore order in the conquered territories for the first, and the end of a living nightmare for the latter, who can now concentrate all his efforts on eradicating the Qeodharans from his lands. Baron Norlan will not take this news well, nor will Alphaks, for that matter.

What the PCs Can Do: They can participate in the peace talks, provided they are lords of Norwold loyal to Ericall or trusted advisors or generals to *Herr* Wulf von Klagendorf.

Sviftmont 16, AC 1016: Battle of Aldgate.

Location: Hamlet of Aldgate, 3 miles southwest of Town of Norchester, Kingdom of Bellayne. SC

Description: The royalist forces led by Lord Perceval Hume, Duke of Parchester, clash this morning with rebel forces led by the Earl of Penwick. The royalist army is confident of a crushing victory, leading Lord Perceval to use his cavalry in a reckless charge against the rebel forces. This leaves the flanks of the royalist infantry exposed as it struggles to maintain contact with the cavalry. Rebel mages and archers, who until now have been concealed in the wooded copse on the left of the battlefield, emerge to open fire with arrows and combat spells on the hopelessly outmaneuvered infantry. Chaos reigns in the royalist ranks. The cavalry charge is defeated by the pikemen of the rebel forces, and without infantry to provide support, the royalist cavalry is easily repulsed. As the royalist forces try to regroup under the attack from two directions, Lord Perceval is hit by an arrow in the eye and breaks his neck as he falls from his mount. This causes panic amongst the royalist troops who immediately break ranks and flee the battlefield. The battle is over and the rebel forces have won their first victory. (*See Am. 12, Sv. 4.*)

What This Means: What the king had expected to be a crushing victory for his forces has turned into a crushing defeat. The royalists lose 3,400 troops in the battle including some of their best. King James II decides to use his remaining forces to shore up his borders with Penwick and Wyndham while he recruits more soldiers over winter.

Sviftmont 16, AC 1016: Verothian Demands.

Location: Kingdom of Veroth and Kingdom of Lagrius, NACE, Bellissaria. AS

Description: King Verothrics personally contacts Queen Siaron to gain the release of his agents and demand the extradition of Brodicim. He informs the queen of who the real Brodicim is and what he has done. Without any physical evidence the accusations are merely his word against Brodicim's, so the queen cannot readily turn him over to Veroth, but she proposes that justice can be served: since Brodicim is now known to be a mage, the matter can be handled more traditionally, all Verothrics has to do is challenge him to a duel. Verothrics agrees and the challenge is issued to Brodicim, who accepts, and the duel is arranged to be held in Blueside on Eirmont 19. In the mean time, Brodicim will be held under guard. To be fair, he is allowed access to any and all magic he has to prepare. (*See Fy. 14, Sv. 13; Ei. 19.*)

What This Means: Though he has little physical evidence, Siaron has little reason to doubt Verothrics's accusations. The men of Randel may be a lot of things, but they do take matters of treason very seriously. A duel will settle things not only in the eyes of justice, but also in the eyes of the public. Brodicim accepts this challenge because he knows that he is a dead man no matter what he does, consoling himself with the hopes that luck may favor him.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs may be called upon to supplement the guards watching over Brodicim. Since he will be allowed access to his magics, special precautions will be needed to insure that he is a model prisoner and does not use magic to flee. Though spells allowing instantaneous travel have been removed from his spellbook, there are always the chances of folks smuggling a spell scroll in or even forcing his escape.

Sviftmont 16, AC 1016: A Strange Story.

Location: City of Raven Scarp, Thyatian Empire, Thyatian Hinterlands. DV

Description: A man who claims to be Baron Claudius Vitalis arrives in Raven Scarp and demands to see General Leilah at once. The man is in good shape and bears no signs of torture or fatigue. The man is soon recognized as the true Lord Vitalis and during his meeting with the general he tells her a strange story.

Lord Vitalis explains that after they were attacked by the Hinterlanders, his group lost contact with the rest of the expedition and remained hidden in the jungle together with a dozen trusted men. When the Hinterlanders left, however, they found themselves to be lost in the forest, without a compass or a map, and so tried to return to Raven Scarp using the sky as a reference. After some hours of marching, they stumbled upon another Hinterlander war party; they tried to fight but were outnumbered and so they scattered into the forest. For many hours the natives played cat and mouse with them, until they were finally surrounded and the Hinterlanders unleashed their death cry. At this point, something incredible happened: strange creatures leaped down from the trees and fought the Hinterlanders, driving them out of the place. There were only half a dozen of them, green-skinned humanoids with strange insect-like mounts, but they were able to defeat a war party of more than twenty individuals. Fortunately, they were friendly and brought them all to a small hut in the jungle, where an Ochalean man by the name of Karcharoz tended them and later offered to bring them back to Raven Scarp. So now, Lord Vitalis and a handful of his guards have returned to the town to inform General Leilah of the threat posed by the Jackal Clan and of the existence of these green-skinned people west of the Hinterlands. General Leilah immediately arranges for a meeting with Karcharoz to know more about the situation. (*See Fe. 25, Am. 22; Sv. 17, Ei. 14.*)

What This Means: Lord Vitalis's report is complete and thorough. The humanoids they have met are Emerondians, representatives of an alien humanoid race never encountered before by the Thyatians. The Hinterlanders were attacking people on their lands, thus poisoning their forest (according to their customs) and so they intervened to drive off the savage Hinterlanders and avoid angering the forest spirits. Since they didn't want any contact with the strangers, they brought them to the Ochalean mystic, Karcharoz, a friend of their people, to be taken into custody and away from their civilization. For this reason, once they were healed, he offered to accompany them back to Raven Scarp.

Sviftmont 16, AC 1016: Caged!

Location: Lake of Despair, northern Forest of Geffron, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: All the members of the Onyx Ring assist the High Priestess of Idris in a delicate ceremony to reveal the Orb of the Great One's position to the Draconic Immortals and lure them on the Prime Plane in their mortal form. The plan goes as expected, and the four Immortals (Diamond, Opal, Pearl and the Great One) manifest themselves near the Lake of Despair with an escort of twenty dragon souls to retrieve the lost artifact. Much to their surprise, they are ambushed by many dragons, humans and other strange creatures not quite human that engage the dragon souls into a fierce melee.

Powerful spells are cast on both sides, but when the Dragon Immortals seem to prevail over the assailants, the three Dragon Rulers Opal, Diamond and Pearl vanish. Panicking, the Great One seizes the opportunity to grab the orb and *plane shift* to the Four, but as soon as He touches it, He feels sucked inside the artifact and He vanishes too. Seeing all their leaders have disappeared, some of the dragon souls return to the Draconic Outer Planes, while others are butchered by the elite servants of Idris. The high priestess then orders the Onyx Ring to take the artifact to the Tower of Idris and guard it for the time being. (*See Fy. 25, Am. 27; Sv. 25, Ei. 9.*)

What This Means: The trap staged by the followers of Idris worked wonderfully. They altered the orb so that it was actually able to suck into it Immortal life-forces with the power *trap life-force*. Touching the orb automatically activated the power and the goal of the ring was to make some if not all the Dragon Rulers touch it and be sucked into it. It turned out that apparently only the Great One was absorbed by the orb, while the other dragons chose to flee before it was too late. Even though the members of the ring remain puzzled by the other three Dragon Rulers' actions, they still think having trapped the Great One's soul is a major accomplishment.

Unbeknownst to them, the other three Dragon Immortals have also been sucked into the orb. In fact, They touched the artifact after casting a *time stop* (in order to take it without major resistance), so nobody saw Them vanish inside the orb. [*The Dragon Rulers did not get a saving throw since they voluntarily touched the artifact, without knowing it had been tampered with by Idris Herself. Ed.*]

Sviftmont 17, AC 1016: Celebration and Shower of Stones.

Location: Colony of Aengmor, Kingdom of Karameikos, Republic of Darokin. OW

Description: Today, 5 King according to the shadow elves' calendar, is a *fasti* day for shadow elves, especially those in Aengmor, because it commemorates the 9th anniversary of the conquest of Alfheim and of the crowning of Princess Tanadaleyo as Governor of Aengmor.

In West-Rafielton there are joyous celebrations, while in East-Rafielton and in eastern Aengmor tension rises high when groups of Alfheim refugees try to voice their discontent. In the Selinar area the shadowelf troops are subject to a shower of stones and they have to call in Celebryl Air Force to calm things down.

In Mirros and Darokin Alfheim refugees parade under the shadowelf embassy to complain for their current situation. (*See Fy. 17; Sv. 27.*)

What This Means: Thanks to the Alfheim Avengers' activity tension is at an all time high between the two races of elves. This time the avengers did not even need to work hard to cause unrest among the Alfheim population.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs may take part to the events described either trying to calm things down or to cause even more unrest.

Sviftmont 17, AC 1016: Factions Mobilize.

Location: Throughout the Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Following the coronation of Manfred in Hattias, as news spreads throughout the empire (via magic or courier), leaders and people choose sides and begin to take action on behalf of their faction. Heinrich quickly secures Hattias with his forces, dispersing the few loyalist forces on the island. His army marches to Port Hatti, just across Vanya's Girdle from The City. There they seem stalemated as the imperial fleet, loyal to Eusebius, patrols the girdle, seeming to block the Hattians' passage. The dukes of Kerendas and Machetos announce their support for Manfred

and begin to rally support for him on the mainland, while the Count of Biazzan declares his loyalty to the empire, but neutrality in the civil war. (See Am. 27, Sv. 10; Sv. 20, Sv. 21.)

What This Means: Eusebius is caught a bit off guard. His strongest forces are overseas, maintaining the empire's hold on its colonies, or still training following his military reorganization. Though due to the loyalty of the fleet and control of the seas he will be able to transport them to Thyatis, this will take time. The Count of Biazzan and Duke of Tel Akbir, while essentially loyal to Eusebius, dare not withdraw their forces from the border, lest the Ylari take advantage of the situation to strike at their domains, and dither indecisively.

Sviftmont 17, AC 1016: A New General in Drax Tallen.

Location: Keep of Drax Tallen, Forest of Geffron, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: General Grumman arrives in Drax Tallen to take command of the operations inside the forest of Geffron. The High Priestess of Idris commanded the general (just returned back to Denagoth after over 20 years spent in Wendar as a spy) to the position, hoping he will be able to catch the crusaders still at large in the woods. They have been causing too many deaths with their nightly raids, and since they seem to have undead allies, Grumman has the duty to investigate the matter and discover if the missing Shadow Lord is aiding them. (See Ya. 25, Kl. 14.)

Sviftmont 17, AC 1016: First News on Emerond.

Location: City of Raven Scarp, Thyatian Empire, Thyatian Hinterlands. DV

Description: General Leilah manages to speak with the Ochalean man who brought Lord Vitalis and his men back to safety. Hard pressed by the woman, he reveals her that those who helped the Thyatians are Emerondians, a race of peaceful forest dwellers who live secluded in the jungle west of the Hinterlands. They mean no harm to anyone and lead a peaceful life, and they do not want any contacts with the outside nations to avoid meddling in their affairs and problems. He also explains that the Hinterlanders know of them and fear them, for the Emerondians are peaceful but more than capable of holding their land and defending themselves.

General Leilah immediately contacts Emperor Eusebius through Kastelian messengers to find out what to do. The emperor decides to consult the imperial senate directly before contacting this new race. (See Am. 22, Sv. 16; Ei. 14, Ka. 20.)

What This Means: Karcharoz knows the Emerondians far too well so he is trying to give the Thyatians the impression of a peaceful but strong nation that would do everything to avoid meddling with other powers. He also knows the Thyatian tendency towards imperialism, and has therefore presented Emerond as a useless nation, which could however prove a pain in the neck if mistreated, hoping to discourage Thyatis from interfering with it.

Sviftmont 18, AC 1016: Stefan Issues Birthday List.

Location: City of Mirros, Kingdom of Karameikos. OW

Description: On his 68th birthday, King Stefan raises several Karameikans to noble status. He elevates Desmond Kelvin from baron to count, making Kelvin the kingdom's first county. Sulescu is made into a barony with Zemiro as its ruler. Two new baronies are created, ruled by Thyatian exiles [*two of the six nobles who received asylum from Stefan in 1013. Ed.*]: the Barony of Traldar, a coastal strip northeast of Traldar Bay straddling the Estron Road, and the Barony of Rifllian, governing the region around that trading encampment, tasked with turning it into a true town.

Several are also promoted as nobility of honor, including the elevation of Terari as Count of Krakatos. These nobles are not administrators ruling fiefs (Terari, for example, remains busy as Master of the School of Magecraft), but to give a title to the recipients, fixing their status within the Karameikan hierarchy. The prominence of the School of Magecraft, for example, is highlighted by the fact that its headmaster is one of only two counts in the kingdom.

What This Means: Stefan is firming up his hierarchy of vassals. An aging man, Stefan wants to leave Karameikos on a solid foundation when he dies. Stefan even offered to turn Marilenev and Dmitrov into baronies. Lady Magda

sent a message filled with sarcasm at being “unworthy to receive a title from your lordship,” which Stefan thought was the most gracious thing she ever wrote him. He treasures that letter deeply, while Olivia, understanding the meaning of Magda’s message, resolved to alert her information gatherers (spies) in the Marilenev household to be on the alert. Lord Lev sent a sincere message saying the offer honored him, but that he is content with his current status. The appointment of a human ruler over Rifllian may cause friction in that region in the future. The other four Thyatian political refugees take positions as assistants to the rulers of the two new baronies.

What the PCs Can Do: Prominent Karameikans might be given a noble title, either with a fief to administer, or as one of the new category of “honor” nobility. The latter is particularly suited to characters that prefer adventure to administration, giving them prominence in the court hierarchy without the burdens of rulership. Such people will be duty-bound to accept missions of heroic nature from the crown, but as loyal Karameikans they would do that anyhow.

Sviftmont 18, AC 1016: Against Aran.

Location: Valley of Kings, Great Escarpment, Kingdom of Thothia, NACE, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: An aranean settlement on the north side of the Valley of Kings is attacked this morning. A motley assemblage of undead and golems clamber their way out of the valley and lay waste to the araneas’ village. Fleeing araneas catch a glimpse of a one-armed, regally-clad lich who proclaims to them that the Valley of Kings is forever barred to their kind, and any intrusions will be met with the utter destruction of Aran. (*See Fe. 5, Am. 10; Ka. 12.*)

What This Means: The lich is Haptuthep, who has used ancient Thothian arts to raise this horde and attack the araneas—whom he hates for their part in the current state of Thothia. He is bluffing, however—the magic that animates his army will not allow them to travel far from the Valley of Kings.

The araneas do not know this, however, and will be forced to take the long way east in order to continue their infiltrations and assaults on Thothia. It will be a minor inconvenience, however, as the spider folk can easily scale the sides of the Great Escarpment.

Sviftmont 18, AC 1016: The Tide Turns.

Location: Duchy of Ossian and Qeodharan Territories of Odinia, Southern Bay Marches. NW

Description: A combined force of the Draken and Alphan navies strike at the Qeodharan ships stationed along Odinia’s coastlines, helped by the powerful magics of some of the Norwold lords. Their attack is so unexpected and overwhelming that more than half of the Qeodharan vessels are lost before any significant counter-attack can be staged, and by this time the confederacy ships are already returning to their harbors.

Meanwhile in Ossian, a strange *skyship* appears over the capital city of Schwarztal and begins bombarding the city walls with *meteor swarms* and other deadly spells. When the Black Duke and his apprentices retaliate, they discover that they are facing none other than Sieger von Durn aboard his gnome-operated flying ship, the Silver Arrow II. After dodging a few *fireballs* and dropping some scrolls over the duke’s castle, the ship darts away into the clouds at an incredible speed. The Black Duke grabs one of the scrolls to read it, and immediately after he shouts at the sky, cursing Sieger with dark words of vengeance. All the scrolls bore this only inscription: “Ready to die?” (*See Sv. 12, Sv. 14; Sv. 22, Sv. 26.*)

What This Means: King Sieger has finally switched sides after the last events and has warned King Ericall and his nobles of possible infiltrators in their lines. He has also studied, together with the overlord and General Beriak, an assault to weaken the Qeodharan forces in preparation for the final blow. Now that they don’t have to fear the Heldannic Knights anymore and can concentrate all their efforts on the Qeodharans, victory seems close at hand for the Norwold lords.

King Sieger’s *skyship* is the byproduct of gnomish engineering and magical research and was secretly built in a hidden facility inside Siegeria during the past year. Sieger is fond of *skyships [he himself was raised by a mage commanding a unique flying ship, which he later inherited and lost at the beginning of the Great War. Ed.]* and now wants to exploit his new weapon to teach the Black Duke a lesson about aerial warfare.

Sviftmont 19, AC 1016: Arogansa Island Secured.

Location: Arogansa Island. AS

Description: The Alphatian troops disembark on Arogansa Island. The only annoyance they encounter are hungry monsters, including a vicious chimera, until they are ambushed by pirates attacking both from land and sea. The soldiers are a bit reluctant to fighting the pirates, as they boast the colors of Alphatia, but the pirates are ruthless in defending their land from the invaders. Commander Broderick orders a retreat, and finally gets an opportunity to parley with the pirates.

After hours of negotiation, the pirates agree to stop attacking ships from the NACE. (*See Th. 1, Am. 25; Ei. 8.*)

What This Means: The pirates are revealed to be remnants from the troops native of Arogansa, who sailed home after part of the Alphatian navy turned mercenary and accepted to fight for the Thyatians against other Alphatians, back in AC 1010. The Arogansans turned to piracy, sinking ships from Thyatis and their traitorous allies, not aware that other Alphatians had united but instead thinking they were all now under the sway of the evil Thyatians.

The pirates, who call themselves the Alphatian Corsairs, really thought they were the only true, free Alphatians remaining. They attacked Thyatian assets on the Isle of Dawn and the Alatians, of course, but also NACE's assets in the Alphatian Sea, including the new sea-lanes to Ionace and the Aquas workers on the new domed city (which they mistook for Thyatian plunderers).

The corsairs agreed to stop their attacks on NACE's ships, but they remain rather suspicious of the NACE, and refuse to integrate the confederacy right away. They agreed to a meeting with the council later on, though.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are helping in the campaign they may be the ones assigned with organizing the assault on the "pirate" island, in which case it is up to them to determine who the "enemies" actually are before too much unnecessary casualties add up.

Sviftmont 19, AC 1016: New Forces Enter Chitine.

Location: Duchy of Chitine, Kingdom of Alpha, NACE, Western Bay Marches. NW

Description: A small army led by General Lavim Hollister of Siegeria joins the Knights of Chitine and the Sollux Fighters in the Burning War against the efreet. General Hollister brings with him a nice gift of King Sieger, a large pack of fire wolves (magical creations of the wizard) ready to tear apart the elementals of Duke Dahish. With these unexpected reinforcements, the forces of Chitine begin to gain ground against their hated enemies. (*See Sv. 13, Sv. 14; Ei. 13.*)

What This Means: King Sieger wants that his northern borders remain safe, and since he has now openly broken his allegiance with the Black Duke and suspects that all troubles in Norwold have been caused (directly or indirectly) by his manipulations, he doesn't want that the Burning War spills into his already troubled kingdom. For this reason he sent General Hollister with his best soldiers and his magical wolves to aid the Knights of Chitine, in order to keep the war in that duchy and prevent the elementals to expand southwards.

Sviftmont 19, AC 1016: Armies Meet at Last.

Location: City of Yuzihuapac, Azcan Empire. HW

Description: Chupicuaro's army, after walking all the way from Huitlaktima, finally reaches the occupied city of Yuzihuapac. Though both sides are far from fresh, they immediately engage each other. At that signal, many Yuzihuapacs loyal to Atzanteotl attack Otziltipac's troops from within the city, slaying their foes fervently. The situation quickly degenerates, and small bands chase each other through the streets of the city, giving and asking no quarters. The skirmishes go on for days. Though Chupicuaro's loyal troops have the upper hand overall, the vicious nature of the fights prevents them from achieving complete victory over their deadly foes. (*See Am. 28, Sv. 13; Sv. 24, Ei. 2.*)

What This Means: The priests of Atzanteotl and city officials were aware of the advance of friendly troops, and that is why they let Otziltipac's men enter the city unhindered. Otziltipac's officers wish they had overrun the city temples, where Atzanteotl fanatics were hiding and being armed, waiting in ambush. The situation looks stern for the followers of Quetzalcoatl now.

Sviftmont 20, AC 1016: Armies March.

Location: Cities of Thyatis and Kerendas, Duchies of Thyatis and Kerendas, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: After the arrival of some detachments from overseas, Eusebius decides to deal with the threat to his rear before conducting an invasion of Hattias. The fleet will patrol Vanya's Girdle to prevent Heinrich's army from crossing to support the army of the nobility. The imperial army marches out of Thyatis City, leaving a guard force behind, confident of victory. After a day's march they camp at the crossroads north of Julinius. The following morning the imperial vanguard skirmishes with advance elements of the army of the nobility, marching east from Kerendas. The vanguard sweeps the enemy back easily, and the army marches onward into Kerendas. (*See Sv. 10, Sv. 17; Sv. 21, Sv. 22.*)

What This Means: Eusebius and his generals have good reason for confidence. Under normal conditions, they would have no problem defeating the rebels and by doing so with ease they would strengthen Eusebius's grip on Thyatis. This early skirmish, so successfully won, seems proof of that. But Eusebius is not facing a normal foe.

Sviftmont 20, AC 1016: The Dragonlord's Truth.

Location: Barony of Hopeland, Wyrmsteeth Mountains. NW

Description: The Caretakers are finally able to locate Kelter Zerben and the Dragonslayers and come to Hopeland on behalf of the Dragonlord himself. The three wizards are amazed to discover the truth behind the Dragonwars, but they agree that even though Kelter Zerben was not responsible for what he did, the dragons have been wronged and will not forgive Zerben so easily. When the Caretakers question him on the theft of the Orb of the Great One, however, Kelter and his friends deny any involvement. They all understand that Siren has been manipulating the Dragonslayers to cause the Dragonwars, and so the Caretakers give the Dragonslayers the task to find her and retrieve the artifact. Only in this way, they think, the Wyrmsteeth dragons could be persuaded to forgive them and stop the Dragonwars. (*See Am. 26, Sv. 6; Ei. 10, Ei. 15.*)

What This Means: Kelter Zerben recognizes that his actions have caused great misery and pain to the inhabitants of Norwold and he feels somewhat guilty. For this reason he has called for a meeting with the Caretakers, knowing they were looking for him, hoping that they could understand the situation and help him out of it. Hopeland has been hit more and more frequently in the past days, when news spread among dragons that a mighty warrior with a dragonscale armor was fighting there, and he senses that he cannot resist the wyrms' assaults for much longer. In such a desperate situation, he would do anything to put an end to his torments and restore peace. Finding Siren the traitor and returning the Orb of the Great One to the dragons seems now the only way out of this intricate situation.

What the PCs Can Do: Participate in the Dragonlord's quest and find a solution to the crisis.

Sviftmont 21, AC 1016: Acquisitions Stand Pat.

Location: City of Beitung, Exarchate of Ochalea, Town of Seagirt, Exarchate of the Pearl Islands, and City of Minrothad, Minrothad Guilds. OW, SD

Description: The newly acquired domains of the Thyatian Empire, for their own reasons, decide to stay loyal... for now. They take a wait and see attitude towards the civil war, watching events before deciding on a course of action.

In Minrothad, Demetius Vannopolus uses his resources to maintain a firm grip. He reminds the Minrothad Guilders how recent the assassination was, and that Darokin may still wish to pursue the matter. They understand the message and pledge their continued loyalty. He does begin to mobilize units of Minrothad's Home Guard, to be dispatched if necessary.

In Beitung and Seagirt the new exarchs are more tentative about their support. They recently rejoined the empire on what they thought would be good terms. Thyatis seemed to be recovering, but the civil war may prove to be the final blow for the empire. Now they wonder if they have shackled themselves to a corpse, and independence begins to look attractive again. But Eusebius may prove up to the challenge, so they wait, and watch. (*See Sv. 10, Sv. 17; Ei. 10.*)

Sviftmont 21, AC 1016: Enough Religious Persecutions!

Location: Dvinzinian-controlled Magocracy of Azardjian, Kavkaz. SC

Description: Widespread unrest erupts in the Dvinzinian-held part of Azardjian. People are asking for the end of the religious persecutions and the end of the rule of the Sublime Octagon Order. Refugees in other parts of Azardjian come in handy to support the uprising. However, due to the lack of a charismatic leader, the Azards are unable to coordinate their action, and the Dvinzinians respond by a major clampdown against the restive population. (*See Kl. 2, Fe. 8.*)

What This Means: The people of Azardjian are increasingly unable to cope with the Dvinzinian abuses. This is but the first of a series of uprisings that the Sublime Octagon Order is sure to meet if it continue its current religious policy.

Fourth Week

Sviftmont 22, AC 1016: A Vision.

Location: Town of Puerto Morillos, *Baronia de Narvaez*. SC

Description: *Barón Hugo* is awakened during the night by a blinding vision. Ixion appears before Hugo praising his recent efforts. First Hugo has persecuted the afflicted, now Ixion wants him to direct his soldiers in a holy crusade against the “blasphemous” Barony of Gargoña. (*See Fe. 1; Ka. 1, Ka. 4.*)

What This Means: *Barón Hugo* immediately begins preparing his armies for the attack. Now that they are equipped with bombs, *smoke powder* and firearms from Torreón, the armies of Narvaez are suddenly much more of a threat to the rest of the baronies. Little does Hugo know that the vision was not from Ixion at all, but was conjured by other, darker forces.

Sviftmont 22, AC 1016: Face off at Bayville.

Location: Town of Bayville, Duchy of Kerendas, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: The previous night the imperial army marched westward into Kerendas, driving the rebel army before it and into the town of Bayville. The imperial forces encamp outside Bayville, and both sides prepare for battle. Today both awake before dawn, and units begin to take up their places in battle formation. It is immediately apparent that the army of the nobility is significantly larger than it was the previous night, having more than doubled. In the center of their line flies the banner of the usurper himself, the standard of Hattias, and a large black flag bearing the insignia of twin gold lightning-bolts. Ranks of Storm Soldiers leaven the army’s center, with Kerendan knights guarding their flanks.

The imperial army, still confident and numerically the equal of the usurper’s army, forms two lines with a strong reserve and pushes forward outflanking forces. Small but well trained aerial squadrons survey the battlefield, providing reconnaissance reports to imperial commanders. Both forces surge forward, cavalry and knights couching lances as they charge, imperial cataphracts firing arrows into the enemy ranks before impact, disrupting their lines. The loyalist forces begin to slowly drive the rebel army towards the sea and certain defeat. Then Heinrich Oesterhaus mutters, and darkness descends over the battlefield, bringing twilight at noon.

Soldiers of the imperial army begin to be stung by small, biting insects. Then come large horse flies that sting so hard they draw blood. The bugs seem to ignore the members of the usurper's army, attacking only the loyalists. Imperial clerics and mages try to *dispel* the effect, but to no avail. Though small in and of themselves, the biting insects cause slight distraction in all but the most stoic soldiers. Their effect on the horses is even worse, causing disorder in the imperial ranks. The rebel force begins to push the imperial army back. By mid-afternoon Eusebius orders a retreat, and the army begins to disengage in good order. Then, a previously unengaged force of black-clad knights appears to the northeast, flanking the imperial army. Their charge shatters the right wing of the army, crumbling it. The army routes back towards Julinius, pursued by their enemies. (*See Sv. 20, Sv. 21; Sv. 23, Sv. 24.*)

What This Means: The Hattians used a portal through the Plane of Shadow, created by Heinrich Oesterhaus, to bypass the girdle and appear in Bayville. Arranging this without detection cost Thanatos significant power, and He is not likely to repeat the performance (chance of detection is too high). Following the battle, the black-clad knights take up a role as Heinrich's personal bodyguard. They say nothing to anyone, and never appear outside their armor. Lawful or good aligned characters with the usurper army will get a sense of foreboding and doom whenever they see them.

For Eusebius, the battle was a debacle. This defeat represents the final passing of the old Thyatian army, which dies on the plains of Kerendas. Eusebius will have to knit together a new one out of newly-trained troops and detachments from overseas, if he has time. Eusebius is also left with two mysteries: how the Hattian troops arrived in Bayville, and why his strongest mages could not *dispel* the obviously magical clouds of insects. But tonight he has no time to ponder these questions, as he flees for his life with the rest of his surviving troops.

Sviftmont 22, AC 1016: Qeodharans Quit the Field.

Location: Qeodharan Territories of Odinia, Southern Bay Marches. NW

Description: After a quick evaluation of the situation, the admiral of the Qeodharan Navy stationed in Odinia, Ejrik Bergstrom, orders his troops a hasty retreat in the Strait of Todstein, where they will station for a while, waiting for Baron Norlan's orders. Before leaving Odinia however, the Qeodharans make sure they leave nothing precious behind, and burn down everything they cannot loot or take away with them. The smoke columns rising from Odinia are so high and numerous that even some Alphan lookouts can spot them in the distance at high noon. (*See Sv. 18; Sv 24, Ei. 4.*)

What This Means: Commander Bergstrom has been informed of the truce sealed by the Heldannic Knights and the Norwold Confederacy. Without the Order of Vanya's support and with half of their fleet sunken, he knew they could not hold Odinia for long. So he chose to minimize the losses by retreating into the foggy Strait of Todstein, where their ships have a better chance to outmaneuver and evade the bigger and slower Alphan galleys, still blocking access to the Great Bay and thus keeping the last edge over Ericall's forces. He sincerely hopes that *Kjavik* Norlan will answer as soon as possible to his pleas for help and either send him reinforcements or order the fleet home. Bitter at heart by the defeat, he also ordered his men to plunder and ransack everything, enslaving some Odinians, killing others and burning down everything and everyone they could not take away on their vessels. This way, he reasoned, the people of Norwold won't forget the Qeodharans' wrath.

Sviftmont 22, AC 1016: Another Murder in Hapta.

Location: Town of Hapta, Kingdom of Nithia. HW

Description: Around midday, townspeople in Hapta's main market are startled by a loud shriek coming from one of the nearby alleys. Rushing to investigate, they see a young Nithian boy slump to the ground in a growing pool of blood, his intestines spilling out from the great gash in his abdomen. One man, looking up from the body, notices a dark-skinned, cloaked figure running towards the other end of the alley.

A vigorous pursuit is organized, but the assailant vanishes into the maze-like streets of Hapta before he (or she) can be positively identified, although many witnesses believe the attacker to be a Tanagoro man. A public outcry arises, as the townsfolk demand that the town guard capture the culprit. (*See Sv. 12; Ka. 5.*)

What This Means: This is the second time a Nithian citizen of Hapta has been killed in such a manner; the patterns of the attack are very similar, and many townsfolk will soon (perhaps rightly) come to believe them to be linked. The fact that the town guard has been unable so far to capture the killer from the previous attack means that tensions are simmering even more.

The fact that some witnesses believe the attacker to be a Tanagoro man will provide fuel for Nithian bigots.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are still helping the town guard, the PCs may have to add to their duties the task of defusing local tensions—not an easy task.

Sviftmont 23, AC 1016: Revolt among the Rebels.

Location: Town of Bayville, Duchy of Kerendas, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Count Heinrich orders all the captives from the defeated imperial army impaled along the road to Julinius as “a warning to all who resist the rightful emperor, Manfred Torion.” Up until now Manfred has been a passive pawn, playing his role effectively, wearing the crown and looking regal; he even fought fiercely in the Battle of Julinius. But he has always followed the instructions of his “adviser” and foremost noble, Count Heinrich. This time he does not: he countermands the order, commanding that the captives be spared. Heinrich is stunned and angered; his face turns purple with rage, and for an instant it looks like he might slay Manfred on the spot. Manfred simply stares back, calmly and imperiously, as if daring Heinrich to disobey him. After a minute, Heinrich says “by your command, my... emperor.” He stalks off to his tent. (*See Sv. 21, Sv. 22; Sv. 24, Ei. 1.*)

What This Means: Thanatos knows that there should be no way for Manfred, His pawn, to resist His will. Manfred is a carefully crafted tool, much like Hansel, but kept secret for the proper time. Manfred’s evident ability to disobey Him threatens to upset His plans. And Thanatos does not know why. The reason is simple, actually: the Crown of Thyatian Emperors is a relic created by the Immortal Tarastia during Her Valentia incarnation, an artifact of law and justice. Normally an Immortal of Thanatos’s strength would easily detect the power flowing through the crown, but Tarastia shielded it from all types of detection and divination, which is one reason why when it was lost it was so difficult to find again. This setback causes Heinrich to pause, and the army remains camped outside Bayville, allowing the surviving imperials at Julinius to escape back to Thyatis City. The next morning, after a further visit by Heinrich, Manfred announces that the captives were spared to serve the army as forced labor. A struggle begins between the crown and Thanatos for control over Manfred. Thanatos manages to get the advantage... for now.

Sviftmont 24, 1016: Hinterlands Declares for Eusebius.

Location: City of Raven Scarp, Hinterlands, Thyatian Empire. DV

Description: Discussions of the brewing Crown War taking place on the Thyatian mainland have spread among the populace of this southern city, and the colonial governor, General Leilah Ben-Nadir, decides to do something about it. She issues a proclamation, to be carried throughout the Hinterlands, that the people of this southern realm will not forget the honorable legacy of Thyatis, nor will they stand by and let a usurper assume the throne.

She issues a call to arms, to all those who wish to do so, to prove their might, honor, and courage in the face of adversity. Within two weeks, those who pledge the oath of service will head north for Thyatis, to do battle with the foe. (*See Sv. 10, Sv. 17; Ei. 9, Ka. 2.*)

What This Means: Knowledge of the Crown War has filtered to the Hinterlands by way of Thyatian and Kastelian traders, and Leilah feels that now is a good time to show the other Thyatian realms that the Hinterlands has “come into its own.” She feels that if she can show that her realm can do its part, other rulers will accord both her and the Hinterlands more respect. She also feels strongly about the rebellion, and does not wish to see Eusebius’s progressive reforms stopped.

She made her call to arms voluntary, partly out of respect to the native Hinterlander traditions of independence and self-reliance. She knows the Hinterlanders will fight more ferociously if they feel they have a stake in the matter, as opposed to feeling coerced into the arrangement. Knowing that the Hinterlanders are by far the majority, she feels this is the best way to do it.

What the PCs Can Do: Sounds like an opportunity for some adventure!

Sviftmont 24, AC 1016: A Scarred Land.

Location: Former Barony of Odinia, Southern Bay Marches. NW

Description: Draken ships land on the coasts of Odinia discovering the horrible legacy left by the Qeodharan invaders. Miles of fields and woods reduced to ashes or still burning like an elemental hell. Hundreds of charred corpses dotting the countryside and hundreds of survivors hidden in caves like frightened kids or roaming the dominion like mindless zombies, endlessly searching for their lost ones. There is no trace left of the Qeodharans, except the wreckage of their sunken longships along the coasts and the horror left in the gaze of the still living inhabitants of Odinia. The soldiers of the confederacy begin to round up the homeless and the wounded and to transport them to either Alpha or Draken. (*See Sv. 18, Sv. 22.*)

What This Means: This is the first tangible result of the Norwold War and the Qeodharan occupation. Odinia is now a destroyed land and it will probably never recover its losses. Although He is clearly loosing ground, Alphaks can still joy for and savor the havoc and the destruction His machinations have wrought upon Norwold.

Sviftmont 24, AC 1016: Reinforcements.

Location: City of Yuzihuapac, Azcan Empire. HW

Description: After days of bloody street fighting in Yuzihuapac, a new force passes by the gates and enters the fray. This force is made up of all available men from Fort Zitapan, and it soon becomes apparent that they are engaging war parties of Atzanteotl supporters, swinging the tide in favor of Otziltipac. (*See Sv. 13, Sv. 19; Ei. 2, Ka. 3.*)

What This Means: Purged from its most pro-Atzanteotl elements, who deserted to join in the defense of Atacoatli, the command of the fort was left in the hands of pro-Quetzalcoatl officers. After some mistrust, where each officer believed he was alone in his allegiance and feared to voice his opinion and be sacrificed, the news from the battle in Yuzihuapac crystallized their common views and prompted them into action. The support from the disgruntled military may well prove to be the decisive factor in putting an end to the old regime.

Sviftmont 25, AC 1016: Dragon Rulers Don't Answer.

Location: All throughout Norwold. NW

Description: Unconfirmed rumors spread about the death of the Dragon Rulers at the hands of the humans known as the Dragonslayers. The rumors flow fast across the land, spread by both human and draconic mouths, and are cause of great despair among the wyrms of Norwold. Praying their Immortals to get an answer and their spells, the draconic priests find no answers and fear the worst. Other rumors start about the new draconic order promised by the Immortal Idris, who will guide the dragons of Norwold to reclaim all the territories now held by the humans and demihumans. Many power-hungry dragons believe and begin following the way of Idris, while others question ancient artifacts in search of reasonable answers. (*See Am. 27, Sv. 16; Ei. 9, Ei. 10.*)

What This Means: The Cult of Idris is spreading the misleading rumors in order to gain followers among the Norwold wyrms and so far its plan is working. The fact that the Immortals do not answer Their followers' prayers and do not give spells worries the dragons, who cannot believe their gods have been killed by puny mortals. Soon the evidence will be too heavy to be questioned and then the dragons will probably unite under Idris's flag to get Norwold rid of humans.

Sviftmont 25, AC 1016: Orcs Meet.

Location: City-State of Ukoy, Krugel Horde Territory. HW

Description: War leaders from the various Krugel city-states meet to discuss war with the Neathar and Icevale. Though the orcs of Ukoy are in favor of an immediate offensive, there is a good degree of hesitation from the other city-states. Citing the need for proper reconnaissance, the orcs want to avoid war for the time being. Though Ukoy lobbies and gains some support, the majority wins out and war is undeclared for the moment. (*See Sv. 1.*)

What This Means: Normally the Krugel would have few reservations about assaulting any of their neighbors. However, the orcs are more reserved as they fear an Icevale and Neathar alliance. Had the previous slaughter not occurred in their lands, the Ukoy would also be hesitant. Also, the orcs have had their experience with the recently arrived Alphatians in last year's hostage standoff; since the Alphatians are said to have holdings within Neathar lands and involved themselves with the hostage situation, it is assumed that they are allied with the Neathar. The orcs are afraid of this possible triad of power and are not willing to go to war yet. In particular, they want information on these mysterious Alphatians before devising any war plans.

What the PCs Can Do: Orcish PCs may begin information gathering. Though large raids are forbidden, small raiding parties may be sent to capture Neathar and Icevale elves to gain information.

Sviftmont 26, AC 1016: Decision for Anaxibius and Stefania.

Location: Redstone Castle, County of Redstone, Thyatian Empire, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: Delegates of the Countess of Kendach and the Baron of West Portage meet with Stefania and Anaxibius in Redstone Castle. They state that their lords are tired of the disorders that have wracked Thyatis in recent years, and are going to side with the rebels in hope of getting more autonomy. They ask the rulers of Redstone to join them in overthrowing Eusebius's administration on the Isle of Dawn. Stefania agrees to talk with Thrainkell Firestorm about the matter, and Redstone mobilizes its forces. (*See Sv. 10, Sv. 17; Ei. 9, Ei. 19.*)

What This Means: With the strange disorders in Thothia and recent Alphatian expansionism, Stefania is less keen on independence. After studying the terms of the Treaty of Helskir and the arrangement between Westrourke and Thyatis, she believes Redstone can get greater autonomy from Eusebius while still retaining imperial support if war breaks out on the island. She certainly does not want to join some Hattian-led revolt at this time, but Redstone does not want to stand alone, and if Firestorm decides to join the revolt, Stefania will go along.

Sviftmont 26, AC 1016: "The Long Lost."

Location: Tower of Silverston, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: The goblin Broknag the Sly, having claimed the abandoned Tower of Silverston for his own, at long last manages to garner the last of its secrets. He and his goblin retainers break into a hidden vault deep beneath the tower, using magicks stolen from raids on nearby Glantrian settlements. Unfortunately, most of the items discovered are useless, either destroyed during the meteor crash of 1006, or usable only by sorcerers—not a shaman like Broknag.

In a fit of rage, the goblin inadvertently smashes a magical gemstone, which explodes in a burst of brimstone and light. When the smoke clears, the goblins are astonished to see a bearded, frail human figure cowering in the center of the chamber. Broknag orders the man taken prisoner, and cleans out all useful items in the room. Perhaps Prince Kol will be able to make use of something here... (*See Ei. 8.*)

What This Means: Over the course of the next few days, Broknag will come to learn that his prisoner is none other than Volospin Aendyr, former Prince of Blackhill. Volospin was long presumed dead. In reality, he has been held captive for years on the Elemental Plane of Air (he angered one of the elemental rulers of that plane while using his magic to escape the meteor impact that destroyed Blackhill).



Sviftmont 26, AC 1016: Assault on Ossian.

Location: Duchy of Ossian, Southern Bay Marches. NW

Description: With the Qeodharans out of the way, the overlord orders the last massive attack on the dominion of Ossian, home of the treacherous Black Duke and last threat to the Alphan Peninsula *[not counting the increasingly aggressive dragons. Ed.]*. The Alphan and Draken navies land on the coasts a few miles east of the Ossian border, disembarking whole squads of battle wizards under the command of Lord Beriak, and knights and footmen led by General Ney and King Ericall. The navy then attacks the coasts of Ossian while the army marches inland, vanquishing the pitiful resisting forces in its triumphal advance. (*See Sv. 18, Sv. 22; Sv. 28, Ei. 1.*)

What This Means: The time is right to crush the opposition inside the confederacy once and for all. The overlord, with the help of Lord Beriak and Lord Ney, has planned the final assault on the Black Duke's territory that will possibly lead to the end of this troubled war. The forces mustered on the field by the confederacy are the elite of the combined armies of three nations, Draken, Chitine and Alpha, and the Black Duke's soldiers have no chances of defeating them: only a miracle could now save Ossian from capitulating.

What the PCs Can Do: Take part in the glorious final battle against the forces of the evil Black Duke!

Sviftmont 27, AC 1016: Arrests.

Location: City of Alchemos, Kingdom of Meriander, NACE, Bellissaria. AS

Description: The relative calm of night is shattered as Meriander troops kick in the doors of several Alchemos homes whose inhabitants are promptly arrested on charges related to the recent bombings. By morning, several of the arrested persons are released, the rest pronounced as guilty and sentenced to death. Word is released that several conspirators escaped the apprehension and are believed to have fled the city. (*See Am. 5, Am. 12.*)

What This Means: Following several leads, investigators have narrowed their suspects to a manageable number. Most of these suspects are taken into custody thanks to the army, then, thanks to magic, the innocent persons are separated from the guilty.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs may find themselves hired to apprehend the more powerful suspects. Since there are still several conspirators loose, PCs can also do a bit of bounty hunting.

Though magic is used to gain the truth, the PCs may have been erroneously connected to the bombings. The DM is encouraged to delve deep in campaign history to find an incident that would cause an accusation of involvement. They will of course be exonerated upon interrogation, but a lot can happen while they are on the run, their capture, and their questioning.

Sviftmont 27, AC 1016: Showdown in Rafielton.

Location: City of Rafielton, Colony of Aengmor, Shadow Elves' Territories. OW

Description: During a state meeting between Princess Tanadaleyo and King Doriath, a heavily armed group of Alfheim Avengers manages to break through the security and attempts to kill both leaders. A spectacular fight ensues with spells flying high and magical wands sending energy bursts throughout the room. In the end Doriath and Tanadaleyo, back to back, manage to fight their way out of the room, just before a loud explosion shatters the building into ruins and hurls them several feet away, laid down at full length, one above the other. (*See Sv. 17.*)

What This Means: This time the Alfheim Avengers aimed really high. This operation had been carefully planned months before, but they underestimated the strength (both magical and physical) of the two nobles, so it was again a failure for the avengers.

On the other hand this event has been more helpful for the peace process, than months of talking between the two leaders, because it has consolidated even more the friendship between Doriath, a sensible leader, and Tanadaleyo, a proud she-fighter.

What the PCs Can Do: If they are in the area the PCs can take part in the fight, trying to save the two leaders.

Sviftmont 28, AC 1016: Valley Closed to Traffic.

Location: Foamfire Valley, Kingdom of Karameikos. OW

Description: Two companies of the King's Road Battalion, under the direction of Killing Moon and Haarl, are stationed at the head of the Foamfire River Valley, guarding the sole passage into the Lost Valley. They, together with a royal edict banning non-commissioned expeditions into the valley, will attempt to keep the situation from escalating further. In the meantime, the Lost Valley diplomats will return to the valley; joining them is a special royal investigative team, including Terari, headmaster of the Karameikan School of Magecraft. The archmage has taken a special interest in the Lost Valley situation. (*See Sv. 10, Sv. 12.*)

Sviftmont 28, AC 1016: Human Sacrifices.

Location: Town of Schwarztal, Duchy of Ossian, Southern Bay Marches. NW

Description: Hearing news of the invasion, the Black Duke understands that his days are numbered. He immediately readies the defenses of his city and castle, while asking his patron Alphaks to assist him in this difficult moment. To strengthen his prayers he offers Him many human sacrifices, killing with a special ritual all the prisoners held in his dungeons, including Baron Ulf Karlsson and all the kidnapped seneschals. (*See Fy. 26, Sv. 26; Ei. 1.*)

What This Means: The Black Duke understands that he cannot win against the confederacy by himself. However, Alphaks's orders are clear: fight those hated Norwold lords to the death. In a desperate attempt to avenge himself of his aggressors, he decided to slaughter all his prisoners (seneschals and lieutenants of the Norwold lords) and offer them to his Immortal patron. With this ritual he also hopes Alphaks might let him escape Ossian, or at least He might grant him some kind of magical power to use in the final confrontation with Ericall's forces.

EVENTS: EIRMONT

First Week

Eirmont 1, AC 1016: Temples Closed in Hattias.

Location: Throughout Duchy of Hattias, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Acting ostensibly on orders of Emperor Manfred, agents of Duke Oesterhaus and detachments of Hattian Storm Soldiers close the temples of Vanya and other Immortals throughout Hattias. With most of the combat-oriented priests and guards away fighting in the Crown Rebellion, there is little effective resistance. Some priests of Vanya do fight the order, but they are slain out of hand.

Over the following weeks, shrines to Thanatos will open to replace these temples. Attendance will be made mandatory. Live sacrifices of foreigners unfortunate enough to be caught on Hattias when the rebellion began will be conducted. (*See Sv. 23, Sv. 24.*)

What This Means: Thanatos is using the Crown Rebellion to establish overt temples to Himself and to strike against the faiths of other Immortals. Because of how He arranged this, people who dissent will blame Manfred. It will be a long time before word of these activities reaches the outside world: the war of the rebellion will distract people's attentions, and Hattias is effectively isolated at this time (due to policies introduced by Oesterhaus and the blockade the imperial navy has imposed).

Most Hattians, whether they support the Storm Soldiers or just turn a blind eye to this, will do nothing. The boldest, those more likely to take action, are already overseas fighting in the war. However, not everyone will be apathetic, and small bands of resistance fighters spring up throughout the Century Hills. Heinrich considers them an insignificant threat and so he ignores them for now.

None of the Immortals will be happy. If this goes on long enough, this could become a stroke against Vanya in particular. Few Immortals are aware that Heinrich is a mortal identity of Thanatos, but some are beginning to get suspicious. Once they deduce more of His plans, they will become more active in resisting Him.

Eirmont 1, AC 1016: Manfred's Army Reaches Julinius.

Location: City of Julinius, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Having dithered for almost a week at Bayville while Heinrich Oesterhaus struggled with the crown for control over Manfred, the nobles' army finally reaches Julinius, which surrenders after a brief assault. Manfred once again thwarts Thanatos, preventing the troops from sacking the city. There is even a brief skirmish between rapine-minded Storm Soldiers and troops under the sway of Manfred. After two days in Julinius the march resumes towards Thyatis City. (*See Sv. 23, Sv. 24; Ei. 5, Ei. 6.*)

What This Means: The delay has given Eusebius time to regroup and begin to rebuild his army. The defenses of Thyatis City have been strengthened in the meantime; Julinius was left only lightly garrisoned and its naval forces withdrawn to The City's harbor. Manfred is getting in the way of a good bloodletting, though. Thanatos consoles Himself that Julinius is just a small town, not really worthy of His efforts. He does vow that He will solve this conundrum of Manfred's willful disobedience before taking Thyatis City; it simply would not do to take The City and then be prevented from destroying it. He considers doing away with Manfred, but ultimately rejects the idea because without a puppet playing emperor the rationale for the rebellion goes away, along with the support of many nobles.

Eirmont 1, AC 1016: Underocean Integrated.

Location: Sea-Kingdom of Underocean, NACE. AS

Description: Underocean begins to integrate itself into the NACE. At the request of the council, Underocean begins to search for new Alphatian Artifacts under the supervision of the agency. (*See Am. 11, Sv. 8.*)

What This Means: Though Underocean is now officially part of the NACE, it is still not closely aligned with the Alphatians. This will no doubt cause tensions in the future.

Eirmont 1, AC 1016: Veroth Progress Report.

Location: Confederate Capital of Ionace, NACE. AS

Description: King Verothrics appears before the council and gives a status report on Veroth. He tells them that things are going fairly well: grain shipments are arriving from Notrion, several citizens have begun growing grapes to make vintages of Randel wine, and Targrus, formerly of Eadrin, has announced his establishing a new settlement along the banks of Lake Lagrius, that will double as a resort town, utilizing the resources of the lake.

Representative Ragmon suggests that Veroth send troops to garrison the western kingdom created in Surshield. They will be under the command of Jhedryll, an elf originally from Foresthorne. Having previously trained at one of Randel's war colleges and having served a tenure in the Randel armed forces during the war, the Verothian troops should serve him well. (*See Fy. 14, Am. 18.*)

What This Means: The council has been hesitant to come up with a suitable administrator for the new kingdom because most of the candidates have shown themselves to have pasts that make them biased towards one of the other Bellissarian kingdoms or at least offer grounds for objections from the other Bellissarian rulers. Jhedryll fills many of their requirements: he has strong ties to Randel, but is not really one of them—being an elf the distinction is more easily apparent. Plus, the council would love to see an elven ruler on Bellissaria.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs may find themselves recruited to accompany Jhedryll. Likewise, PCs may be assigned the duty by the council to monitor Jhedryll's moves.

Eirmont 1, AC 1016: Trikelios Fund Cut.

Location: City-State of Trikelios, NACE, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: Like East Portage earlier, the city-state of Trikelios ceases to receive financial aid from the NACE to help in its reconstruction and is officially declared as having recovered from the war. One day of celebration is issued. (*See Th. 1.*)

What This Means: Ever since Trikelios became a member of the confederacy it has benefited from a special reconstruction fund along with the other city-states. Unlike East Portage, which had been relatively lightly hit by the war, Trikelios had a real need for the money and used it as it was intended. Though the city hasn't reached its pre-war level yet, and despite the population's fear of another Thyatian aggression in spite of the recent Treaty of Helskir, most are happy with the achievement. The loss of imperial subvention will somewhat hurt the economy, but the increased ties with Thothia more than makes up for this.

Eirmont 1, AC 1016: The Black Duke's Last Stand.

Location: Town of Schwarztal, Duchy of Ossian, Southern Bay Marches. NW

Description: The troops from the confederacy have finally reached and now besiege Schwarztal, the capital city of Ossian. The victory seems close at hand, but suddenly a magical *gate* opens in the rear lines of the Alphan forces, and a veritable horde of undead and fiends pours out taking the Alphans by surprise. A fierce battle ensues, and even with the help of the Norwold lords (who are fighting alongside the common soldiers) the issue of the conflict seems uncertain, as more and more monsters exit from the planar gate.

In another part of the battlefield, King Sieger's *skyship* swoops down from the clouds, and an impressive array of destructive spells hits the Black Duke's fortress. The citizens start panicking and flee, trying to open the massive doors of the city to run outside and escape the fire that is now spreading over the capital. The Black Duke himself

and his minions *fly* out of the crumbling building to confront the Caretakers, who are waiting for them on Sieger's ship together with Blind Wooster. A great magical duel breaks out over the skies of Schwarztal, while the battle with the fiends continues in the surrounding countryside.

After long minutes of terrible warfare, the magical *gate* in the Alphan rear lines suddenly collapses and the fiendish creatures, trapped in this world and unable to receive further reinforcements, loose morale as the powerful Norwold heroes reduce their numbers drastically. When they see they have been outnumbered, they run or fly away or burrow into the earth, while those who are not swift enough fall under the mighty blows of the skilled heroes. The doors of the city burst aflame then swing open, and a stream of terrorized citizens run outside followed by the Black Duke's minions, who are confronted by the Alphan army. After brief skirmishes, the initial resistance is extinguished and the enemies captured: Schwarztal has finally fallen to the Norwold Confederacy, and the troops of Ericall leave it to the purifying touch of the flames. Meanwhile the magical duel above their heads continues.

Conjured monsters fight among themselves while the wizards engage in close combat on the deck of the Silver Arrow II. The stalemate between the two sides is finally broken when a daring gnome belonging to the ship's crew stabs from behind the Black Duke stunning him momentarily. King Sieger immediately takes advantage of the situation and *teleports* the stunned enemy inside the *disintegration chamber* of his vessel, and after that he orders Blind Wooster to cast a *silence* spell in that area. Following the priest's spell, Adik creates an *explosive cloud* inside the chamber while Arcadius, now joined by Count Shuren, holds off the attacks of the remaining minions (fiendish and human) of the duke. After a few minutes, Sieger triumphantly announces that the Black Duke is no more, and the necromancer's followers soon dart away or vanish, in order to escape the fate of their master. (See Sv. 26, Sv. 28; Ei. 10.)

What This Means: Alphaks listened to the prayers of His priest and granted him His help by opening a *gate* to His own homeplane, Doomgard. From there He sent waves of His lesser minions onto the Prime Plane in order to turn the outcome of the war and to avoid attracting too much attention from the other Immortals. Since only the lesser kind of undead and a few fiends entered Mystara, He reasoned, the Council of Intrusion would have blamed the Black Duke for this and Alphaks would have certainly avoided unwanted retribution. However, the unexplained collapse of the gate ruined His plan before He could complete it and gave the mortals a chance of winning the battle, an opportunity they immediately exploited. The concerted attack of the Norwold Confederacy's armies, led by its most powerful lords and heroes, and the intervention of the Caretakers assured the victory over Alphaks's forces, much to the dismay of the scornful Immortal.

What the PCs Can Do: Carve their place in Norwold's history by killing fiends and undead, or by helping the Caretakers defeat the foul Black Duke.

Eirmont 2, AC 1016: Yuzihuapac Freed.

Location: City of Yuzihuapac, Azcan Empire. HW

Description: Obviously overwhelmed, and greatly decimated, most remaining warbands true to Atzanteotl flee Yuzihuapac for their lives, some heading west to Huitlaktima, but most scattering into the jungle. Within a few days the last groups that decide to fight to the death are slaughtered, though not before inflicting heavy casualties. The eastern part of the empire is declared free from the evil influence of Atzanteotl. Otziltipac's officers decide to let their men rest after those tough and bloody battles, then they will resume their campaign by assaulting Huitlaktima, the center of power for the remaining opposition to the New Way. (See Sv. 19, Sv. 24; Ka. 3, Ka. 4.)

Eirmont 3, AC 1016: The Battle of Sayr Ulan.

Location: City of Sayr Ulan, *Mumlyket* of Sindrastan, Kingdom of Sind. OW

Description: The final confrontation between occupying forces of Hule and Sindhi resistance forces begins in earnest. The armies of the northern *mumlykets* and the armies from southern Jalawar along with all allies set up their camps around the city days ago, and began to coordinate their efforts. Today, they begin have their first engagements with Hulean forces; the fighting is bloody, and little headway is made. When the day is over, the

Huleans are still in control of Sayr Ulan, and everyone gets set for a long and vicious war. (*See Am. 26, Sv. 2; Ei. 15, Ei. 16.*)

What This Means: The Hulean forces are in the stronger position, and are concentrated. Their army is not as strong as it was during the invasion of 1006, but it is still going to be tough for the Sindhi army to uproot them. Additionally, the Sindhi *skyships* will be of limited use against the enemy, as the Sindhi fear to unleash their destructive power on their capitol city.

Eirmont 4, AC 1016: Karameikan Forces Recalled.

Location: City of Dengar, Kingdom of Rockhome. OW

Description: A messenger from Karameikos reaches the city of Dengar with direct orders from King Stefan: all Karameikan companies are to return home immediately.

King Everast XVI extends his heartfelt thank-yous to the Karameikans and their king, as well as the representatives of the other Western Defense League nations. The Karameikans leave with the coming dawn of the following day; with their departure, the other armies soon follow. (*See Fy. 6, Am. 2.*)

What This Means: The recent conflict in Thyatis have King Stefan concerned for the safety of his nation. He is already dealing with internal problems of his own (with the Lost Valley crisis), and must now be worried about his eastern border. He recalled his troops immediately, hoping to get them back to Karameikos before the winter snows make it difficult to pass through the mountains. The additional forces will be sent to bolster defenses at Rugalov Keep, in case Thyatian eyes turn westwards.

Eirmont 4, AC 1016: War Is Over for Norlan.

Location: Strait of Todstein, Great Bay. NW

Description: A longship bearing the coats of arms of Qeodhar meets the Qeodharan fleet in the Strait of Todstein at dawn. The captain bears a message from *Kjavik* Norlan of Norzee: he orders Commander Bergstrom to sail home, putting an end to the military campaign of Norwold. The admiral is more than happy to obey his lord, and so the fleet sets sail towards Qeodhar. Only a couple of smaller vessels remain in the area, taking up the deserted and cursed isle of Todstein as a hidden harbor for their future piratical raids on the coasts of the Great Bay. (*See Sv. 18, Sv. 22; Ka. 19.*)

What This Means: After hearing of the Heldannic Territories' truce with the Norwold Confederacy, Norlan immediately felt betrayed but wanted to go on with the war nonetheless. However, his advisors made him change his mind after explaining him the situation of the Qeodharan fleet, which had been greatly damaged and reduced by the Norwold armies. Bitter at heart for this defeat, Norlan ordered his troops to come home so as to not lose other soldiers (also because he needs his troops back in Qeodhar to end the troubles stirred up by the Ystmarhavn clans). He will now have to find a plausible scapegoat for this failure, and above all will have to confront the NACE with a sound explanation for his deeds to avoid being replaced on the throne of Qeodhar.

Eirmont 5, AC 1016: Manfred's Army Reaches The City.

Location: Outside City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: The rebel army reaches the outskirts of Thyatis City today, setting up a fortified camp for the night. The next morning they surprise everyone, both the defenders and the nobility, by promptly marching off again instead of assaulting the city or setting up a siege. They march north along the Mesonian River, reaching the town of Hillfork after two days. They take the town and set up camp. (*See Sv. 24, Ei. 1; Ei. 6, Ei. 9.*)

What This Means: Thanatos does not care who wins the civil war. What He wants is death, and on a large scale. Taking Thyatis City would be difficult, but He believes it could be done. However, it would be a worthless achievement to take such a prize and not be able to fill the streets with blood. More and more of the army is becoming

loyal to Manfred for some inexplicable reason, however, and Heinrich's control and influence is ebbing. He is beginning to suspect the crown of exerting some kind of influence but has not yet detected anything unusual about it, though His Immortal intelligence has led Him to that conclusion. He decides He needs to dispose of the crown, not Manfred, but even doing that without raising suspicions will take some doing. He plays for time by diverting the army to secure the Duchy of Thyatis before attacking the city itself.

Eirmont 6, AC 1016: Ostland Mobilizes Aid.

Location: City of Zeaburg, Kingdom of Ostland. OW

Description: At the request of the Thyatian ambassador, King Hordson sends out the call for warriors to fight on behalf of their ally Eusebius in the Thyatian civil war. Many Northmen, not just Ostlanders, fond of battle and bored at home, grab their weapons and begin to set out for Thyatis. The Ostlanders go to aid their ally, the others as mercenaries in search of glory and booty. (*See Sv. 10, Sv. 17.*)

What This Means: Ostland did not do much to help its Thyatian ally during the Great War. The recent Treaty of Helskir has cemented the alliance between the two nations. Eusebius needs all the help he can get at this point, and will welcome support from the tough northern warriors.

What the PCs Can Do: This is a perfect excuse for northmen characters to get involved in the Thyatian civil war. They might join either faction, or just try to engage in some opportunistic raiding.

Eirmont 6, AC 1016: The Expedition Returns.

Location: Outpost of Vanya's Rest, Heldannic Territories, Aryptian Coast. DV

Description: A Heldannic patrol comes across the exhausted and haggard remains of the expedition. The survivors, numbering ten, are ferried back to Vanya's Rest where they are attended to by the clerics. (*See Am. 2, Am. 3.*)

What This Means: Since the ambush, the surviving knights have been on a desperate flight back to Vanya's Rest. Part of that journey had them under the sporadic pursuit of Divergan skirmish troops. Along the way four more of the party fell to the pursuers, the elements, and exhaustion; the skills and judgment of Dieter were instrumental to their survival.

Back in Vanya's Rest, the survivors report the attack on themselves as well as the Meghaddara. The existence of an unknown and well-armed and skilled adversary so close to Vanya's Rest will have to be thought over.

What the PCs Can Do: This is the end of the expedition for any PCs involved. All they can do for the moment is to rest and heal. They should have a deep respect for Dieter.

Eirmont 6, AC 1016: Defection on the Rise.

Location: Hulean Empire. SC

Description: Throughout the Hulean Empire humanoids of all races are quitting the Master's service. Though this move does not seem coordinate, it is widespread to the point of raising questions in the heads of the Hulean administration. Strangely, the deserting humanoids just seem to have grown tired of constant warfare and are increasingly critic about their living conditions and the Master's decisions. Small bands of humanoids start roaming the Hulean lands plundering small villages here and there. (*See Fy. 14, Fy. 15.*)

What This Means: For the Master, this is a worrying evolution, it is the proof that either Rehmin or Ustalam has reached his objective. Also, if this movement spreads it might become a military disaster. In order to keep the humanoids from deserting, the Master allows his troops to retain more riches from their plunders.

Eirmont 7, AC 1016: Ylari Raid Biazzan.

Location: Fort Nicos, County of Biazzan, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: A large Ylari raiding force crosses the border to take advantage of the civil war in Thyatis by sacking Biazzan. As they ride through the mountain pass near Fort Nicos, a thick mist rises up around them. Soon visibility is reduced to almost nothing and warriors begin wandering aimlessly, the commanders trying to keep contact with detachments and stragglers. Horses rear up in fear and confusion, throwing off their riders. Men begin to see what they think are Thyatians approaching them, and fire arrows at them or cut them down with scimitars, only to discover they were fellow Ylari. The clerics of al-Kalim that are present try to *dispel* the mist, but with limited success. An odd feeling of dread fills them. Leaders order their units to return home but some are unsure which direction that is. Suddenly men and horses begin to be slain by unseen enemies, and men begin to flee in all directions. By nightfall some stragglers break out of the mist and return safely to Ylarum, others reach Fort Nicos in a stupor and are quickly captured. Many lie slain within the mists. (See *Ei.* 8.)

What This Means: By ancient tradition most Sclari mages do not involve themselves in civil wars or rebellions; the only exceptions are those in direct service of one of the dominion rulers (wizards like Demetron). This self-limitation is a result of foresight: the effect of hundreds of powerful mages could ruin the empire with destructive spells, and Thyatians prefer to fight their civil wars with steel, not spells, in any case. The Sclari only involve themselves in foreign wars (such as wars against Alphatia) for this reason. As part of this tradition during civil wars the wizards of Sclaras assume responsibility for insuring that foreigners do not take advantage of the strife at the expense of the empire.

Ylarum's experience during the Great War led them to believe that the empire would be easy pickings during a civil war. They were wrong. Using spells to create an enchanted mist derived from ancient Vyalian magic the Sclari were able to fill the mountain valley for miles around the Ylari raiders. They then sent in *invisible stalkers* with orders to attack anyone they found within the mists. About a third of the Ylari return home safely or with minor wounds. Another third are caught and disarmed by the Thyatians and held captive in Biazzan. The remaining third lie dead within the mists.

What the PCs Can Do: Ylari characters may decide to join (or even lead) the raid. When the mists spring up, do not tell them what is happening: the mists cause *confusion* in those who are trapped within it (save vs. spell each round in the mists). Since the mists were created by 20th (36th) level wizards, they will prove very difficult to *dispel*. Any successful *dispel magic* will only create a safe pocket, removing the mists within the *dispel*'s radius only. Characters can save some of their fellow raiders from each other, the *invisible stalkers*, and capture.

Second Week

Eirmont 8, AC 1016: Ylari Warriors Attack Fort Zendrol.

Location: Fort Zendrol, Duchy of Tel Akbir, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Acting in concert with the raiders who attacked Biazzan, but not having yet heard of their demise, Ylari warriors, their confidence fortified by their recent victory over the Fiends, cross into Tel Akbir with the ambition of conquering it. Their first goal is Fort Zendrol, just across the border. As they approach it, they find themselves surrounded by the same mists that the Biazzan force encountered, with much the same result. (See *Ei.* 7.)

What This Means: These troops are the victims of the same enchantments that wiped out the first raid. Ylari clerics *dispel* more of the mist this time, but then *chain lightning* spells are cast, cutting through the Ylari troops. Again approximately a third of the force returns home to Ylarum, another third is captured and disarmed (with the captives being sent to Tel Akbir), and a third slain. Ylarum becomes disinterested in involving themselves in Thyatian civil wars. When Heinrich hears of these massacres, he laughs—it doesn't matter who dies as a result of his plot, it only matters that they die. Hansel is just happy that foreigners were killed. Heinrich is getting sick of Hansel—his vision is so limited.

What the PCs Can Do: Ylari characters who were part of the raiding force might be captives in either Biazzan or Tel Akbir. A small band (the party) might have a chance to escape, but bringing all their fellow captives with them should

prove impossible (especially as they are isolated from each other and heavily guarded). Ylari (or others) may be commissioned by the sultan to negotiate for the release of the prisoners.

Eirmont 8, AC 1016: Synn Amok!

Location: Principality of New Kolland, Principalities of Glantri. OW

Description: Regions in and around the Great Crater in Glantri are plagued by the rampage of a massive black dragon. The attacks go on for several evenings before the dragon seemingly returns to its lair. As most of the settlements that are attacked are not human or elven, but goblinoid, there is little interest paid to the matter. Oddly, Prince Kol, normally vocal about any matters threatening "his" goblinoids, is utterly silent about things. (*See Sv. 26.*)

What This Means: A few days ago, Volospin Aendyr managed to escape Prince Kol's captivity. When this news reached Dolores Hillsbury, she exploded in a fury. Knowing that Volospin's existence jeopardizes her position with the Glantrian nobility, she was righteously inflamed. She traveled to the Great Crater to personally punish Kol and his minions, and vented some of her rage on the goblinoids in her natural form of Synn the night dragon. When she eventually calms down, she will return to Fenswick to make plans to account for this new complication.

As for Volospin Aendyr, his whereabouts are currently unknown.

Eirmont 8, AC 1016: Eagret Island Secured.

Location: Eagret Island. AS

Description: Commander Broderick leads his troops to reclaim Eagret Island from the lowlife that make their lair on it, an association of Ostlander pirates and Thyatian deserters that have been plaguing the sea lanes since the end of the war on the Isle of Dawn. (*See Am. 25, Sv. 19.*)

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs can be sent ahead to infiltrate the camp and prevent the pirates from using their defensive position to their best advantage. They may also capture the pirate leaders, or devise any other way of defeating the pirates without drawing too much blood.

Eirmont 8, AC 1016: A Day of Terror and Revelation.

Location: Valley of the Kubitts. HW

Description: An Alphatian *skyship* appears in the skies above Kubitt Valley and halts to a hover just above the treetops. As the frightened kubitts scurry for cover, a group of Alphatians and three kubitts *levitate* down to the ground below. One of the kubitts, Zoranthis, calls to her fellows to not be afraid as the Alphatians come in peace.

A few more adventurous kubitts emerge from the bush to approach Zoranthis, her companions, and the accompanying Alphatians. They give the Alphatians a thorough, suspicious look-over before greeting their comrades. Zoranthis requests that her aunt, Queen Zalmontis, be summoned to speak with the Alphatians. Zoranthis is told that her aunt died but a few days earlier. Zoranthis is shocked and asks her Alphatian escort to postpone any discussions for a week to allow her time to mourn. (*See Ka. 23.*)

What This Means: Since her capture last year, Zoranthis and her two companions have learned much about the Alphatians, enough to know that their fears are mostly unfounded. In fact, she sees that her people can benefit greatly from the land of their creator. She had hoped to return to her people and establish formal relations between the two.

Queen Zalmontis's death is a bit of a shock to Zoranthis. Though her uncle, King Eraw still lives, under kubitt law he is virtually powerless and cannot rule. A replacement is needed fast to resolve the chaos of a leaderless kubitt people. For years Zoranthis had pondered on how to usurp her aunt's throne, but now with the throne within reach she has second thoughts. With Zalmontis's death, she is now the most qualified descendant. She has seen some of what lays outside of the Valley of the Kubitts and those sights make even rulership of her people seem bland in comparison. She has a great deal to think about while she mourns.

Eirmont 9, AC 1016: Stefania Meets with Firestorm.

Location: City of Newkirk, Archduchy of Westrourke, Thyatian Empire, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: Countess Stefania Torion meets with Thrainkell Firestorm to discuss his opinion of the Crown War in Thyatis. She finds Firestorm does not seem to be the bold man she knew. He says he is content with his status under Eusebius and has even considered sending re-enforcements to Thyatis City. Stefania then reveals the plans of Julia Kendach and Periandra Docerius. Firestorm and Stefania decide it might be wise to discuss the matter further with them, and send messengers to call a meeting in Redstone. (*See Sv. 17, Sv. 26; Ei. 19.*)

What This Means: The Crown War is causing ripples throughout the empire, and everyone is being forced to take sides. Firestorm's personality change is also evidencing itself again: he seems more content, not the ambitious man he once was. This puzzles those who know him, but most decide he is just more mature now.

Eirmont 9, AC 1016: The Hinterlands Force Assembles.

Location: City of Raven Scarp, Hinterlands, Thyatian Empire. DV

Description: A force of 1,500 men and women board fast Thyatian and Kastelian ships today, heading for the Thyatian mainland, and glory in battle. With great fanfare, and the personal blessings of Leilah herself, they depart as heroes. (*See Sv. 17, Sv. 24; Ka. 2, Ka. 4.*)

What This Means: Although seemingly small, the force that was assembled is considerable, given the short mobilization time. About 800 of the warriors are native Hinterlanders, some of whom are serving as legionnaires, with the remainder being citizens eager to prove their mettle. Of the remainder, 500 are citizens of Thyatian stock, and 200 are Kastelian marines and adventure-seekers. This last group was unexpected, as were the additional Kastelian ships, but the city-state had privately decided that maintaining the status quo would be far more desirable than having Thyatis descend into anarchy, or worse.

What the PCs Can Do: Adventuresome PCs could very well be among the warriors bent sent to Thyatis, and this is also a good way to introduce Davanian PCs to the Old World.

Eirmont 9, AC 1016: The Orb Vanishes.

Location: Tower of Idris, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: The keepers guarding the *Orb of the Great One* are found slain on the doorstep of the anti-spying chamber. Once raised by Idris's priests, the two tell that Karyan is responsible for attacking them and stealing the precious orb. Enraged by this treachery, the high priestess orders the Onyx Ring to find the wizard and bring him back alive for a just retribution. Siren and a couple of other members are dispatched to locate and retrieve both the artifact and Karyan. (*See Am. 27, Sv. 16; Ei. 10.*)

What This Means: The *Orb of the Great One* was stolen by the Onyx Ring, a secret sect loyal to Idris, to cause further troubles in Norwold. Then they used it to lure the Dragon Rulers on the Prime Plane and capture Them, in order to blame the humans and convert the dragons to their cult. However, now the same person that proposed the whole plan has stolen the orb and disappeared. The Onyx Ring never suspected Karyan of being a traitor, and they still do not know for whom he is working nor why has he arranged the theft of the orb, exposing himself so directly. They hope to recover the item before Karyan uses it for Idris knows what purpose.

Eirmont 9, AC 1016: Zuberi Assassinated?

Location: City-State of Slagovich. SC

Description: Zuberi returned to Slagovich yesterday despite orders from his *margrave* not to do so. Despite the *margrave's* reservations, Zuberi is greeted as a conquering hero by much of the populace who are excited about his

recent victories over Hojah. This morning however, he is found dead in his bed with his throat slashed. The official investigation does not manage to reveal any leads as to who might have killed Zuberi, although publicly, Hojahan agents are blamed. (*See Ya. 26, Fy. 24.*)

What This Means: Zuberi is not dead at all. The “body” is in fact a magically created clone that was killed instead. Zuberi left the clone in his room as bait to draw out his enemies. The killer was in fact Iago, one of his crewmen. Secretly following Iago after the murder, Zuberi discovers whom his former friend was working for. Suspecting the *margrave* to be behind the “assassination” because of Zuberi’s interest in Tatyana, Zuberi is surprised to find that Iago’s employers are actually Hojahan. Just goes to show that not every conspiracy theory is founded! Zuberi slips in to see Tatyana that night to assure her that he is not in fact dead. After she gets over her initial shock, she warns him that his life is again in great danger as the *margrave* had also ordered his assassination. His initial fears confirmed, Zuberi slips out of the city determined to plot a way of removing the *margrave* and then leading the Slagovian forces to victory over Hojah.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are friends of Zuberi, that can help him escape the city without being detected.

Eirmont 10, AC 1016: Karameikan Volunteers Set Sail.

Location: City of Mirros, Kingdom of Karameikos. OW

Description: As the factions mobilized in Thyatis, some Karameikans of Thyatian descent pondered getting involved. Among them was Justin Karameikos, whose commercial inclination made him admire Eusebius’s reforms in Thyatis. The influence of Olivia, still favorably disposed to her homeland if her husband is not, encouraged this attitude, but Stefan advised against it.

The battle at Bayville crystallized Justin’s attitude. Though his father was indifferent, Justin could not bring himself to stand idly by. Encouraged by his mother, Justin began to organize like-minded Karameikans, some of whom were ashamed of their nations actions in the Great War and bent on redeeming their own honor. Justin’s corps of volunteers consists largely of the younger children of Karameikan nobility, like himself, unlikely to inherit positions of rulership within Karameikos and romantic at heart, setting out to make something of themselves. Thus his expeditionary force is an ironic echo of the men who followed his father into Traladara from Thyatis several decades ago.

Today this force sets sail from Mirros on chartered ships, heading towards Thyatis City. (*See Sv. 10, Sv. 17; Ei. 20, Ei. 22.*)

What This Means: Not all Karameikans are happy with Stefan’s recent policies toward their old homeland. Some of them are romantics, simply looking for a noble cause to champion, and finding it in the land of their fathers. The most driving factor of all, however, is that Karameikos is becoming a more and more settled land, filling with established dominions, so that the opportunities their fathers and older siblings have simply are less available now. In Thyatis, however, as colonization continues, the chance to carve out a place for themselves is still available. Helping the right side win can bring rewards.

What the PCs Can Do: Karameikan characters may want to join the expeditionary force, either out of a sense of responsibility, to seek a chance at heroism, or to try and catch the eye of the emperor and gain a domain.

Eirmont 10, AC 1016: New Arrivals in Freiburg.

Location: City of Freiburg, Heldann, Heldannic Territories. OW

Description: Early today eight large cargo vessels pull into Freiburg’s harbor, apparently laden with people. As soon as the ships are docked, almost 3,000 people pour onto the docks, demanding to meet a representative of the authorities to discuss permission to settle in Heldann. It soon becomes apparent that all of the former passengers are from Thyatis—Hattias to be more precise—many of whom are followers of Vanya.

Not wishing to have the situation degenerate into chaos, the dockmaster requests aid from a nearby detachment of knights in maintaining order and assessing the situation. (*See Ei. 25, Ka. 20.*)

What This Means: These Hattians are former citizens of Thyatis who decided to leave their homeland for the Heldannic Territories. Though many Thyatians are emigrating beyond Thyatis, mostly to Thyatian colonies, Count Heinrich Oesterhaus seems to have spurred this latest exodus. It seems to be a conscious policy to push devout (some would say fanatical) worshipers of Vanya to leave Hattias. Knowing that the Heldannic Territories is a land where Vanya is revered, as well as being a place where Hattians are welcomed, these people opted to leave their homes and try their luck in a new nation. This group of refugees is not the last, either; more will be on the way. Oesterhaus is providing many incentives, both propagandistic and of a more direct nature, to leave.

This development is fortuitous for the knights, who are busily reconquering Heldland. They now have land-hungry Hattians who also happen to be followers of Vanya—perfect settlers to secure their hold in the new territories.

What the PCs Can Do: This could present an opportunity for new PCs to adventure in the Heldannic Territories, as 1st level PCs “just off the boat,” or as name-level characters seeking lands to govern.

Eirmont 10, AC 1016: Rulers Consult.

Location: City of Beitung, Exarchate of Ochalea, Thyatian Empire, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: Nurokidu Nuar of the Pearl Islands arrives in Beitung to discuss what action, if any, the island nations should take in reaction to the civil war in Thyatis. He expects Teng Lin-Dieu to urge caution at the least and withdrawal from the empire again at the most. If Teng advises the latter Nurokidu is ready to propose a federation of some kind to replace the Thyatian presence throughout the Sea of Dawn.

Teng surprises everyone when he declares that Ochalea will fully back Eusebius with all its strength, and that the Pearl Islands should do the same. After a short closed-door discussion, Nurokidu agrees. Both nations will dispatch forces to re-enforce the rightful emperor as soon as they are able. (*See Sv. I, Sv. 21.*)

What This Means: While Nurokidu was traveling to Beitung, Teng Lin-Dieu prayed to Koryis for guidance. He received a series of dreams in response, filled with disturbing imagery: twin lightning bolts burying themselves into Thyatis, dividing the land; a black-clad figure cutting down humanity with a scythe; blood, fire, and darkness filling the streets of Thyatis City, spreading outwards to cover first the empire, then the lands beyond; Mystara as a burned out cinder in an endless void of darkness. Koryis sent this imagery after piecing together strands of information and arriving at a disturbing conclusion. Though things are not quite as apocalyptic as His apocryphal dreams portray, Koryis knows that if Heinrich wins there will be neither peace nor prosperity on Mystara, only strife and destruction. Thus an Immortal of peace urges His followers to involve themselves in war.

On his trip back to the Pearl Islands Nurokidu receives similar dreams from Korotiku. Dreams with different images, but the same message.

Eirmont 10, AC 1016: Free!

Location: Guardian Mesa, unknown location on Mystara.

Description: Karyan, the member of the Onyx Ring that stole the *Orb of the Great One* (an artifact where the souls of the Immortal Dragons have been trapped), materializes at the bottom of the Guardian Mesa, the place where the *gate* to the Pits of Banishment lies. He is accompanied by a group of six people wearing black robes embroidered with mysterious and weird-looking glyphs. Some of these figures also seem to walk strangely, as if they were not completely human. They begin to trace strange mystical symbols on the ground, placing the orb at the center of a pentacle of power. Immediately after completing a great runic drawing, they take place around the orb and intone an obscure litany that causes the whole area to hum with magic.

A few minutes after, Siren the Sorceress and other members of the Onyx Ring appear nearby and take position around the mysterious figures to attack them and retrieve the artifact. When questioned about the true motives of his actions, Karyan the traitor does not answer but smiles viciously and goes on with his ritual.

Suddenly a third group materializes near the Guardian Mesa: it is Kelter Zerben and his Dragonslayers. The mage Alminthrar (one of the Dragonslayers) has been magically looking for Siren since the Caretakers gave them the task to

recover the missing orb, but only now was he able to locate her and immediately *teleported* to the spot with his comrades. The Dragonslayers attack Siren and the black-robed people, believing them all to be involved in the same dark scheme.

During the battle Siren calls to the other members of the Onyx Ring in Denagoth for aid, and a few minutes after a large group of knights in armor and flying wizards *teleport* to her location and start engaging the Dragonslayers in close and ranged melee. Some of the black-robed figures have been killed, but they proceed with their ritual nonetheless. Only Karyan stops the chanting and confronts the attackers by summoning strange beasts of otherworldly shapes to defend himself and his companions.

When the Dragonslayers begin to suffer heavily from the combined attacks of Siren's allies and the summoned creatures, Alminthrar sends a telepathic call for help to Arcadius, one of the Caretakers. Arcadius warns King Sieger and Adik de Chevas, and the three promptly *teleport* near the Dragonslayers after casting some protective spells, to aid them against the other villains. The tide of the battle turns once again in favor of the Dragonslayers, but right in the middle of the confrontation an arcane explosion louder than the others shatters the concentration of all the opponents, who fall to the ground hands pushed on their ears.

A deafening and acute sound pierces the bystanders' ears while the very fabric of space seems to tear apart around the orb, and the vision blurs intermittently. The wizards and priests try to concentrate to counter this magical wave of majestic proportions but they collapse once again to the ground, unable to utter a single spell. A magical *gate* swings open right in the middle of the great circle of power drawn by the black-robed figures, just above the orb, and some strange lizard-like creatures emerge, stepping on the ground with a frightening smile on their large maws. Other people jump out of the *gate* as well, a few humans and elves in very bad shape, and the bystanders are able to see a huge temple lying on the other side of the *gate*, bathed in an unholy dark and sick green light. Other figures are waging battle against each other with spells and weapons, when (unnoticed by everyone) a single person manages to snatch a long cylindrical object set on the main altar of the temple.

The *gate* suddenly begins to shrink and the humming sound in the area grows dimmer. The Dragonlord takes advantage of the situation and charges at Karyan, slashing him repeatedly with his *Wyrmslayer* sword and killing him outright. Then, backed by the priest Ceowulf (who personally engages a few of the black-robed figures) he darts towards the *Orb of the Great One* and seizes it. Waves of destructive energy are unleashed against his body, but notwithstanding the pain he manages to bring the artifact out of the pentacle of power. This causes the great lizard-like beings' commotion, and the deafening sound also ceases, freeing the spellcasters from their paralysis. The *gate* starts collapsing and the few lizard-like beings already out vanish with a scream of rage, while the battle outside the Guardian Mesa rages on. Before the *gate* closes completely the man with the cylindrical object in his hands (which appears to be a twisted staff) jumps out and *flies* immediately above ground, laughing maniacally.

The surviving black-robed figures *teleport* away, followed by the man with the staff. Siren and the remaining Onyx Ring members, in a last desperate attempt to kill the Dragonlord and the Caretakers, unleash a highly powerful collective spell on the area that kills many and cracks the orb in the hands of Kelter Zerben. A multicolored light stems out of the crack in the orb and a few dragon-like silhouettes of different colors emerge from it. Immediately afterwards the orb explodes, and a dark oblivion falls on all the bystanders. (See Sv. 16, Ei. 9; Ei 12, Ei. 15.)

What This Means: This is the final conclusion of a carefully studied plan devised by the carnifex and the entities known only as the Outer Beings. The plan began in AC 1010, when the Outer Beings influenced the Shadow Lord's dreams with false suggestions about the existence of a powerful artifact called the *Black Staff*. The voices in the Shadow Lord's head spoke of great powers magically sealed in the Pits of Banishment, and the *Black Staff* was but a fragment of these powers. It could have been used to create and dominate undead, just what the Shadow Lord had been searching for in all his undead years. He immediately began to look for the entrance to the Pits of Banishment, eventually discovering the Guardian Mesa and the Septahenge, an ancient magical place where the *gate* to the Pits lay.

In order to get the staff without risking too much, he fooled the elves that led a crusade into Denagoth into thinking that the staff was the only item that could have destroyed Idris and Her minions forever. Later he joined their expedition under cover to get the *Black Staff* at the right time. The man in black that exited the gate before it collapsed was indeed the Shadow Lord, finally coming back to Denagoth with his long-sought artifact to free himself of Idris's yoke and attain full lichdom.

However, the Shadow Lord was being used by the carnifex and the Outer Beings as well as the Onyx Ring. Karyan and the black-robed figures were in fact cultists of the Outer Beings who, on dream-suggestions by their deities, devised the plan to trap the Immortal Dragons inside the *Orb of the Great One*. Karyan later stole and used the artifact to open the *gate* to the Pits in order to free the carnifex, the first among the Outer Beings' exalted servants. The carnifex themselves had been instructed by the Outer Beings to craft the *Black Staff* as part of their quest to escape the prison dimension where the Immortals relegated them many millennia ago. The ritual to escape the Pits included the sacrifice of a Prime Plane soul in the temple inside Castle Carnifex (something the Shadow Lord provided by guiding the elves and their allies to the Guardian Mesa); the crafting of the *Black Staff* to channel the power of the carnifex to link the multiverse with the Pits; and finally the sacrifice of an Immortal Soul on the Prime Plane to open the *gate* and allow the passage of the carnifex.

All this was accomplished with the final ritual celebrated by both the carnifex inside their temple and the Outer Beings' acolytes near the Guardian Mesa, freeing some of the carnifex (those lizard-like beings that exit the *gate*) from their millenary imprisonment. However, Kelter Zerben and the Shadow Lord's intervention broke the ritual and caused the untimely collapse of the *gate* before all the carnifex could walk out. Also, during the ritual the soul of the Great One (held inside the orb) was consumed to open the *gate*, and later the remaining three Dragon Rulers broke free of Their prison only because the orb was destroyed by the Onyx Ring members' massive spell.

Now some carnifex are once again free to roam Mystara and surely the Outer Beings had something in mind when they organized the release of their most powerful servants. Also the three Immortal Dragons have to face a difficult situation, the election of a new Great Dragon, and this could move the Dragonwars to the Draconic Outer Planes.

What the PCs Can Do: Fight against the Onyx Ring and the Outer Beings' acolytes in a desperate battle to prevent the carnifex from returning to the world. It is unlikely they will prevent the opening of the *gate*, but they could succeed in killing a few carnifex before they disappear (not all of them, however—some should escape and become a threat later on, which the PCs will have to free the world of).

Eirmont 11, AC 1016: Elven Arrival.

Location: Western Kingdom of Surshield, NACE, Bellissaria. AS

Description: The elf Jhedryll arrives in Surshield near its border with Dawnrim where he and his body of troops begin construction of a fortress to operate out of. Even before the fort is completed, Jhedryll is to begin patrols of the area. (*See Kl. 3, Am. 18; Ka. 21, Ka. 27.*)

What This Means: Though he is not aware of it, Jhedryll is beginning building his power structure in what is to become his kingdom. The move solves two problems: it offers security in the region, and it establishes Jhedryll in the area, setting up his promotion to governor and eventually king.

The council has allotted Jhedryll but a few troops in a move to prevent the kingdom from becoming a police state. Jhedryll must gain support of the locals to his cause and fill out his ranks and when this is done, the council will have no doubt that Jhedryll is the right man to rule the kingdom.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs accompanying Jhedryll will have their hands full in patrols and in winning the hearts and minds of the locals. Locals opposed to Jhedryll may hire PCs to undermine these efforts.

Eirmont 12, AC1016: A Gift for Idris.

Location: Idris Tower, Forest of Lothenar, Kingdom of Denagoth. NW

Description: The Shadow Lord finally reappears in the Tower of Idris; boasting a yet unheard of dose of courage and broadmindedness, he interrupts the high priestess while in the middle of a sacred daily ritual. When the high priestess coldly demands him to explain his behavior and the cause of his desertion in the last ten months, the Shadow Lord merely presents a twisted black staff embedded with dark gemstones, and utters a simple statement: "I have come to regain my freedom... and to take your cursed life." Before the acolytes and guards can react, he utters a few words and a pitch-black aura extends from the staff, bathing everyone into darkness. Once the aura disappears,

each person in the room finds himself confronting an exact undead replica of himself... all except the Shadow Lord and the high priestess.

The Shadow Lord is so stunned by the high priestess's lack of an undead clone that he doesn't act for a good minute, while the battle rages around him. The high priestess slowly walks towards the Shadow Lord and seizes the *Black Staff*. Then, smiling viciously, she whispers something into the other's decayed ears, and when the Shadow Lord stares at her in awe, she sneers at him: "You will always be Idris's lackey, vassalich!" Then, the Shadow Lord disappears, and she helps her retainers kill all their undead replica before returning to the ritual. (*See Ei. 10.*)

What This Means: According to the voices who revealed him the existence of the *Black Staff* in the Pits of Banishment, the artifact would have caused the demise of all those who were touched by its deadly darkness. During the battle with the Carnifex inside their castle, the Shadow Lord was able to see how the staff worked, and thought it good enough to use against the high priestess. He simply wanted to make her his servant and order her to give him his phylactery, thus earning his freedom. In fact, as long as the high priestess holds his phylactery, the Shadow Lord will never be able to attain full lichdom, and will always be a vassal of the Church of Idris. This has been his status for the past two centuries, and now he had the opportunity to change it. But something did not go as planned: the high priestess had no undead replica. The words she whispered to the Shadow Lord explained him why its plan did not work, but now it was too late. Currently the Shadow Lord has been sent into Idris Tower's dungeons, and his fate still remains a mystery, for Idris is not famous for Her patience.

Eirmont 12, AC 1016: Under the Earth.

Location: Plain of Fire, east of the Kingdom of Sind. OW

Description: Weeks of wandering in the vast, deadly desert have begun to take their toll on the humanoids of the Great Migration: even creatures designed to adapt to the most inhospitable conditions like humanoids have their limits. Desertions are on the rise, as are incidents of infighting.

Just when things seem their bleakest, a group of strangers appears in the midst of the humanoid encampment. A pair of gnolls, having arrived seemingly from nowhere, meet with the leaders of the Great Migration.

The following morning, Hool and Nizam-Pasha herd the vast group of humanoids on the march once more. After some hours, they arrive at a large rock formation. Then, together with the two gnolls, they lead their people into a large cave, and the Great Migration vanishes from the face of Mystara! (*See Fe. 8, Am. 4.*)

What This Means: The Great Migration has entered into the depths of Graakhalia—a large underground cave complex that lays beneath the surface of the Plain of Fire. The pair of gnolls they met up with are representatives of the beleaguered society of Graakhalia—gnollish and elven peoples living together—who have long lived in this part of the world. Their realm has been under siege by agents of the Master of Hule for many years. Perhaps, with the assistance of the army of the Great Migration, they can be liberated once more... or perhaps Ranivorus has other reasons for sending His humanoid followers to this underground realm.

Eirmont 12, AC 1016: Gold! They've Found Gold in the Hills.

Location: Village of Fletrip, Freelands of the northern Bylot Hills. SC

Description: Another important gold vein has been found in the northern Bylot Hills. The region gains in appeal both for the Hulean population afflicted by war and the nomads' rampages and for the neighboring imperial powers. (*See Ka. 17.*)

What This Means: The growing attractiveness of the Bylot Hills is certain to bring more people in the wild forest north of Antasyn. This will increase tension between the colonists and the forest-dwellers. Also, as new resources are uncovered in the region, the interest of the Empire of Zuyervo might grow to the point of pushing the *czar* to organized a real invasion of the hills.

Eirmont 13, AC 1016: Duke Ney Returns Home.

Location: Duchy of Chitine, Kingdom of Alpha, NACE, Western Bay Marches. NW

Description: Ney the furmy, at the head of his army of Knights of Chitine and footmen, arrives on the battlefield where the Burning War is being waged. With the help of the fresh troops he is bringing in the war, the allied forces fighting for Chitine's freedom push the fire elementals of Duke Dahish and the giants of Coiger de Mory farther westwards, in the uphill of the Icereach Range, only thirty miles from the western border of the country. (*See Sv. 19, Ei. 1.*)

What This Means: King Ericall allowed his faithful general to sail for Chitine immediately after the fall of Ossian, and Ney immediately left with his troops and with a contingent of Ericall's soldiers lent to him by the overlord. Norwold is not free of troubles yet, and so the overlord had the power to commission forces from another land to help Chitine fight off its enemies, as all members of the confederacy have the right and duty to do.

What the PCs Can Do: They can go with Duke Ney if they want, taking part in the Burning War and maybe ending it before it causes further damage in Chitine.

Eirmont 14, AC 1016: Eusebius Fortifies His Position.

Location: City of Thyatis, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Over the weeks following the defeat of his army at Bayville, Eusebius has taken measures to strengthen The City against assault. Additional detachments have returned from overseas. Most strikingly, the day after Eusebius returned he issued an imperial edict freeing all slaves who would work to help protect the city and improve its defenses.

To strengthen resolve the senate passes a new charter for the city, permitting it a greater level of self-government. The authority of the emperor and the senate will remain paramount, but Thyatis City and its suburbs (roughly the 8-mile hex the city is in) will be detached from the Duchy of Thyatis and administered separately, in effect as a new domain. At this time, the unpopular emigration draft is also ended.

The city is divided into 14 districts, each of which now has the right to elect 2 senators and a city councilman (called a *tribune*). Its craft guilds elect four *demarchs* (red, blue, green, and white, covering three districts each. Two districts, the Zendrolium and River Guard Town, are outside this system, supervised directly by the emperor's curators.). Under the supervision of a *praetorian prefect* (usually just referred to as the prefect) appointed by Eusebius, these officials will run the day to day administration of the city. In exchange for this, the guilds and districts will organize and maintain a qualified, well-trained militia force (four divisions known as *demes*, after the quarters, are created, all under the command of the prefect). Eusebius appoints Nikephorus Logotharion, the man who has advised him on fiscal and commercial matters, as the first prefect of Thyatis City. (*See Ei. 9, Ei. 10; Ei. 17, Ei. 20.*)

What This Means: Eusebius could have simply ordered the slaves to labor on his behalf, commandeering them from their owners if necessary. But they might have sabotaged their own efforts or otherwise not worked as efficiently as possible—recent revolts certainly don't encourage confidence. By promising them their freedom he has earned their enthusiastic loyalty. Their liberation will be permanent, and if Eusebius wins he feels this will strengthen the empire in the long run. In any case those freed will sign contracts to either enter the military or serve the empire and the city as indentured servants for the duration of the siege or one year, whichever is greater. Note, however, that this action does not outlaw slavery in the city: slavery will be much less prevalent, but it is still legal. The people of the city, given a greater stake in its governance, can be counted on to strive hard for it, and the empire. Skilled gladiators train the *deme* militia. From now on there will be no gladiatorial slaves, only those who chose to will fight in the arena, along with the occasional convicted criminal.

Artillery are placed atop the walls, and the city's defensive enchantments are re-enforced by Thyatian priests and mages. Some refugees pour into the city while others leave it seeking safety elsewhere. In all, more people enter than leave, however (especially country slaves who take advantage of the confusion to run away from their owners and receive freedom). By now the city's population has reached 600,000 again. Supplies (including the first grain shipments from Bellissaria) are brought in for a long siege. Everyone begins to wonder why the nobles' army has not attacked.

Eirmont 14, AC 1016: Thyatian Diplomacy at Work... Again.

Location: City of Raven Scarp, Thyatian Empire, Thyatian Hinterlands. DV

Description: In response to General Leilah's request, the Thyatian Senate sends Cirus Bovas the Younger, an able diplomat and negotiator, to Davania in order to report on Emerond. Ambassador Bovas has the duty to investigate and learn as much as possible about the Emerondian military, customs and powers before taking any political decision, reporting to the Minister of Foreign Affairs via *scrolls of communication*.

Karcharoz, albeit reluctantly, guides the new expedition headed by Ambassador Bovas into Emerondian territory, avoiding possible ambushes by the Hinterlanders and repelling other assaults. (*See Sv. 16, Sv. 17; Ka. 20, Ka. 27.*)

What This Means: Thyatis wants to know what are Emerond's real strengths and goals. For this reason the senate has sent Ambassador Bovas, who happens to be not only a keen negotiator but also a trusted member of the *magistranoi* (a Thyatian spy network). After he acquires enough information, he will be given instructions to handle Emerond.

What the PCs Can Do: Obviously, the PCs can be part of the entourage that escorts the ambassador to Emerond.

Eirmont 15, AC 1016: Sayr Ulan Freed!

Location: City of Sayr Ulan, *Mumlyket* of Sindrastan, Kingdom of Sind. OW

Description: Fighting in the city of Sayr Ulan comes to a head today as Hulean forces are defeated in a decisive battle. Finally, after 12 years of Hulean control, Sayr Ulan is freed of the Master's iron grip. Fighting will continue for some time, as freedom forces rout out Huleans, but the city is in the control of Chandra once more. Along with the *mumlykets* of Punjab, Nagpuri, Peshmir, and Jalawar, the eastern half of Sind is more or less free of the intrusive Hulean agents. (*See Sv. 2, Ei. 3; Ei. 16.*)

What This Means: Sind has been under the heel of the Master for a long time now, and the presence of Hule is still not wholly purged from the westernmost reaches of the Old World. Yet there is hope, as reparations can finally begin. Chandra UI Nervi will spend the next few weeks regaining full control of the city and the rest of Sindrastan, and will sit down with his allies (notably Darokin) and attempt to repair his damaged nation.

Turmoil is far from over, however. The Master still retains a solid presence in many Sindhi *mumlykets*: Azadgal, Baratkand, Jhengal, Putnabad, Shajarkand. Jaibul remains an ally, as does Kadesh—the latter being locked in a deadly civil war with neighboring Peshmir. Additionally, the *himaya* caste retains its animosity towards the followers of Gareth, whom they view as heretics to Sindhi faith. The fact that the followers are national heroes will only serve to further the *himayan* attitude.

Third Week

Eirmont 15, AC 1016: Death of a Dragonlord.

Location: All throughout Norwold. NW

Description: Unconfirmed rumors spread about the death of Kelter Zerben, the Dragonlord. The rumors flow fast across the land, spread by both human and draconic mouths, and are cause of great despair among the human inhabitants of Norwold. On the other hand, joy and satisfaction is expressed by the draconic population.

Hopeland is swarmed once again by the wyrms but no effective resistance is encountered, not even by the lord of the dominion and his followers. The humans barricade or retreat into safer caves within the foothills, leaving their homes empty and vulnerable to the dragons' raids. (*See Ei. 9, Ei. 10; Ei. 18, Ei. 19.*)

What This Means: The Caretakers are responsible for spreading the rumors. They managed to survive the final explosion that destroyed the *Orb of the Great One* using *contingency* spells. They have now fully recovered from the battle and wish to end the Dragonwars as soon as possible. This is the first step in their plan.

Eirmont 16, AC 1016: Celebrating in Sind.

Location: City of Sayr Ulan and liberated *mumlykets* of Sind, Kingdom of Sind. OW

Description: Today is the day of *Vada* on the Sindhi calendar, when Sindhi proclaim their resolutions to become better people in the future. Coming as it does on the day after the liberation of Sayr Ulan, celebrations are particularly loud and festive, as Sindhi bathe in the waters of the Asanda River, and indulge in all sorts of vices (gambling, drinking, and more), all with the promise that, starting tomorrow, they will never do such things again. (*See Ei. 3, Ei. 15.*)

Eirmont 17, AC 1016: Army on the March.

Location: Town of Hillfork, Duchy of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: The rebel army dithered around Hillfork for weeks while Heinrich worked to dispose of the Imperial Crown. He secretly made a copy of the crown, then switched it with the real one. Manfred now wears a fake, with the original kept in a locked chest in Heinrich's tent. The army now decamps from Hillfork, marching south along the Mesonian River towards the city. (*See Ei. 10, Ei. 14; Ei. 20, Ei. 22.*)

Eirmont 18, AC 1016: The Caretakers Sponsor New Rulers.

Location: Wyrmsteeth Mountains. NW

Description: The Caretakers separately meet with three representatives of the Norwold dragons during the night to discuss a profitable agreement. They reveal them to be the true slayers of the Dragonlord and to have the power to help them obtain the rulership over their fellow dragons, thus becoming the new dragon rulers of Norwold. However, in exchange for all this they want them to immediately call for a meeting of all the dragons to stop the Dragonwars and sign a peace treaty with the other inhabitants of lower Norwold. The dragons ask for a proof of their deed, and each of the wizards presents them with something belonging to the Dragonlord: his head, his heart and finally the *Dragonhelm*.

The Caretakers then offer to lend to each of them twenty dragons of their own color that would obey their commands, thus making the three wyrms the most powerful dragon masters of the Wyrmsteeth and the rightful heirs of the previous draconic rulers. When questioned about the *Orb of the Great One*, the Caretakers answer the dragons that the orb was destroyed in the final battle with the Dragonlord. The three dragons are invited to discuss the proposal with one another before answering, then the Caretakers *teleport* away. (*See Ei. 10, Ei. 15; Ei. 19, Ei. 25.*)

What This Means: Adik de Chevas contacted a gold dragon master, while Arcadius spoke with a jade one and Sieger with a red one. The three wizards plan to sponsor the three wyrms as new Dragon Rulers of Norwold, in order to stop the Dragonwars as soon as possible without much opposition on the dragons' part. The only possible way for doing this was to exact the vengeance over the Dragonlord as the dragons wanted and to make three dragons of each alignment raise to prominence among their own kind. Thus they are now giving these three dragons [*magically-created using Create Magical Monsters to create griffons, then cast an Improved Phantasmal Forces and Permanency. Ed.*] the opportunity to become the new Wyrmsteeth Rulers and the heroes of dragonkind, by giving them the full credit for killing the Dragonlord and for restoring order in the Council of Wyrms. It is vital however, that all of them accept the offer, else the war will not be over, but they are confident that the dragons will be convinced by their proposal, given their thirst for power. Giving the orb back to the dragons would have proven most useful as well, but unfortunately it was destroyed in the final confrontation with Siren and the Idris cultists.

Eirmont 19, AC 1016: Meeting in Redstone.

Location: Redstone Castle, County of Redstone, Thyatian Empire, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: Thyatian lords gather in Redstone to decide on what policy they should adopt towards the empire and the War of the Crown. Julia Kendach and Periandra Docerius are surprised when Anaxibius suddenly orders his guards to arrest them. Both look to Thrainkell Firestorm for support, but he simply folds his arms. The rebel lords are dragged off to cells, shouting invective and complaining of their betrayal.

Meanwhile joint forces of Westrourke and Redstone march to West Portage and Kendach, quickly assuming control of both regions. There is little resistance, as the garrisons of both domains believe they are welcoming allies. (See Sv. 26, Ei. 9.)

What This Means: For now those loyal to Eusebius remain in control on the Isle of Dawn. Anaxibius and Stefania announce their intention to lead a force to Thyatis City, to join her brother in fighting the rebels. Firestorm will assume control of the situation on the Isle of Dawn in the meantime. Ironically, this puts him in the position of dominance he always dreamed of attaining.

Eirmont 19, AC 1016: The Big Duel.

Location: City of Blueside, Kingdom of Lagrius, NACE, Bellissaria. AS

Description: The crowds gather to watch the duel between King Verothrics and Brodicim. Brodicim arrives from his jail cell accompanied by friends and by a squad of Lagrius troops. A few minutes later, Verothrics arrives, accompanied by his entourage of Veroth troops and officers. Queen Siaron herself will oversee the duel.

The two are called into the center of the dueling arena to listen as Siaron reads the accusations that led to this duel. She then recites the customary rules and protocols of a duel, then steps back and begins casting the customary *duel shield* to protect the spectators from errant spells.

The duel begins with a flurry of magical spells being thrown about as the two “feel out” the other probing for magical defenses. Brodicim begins the spell assault by casting a *magic missile* whose magical projectiles dissipate upon contacting the king. Verothrics’s response is unexpected: he rushes at Brodicim and attacks him with his staff, striking him solidly in the jaw. A reeling Brodicim draws a wand from his belt and tries to raise it at his opponent but Verothrics is quicker and uses the staff to knock the wand from his grasp, following this move by a series of staff blows that leave Brodicim laid out upon the ground.

Verothrics then casts his coup de grace: standing over the barely conscious Brodicim, he casts *disintegrate* upon him, leaving nothing but a pile of dust. As the *duel shield* dispels, Siaron steps in and names Verothrics the winner. The spectators are shocked at what they had witnessed and pause before applauding his victory. Verothrics does not remain in Lagrius to celebrate his win, instead he and his entourage offer their respects to witnessing nobles and *teleport* back to Veroth. (See Sv. 13, Sv. 16.)

What This Means: The duel is a mismatch from the start: Brodicim lacks both the skill and experience that Verothrics has gained from years of warfare and training. With but a few cast spells, Verothrics had discovered Brodicim’s protective wards and eliminated them. That the duel lasted as long as it did is due to Verothrics playing with his opponent, even trying to make it interesting, as well as more painful, by utilizing his staff instead of strictly adhering to spells.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs affiliated with Veroth may find themselves challenged to duels by overzealous persons. Likewise, PCs may wish to bolster their own notoriety by challenging a Veroth national.



Eirmont 19, AC 1016: Diamond Hears His Supplicants.

Location: Wyrmsteeth Mountains. NW

Description: Hessuarveeum the Gold, a draconic priest of the Sun Dragon, tries to commune with his patron to receive guidance in order to evaluate the proposal made by Adik the day before. Much to his surprise, this time Diamond answers his prayers and Hessuarveeum understands that the Immortal Dragons have returned. Believing this to be a good omen, the gold dragon assumes that Diamond blesses the proposal made by the human wizard and so sends a message to Adik stating his agreement. (*See Ei. 10, Ei. 18; Ei. 25, Ka. 7.*)

What This Means: The three Immortal Dragons have returned to the Four (their outer plane) after being imprisoned in an immortal artifact for the last month. Diamond is the first to receive the prayers from His priests and He replies immediately to assure them that everything is back to normal. The other two Immortals will do the same in the following days, and since Their return appears to be in conjunction with the Caretakers' proposal to the three dragons of Norwold, the three will conclude this is an omen from their patrons and will end up accepting the humans' idea.

Eirmont 20, AC 1016: Expeditionary Force Docks at The City.

Location: City of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Justin Karameikos's volunteer force arrives in Thyatis City amid great celebration. They are paraded down the main avenue to the cheers of the crowd before being assigned positions defending the walls. They arrive just in time, for the nobles' army reaches the city the same afternoon, and this time it appears they are here to stay. (*See Sv. 17, Ei. 10; Ei. 22, Ei. 23.*)

What This Means: Eusebius decided that a ceremonial exercise would boost morale in the city and give the volunteers a taste of what they were here to defend. It is also a way of contrasting Justin's behavior with his father's, a subtle slighting of the king.

Fourth Week

Eirmont 22, AC 1016: Factions Prepare for Assault on The City.

Location: City of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: After establishing a fortified encampment in one of the suburbs of the city, Manfred's army proceeded over the next several days to construct siege engines and ring the city with them. By now Heinrich has complete control over Manfred again, as well as the most prominent nobles among his army. A contingent of scythe-wielding clerics from Hattias and elsewhere have joined the army; a few of these clerics are able to sprout gargoyle-like wings and fly. They command squadrons of gargoyles, saberclaws, and dark wings. These flying horrors

counter the few units of the Retebius Air Corps that Eusebius has available, preventing the air corps from disrupting the rebel army's preparations.

Things are far from quiet inside the city, however. Defenders man the walls and a few raids are conducted against Manfred's forces to disrupt their preparations. Prayers are offered to the Immortals and soldiers are blessed by Thyatian clerics. Sacred relics (largely non-magical, but morale boosting) are displayed visibly from the walls. All residents seem to dedicate themselves to the task of defending The City. Even Helena Ledamiades, who once led the leading families of Thyatis in decadent feasting, is seen at the major temple to Valerias alongside Helena Daphnotarthius, participating in the ceremonial girding-on of weapons before the battle. (*See Ei. 17, Ei. 20; Ei. 23, Ka. 1.*)

What This Means: The preparations of both sides will soon be put to the test. The scythe-wielding clerics are of course Thanatons, priests of Thanatos. By now those among Manfred's army, like Callastian Jowdynites, who might normally question fighting amid such priests and their flying horrors, are firmly under the influence of Heinrich.

Eirmont 23, AC 1016: First Assault on The City.

Location: City of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Today siege engines are aimed and their munitions launched against the foe. Manfred's troops, covering themselves with large shields and mantlets, or protected in covered galleries, surge towards the walls. The attack falters as suddenly as it began when the assault teams get within a hundred yards of the walls. Bronze tubes suddenly protrude from tower apertures, spewing a thick, sticky substance on the attackers. Archers fire flaming arrows into the assault crews, igniting them. Flame and smoke spreads over the battlefield and the attackers start to fall back.

Only in two areas do they reach the walls: a group of Storm Soldiers, disregarding their own casualties, manage to breach the first ditch but are cut down before crossing the second one. At another location a force of Kerendan knights, protected by the spells of Commandant Thyarius Palykratidius, reach the first wall and deploy their scaling ladders. Duke Maldinius Kerendas, the commandant, and a few soldiers manage to set foot atop the wall and momentarily drive the defenders back. Then one of the gargoyle-winged clerics and a contingent of saberclaws fly over to support them, and for a moment it looks like the attackers might succeed in breaching the walls, but Palykratidius's spells inexplicably fail him when the scythe-clad cleric comes near. A flight of griffon-mounted Air Knights drive off the gargoyles, and ballista fire from the inner wall begins to decimate the Kerendans, who are driven back.

The attackers retreat to camp, dragging their dead behind them with the taunts and jeers of the defenders following them. Some of Eusebius's generals advise a sortie, but seeing that much of Manfred's army, including the force of black-clad knights, didn't even participate in the assault, Eusebius cautiously decides not to. Still, the defenders celebrate their victory into the night, while Imperial Hospitaliers and other priests heal the injured. (*See Ei. 20, Ei. 22; Ka. 1, Ka. 2.*)

What This Means: This was little more than a probing attack intended to test the defenses—Heinrich did not expect it to succeed. It was Vanya Herself who caused Palykratidius's spells to fail: priests of Vanya are forbidden from associating themselves with the Storm Soldiers, and by extension the forces of Thanatos. Though Palykratidius, like Maldinius Kerendas, joined the forces of the usurper out of principled opposition to Eusebius's policies (which they feel threaten the Thyatian way of life), Vanya would not be pleased to see Manfred and Heinrich win.

Eirmont 24, AC 1016: Scandalous Discovery.

Location: City of Errolyn, Kingdom of Theranderol, Floating Continent of Alphatia. HW

Description: Queen Eldrethila issues a warrant for the arrest of the well-known financier, Bredellia. The charges stem from a series of questionable loans made to several prominent citizens of Theranderol. Though Bredellia is still at large it is expected that she will soon be in custody as a reward of 10,000 crowns has been issued for her capture and return to Errolyn. Already, numerous bounty hunters are out hunting her down.

What This Means: The victims of the loan scams would rather the whole matter not have been made public as it undermines their business and social prestige. They have already dispatched bounty hunters and see no reason to further agitate the matter with administrative interference. The victims have joined together and discreetly offered a reward of 20,000 crowns for her return to them.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs may venture to collect either of the rewards. If they find Bredellia, she will certainly attempt to buy them off with portions of the money she embezzled. Likewise, there will be stiff competition for the reward. The victims may hire PCs to thwart those that interfere.

Eirmont 25, AC 1016: Heldannic Hold Strengthened—a New Policy Announced.

Location: Throughout the Heldannic Territories. OW

Description: News of the ongoing arrival of refugees from Hattias continues to circulate among the upper echelons of the knights. Since the arrival of the first refugees, another 4,500 have come to the territories in search of a new life. Almost everyone, from *Herr Wulf* to the commoners in the street, feel that this is a good development. The authorities in Freiburg have been taxed to the limit in their efforts in processing the new arrivals as quickly as possible, but overall they have been successful in doing so.

This series of events also coincides with an important proclamation made today in the Star Chamber. Starting today, all new Hattian immigrants to the Heldannic Territories will be given a substantial land grant if they agree to settle in Heldland, or the border regions of the Heldann proper (though these grants will be slightly smaller). New settlers in Heldland will also be exempt from taxes for a period of four years, though they must erect a permanent home on their lands within a year of settlement. Those families with able-bodied sons will also be offered a one-time cash grant of 10 gelder for each son who voluntarily joins the Heldannic Order. This policy is pronounced law immediately, and takes effect today. Those who immigrated to the territories earlier are still eligible for the benefits described, and have only to apply to the nearest government office to claim them. (*See Ei. 10; Ka. 20.*)

What This Means: The authorities have decided to make the immigrants feel more welcome—and loyal—by offering generous incentives to send their sons to the Heldannic Order, and offering tax freedom and large land grants for those willing to settle Heldland. The knights hope that this will drive many refugees north in search of lands to cultivate and settle. This not only allows them to cement their hold on lands already gained; by putting the land under the plow, the wilderness and its inherent dangers are driven back, thus making Heldland safer, more profitable, and easier to govern. The less generous package for those settling Heldann itself is a deliberate ploy to send people north instead.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs who are with the knights could find themselves guiding settlers to their allotted lands, or collecting new recruits. Again, this is also an opportunity for would-be dominion rulers to carve out a legacy for themselves.

Eirmont 25, AC 1016: The Draconic Council.

Location: City of Wayreach, Wyrmsteeth Mountains. NW

Description: Hessuarveem the Gold, Y'ilorchaem the Lofty One and Renffeodagg the Doombringer call a meeting of the Council of Wyrms in the draconic city of Wayreach, hidden in the heart of the Wyrmsteeth Range. With the support of an impressive number of allied dragons—many of whom are completely unknown to the other clan leaders—the three are able to settle all disputes over the charge of Elder Wyrms of Norwold and claim the position for themselves.

Then they present the council of dragons with proofs of the death of the Dragonlord: his head and heart, and the *Dragonhelm*. They tell the other wyrms of how they battled the Dragonslayers and killed the human Kelter Zerben with the help of the mortals known as the Caretakers, dismembering his body and disintegrating all its parts except these ones. As to the rest of the Dragonlord Suit, they explain that it fell to pieces once the Dragonlord was slain, and all the different items darted away in different directions. The only thing they were able to catch was the *Dragonhelm*, which they took away from the humans' grasp.

Satisfied with the result of the meeting, the draconic clan leaders part their ways after the three new elders proclaim the Dragonwars over. Now they will arrange for a meeting with the mortal lords of Norwold to discuss and renegotiate the old Draconic-Alphatian Treaty. (See *Ei. 18, Ei. 19; Ka. 7, Ka. 12.*)

What This Means: The three dragons accepted the Caretakers' proposal and used the magically-created dragons the wizards gave them to impress the other dragon masters and quiet all claims over the ruling positions in the Council of Wyrms. They also believed the story about the death of the Dragonlord as given by the three wizards and told it to the wyrms, changing the facts to appear the true heroes in front of the other dragons.

Eirmont 27, AC 1016: Broken Spear?

Location: Erekarr Road, Kingdom of Rockhome. OW

Description: During a battle between the allied army of Erekarr Fort and goblinoid and giantish forces, a spear is broken. The orcish captain to whom the spear belonged looks about in confusion, but quickly returns to the fighting.

Unknown to the orc, his misfortune was observed by Frockson, the leader of the giantish forces. The frost giant king thoughtfully retrieves the discarded spear from the battlefield and then he, too, returns to the fighting. (See *Th. 23; Ka. 28.*)

What This Means: The spear in question is one of the dozen or so *spears of giant killing* given to the dwarf Duric by his Modrigswerg contacts in Vestland. The spears are the tools by which Duric and his allies coerced the giants of Jotunheim into working with the goblinoid army in Rockhome.

In actuality, Duric was only given a few working spears—the rest are cheap replicas that the Modrigswerg often pass off to outsiders. Even Duric was unaware of the deception, however, and with the working spears he managed to cow the giants into submission. Frockson will study the broken spear and come to his own conclusions about his alliance with the dwarves and goblinoids.

Following their defeat in battle with the giantish/goblinoid forces, the Erekarr garrison will retreat to their mountain fort, where they will spend the winter. The goblinoid forces will encamp outside the fort to guard against any intrusions into the Klintest Lowlands.

Topic of the Month: Not So Quiet on the Southern Front

[The below document came into the possession of this publisher through mere chance. As to its authenticity, one can only speculate as there has been neither denial nor confirmation from the limited contact this publisher has with people of the Heldannic Order. Ed.]

An analysis by Hauptmann Lars Säjer and Oberleutnant Otto von Langer.

As recorded by Adelard Bohm.

With the victory at Polakatsikes and the current crusades elsewhere, I am ill at ease to report this due to its possible affects upon morale. However, a matter has come to our attention that needs to be addressed. As you are aware of, recently we here at Her Most Holiest Domicile were subject to a series of raids. These raiders originate from a nearby indigenous people known as the Meghaddaran. To eliminate these raiders, a heavily armed patrol was dispatched. This patrol of fifty Heldannic Knights and infantry were led by the promising *Herr* Dietrich, nephew of the renown Urnst and Greta Dietrich of Freiburg. Accompanying the patrol was the noted huntsman, Dieter von Kleindorf, nephew of Brother Lars Wittman.

The patrol departed and was not heard from again for several months. Since the Meghaddaran raiders resumed their activities shortly thereafter, it was naturally assumed that the patrol failed at their task. This assumption was proven incorrect on Eirmont 6, AC 1016, when a mere handful of survivors were intercepted by a patrol. The survivors were questioned and re-questioned to answer the interrogations that their absence and reappearance had produced. From that, we have a reasonable understanding as to what transpired and how it transpired. Dieter von

Kleindorf proved especially helpful in the reconstruction of events and also deserves praise in his efforts throughout the ordeal.

Herr Dietrich's troops followed the Meghaddaran raiders for several weeks, following their trail ever westward into unexplored regions of the continent. We are pretty certain that sometime during this pursuit, the group of Meghaddaran divided their force. One raider force continued leading our troops westward, while the other headed back east. This would explain the continued raids upon the farmers, which contributed to the assumption that Dietrich's troops had been destroyed.

On or about Ambyrmont 3, AC 1016, Dietrich's *truppen* discovered the remains of the Meghaddaran warriors that they had been pursuing. They had been attacked in their own campsite by a third party. The sounds of the attack were actually heard by Dietrich's forces and were what drew the troops to the encampment. As such, the time of the attack and the discovery of the slain warriors were in close proximity, maybe an hour at the most.

While examining the dead and the encampment, Dietrich's forces came under attack. This attack was initiated by a series of well-directed volleys from crossbows. These volleys raked the ranks of the *truppen*, taking a heavy toll on Dietrich's own crossbowmen. This was obviously a planned tactic to minimize our comrades' own ability to provide counterfire. After three or four volleys, the attackers began to show themselves. They emerged from the surrounding brush, as well as from the tree branches. Several mounted knights formed up to charge the emerging attackers. This charge was met and the mounted knights slain.

After this point, details of the battle become sketchy. What we do know comes from compiling the individual accounts and observations of the survivors. Uniformly, the survivors do note the chaotic nature of the attack. Several note that this chaos was not indicative of disorganization by the attackers. Instead, they vow that the attackers were very well organized and it was their tactics that caused the knights to become disorganized. As Sister Hedda, a veteran of six battles, stated "if anyone had complete control of their bearings and wits, it were these attackers." She added that "we ourselves were in a purely defensive position from the start and honestly enough were as effective as an orc swatting at a swarm of angry hornets."

The attackers themselves were human-like in physique. In stature, they were consistent with a human too. A peculiar oddity was that they had a tail, similar to an animal's, protruding from their backsides. Details on facial attributes are scarce as the attackers wore helms with face shields. However several survivors note the eyes, seen through eyelets, were slotted and had an animalistic look to them. Sister Hedda reports feeling the face of an attacker. While grappling with him in close combat, she slid her hand up under her opponent's helm with the intent to gouge at the eyes. She noted a humanistic face devoid of facial hair. She also noted being bitten for her attempt. Her scarred hand denotes the attacker had a set of canine-like teeth.

The attackers wore an armor that focused protection on the torso. The arms and legs were mostly unarmored except for the use of shin guards and bracers. Though concise details are not known, the torso armor can basically be categorized as being of two primary types, leather and a variant of banded armor. Over this was worn a short hooded cloak of cloth dyed with mottled earth tones. The camouflaging properties of the cloak and the dull hue of the armor are pretty evident.

In combat, these attackers proved to be highly skilled and agile in their attacks. Brother Ruffus, another veteran, remarked that they reminded him of gymnasts or some of the more agile gladiators of Thyatis. Ruffus compared the melee as being akin to a pack of wolves attacking a grizzly bear. For all its brawn, the bear is too slow to beat down the wolves as they dart in to strike but fall back out of paw reach before receiving a counter blow.

In regards to weapons, the attackers were very well equipped. The survivors tell of a great variety of weapons being used. Most of the attackers carried two or more types of weapons. Despite the variety of weapons, individual weapon types seemed to be fairly consistent in design and construction. Sister Hedda noted that the attackers "gave the impression of being specialized to certain tactics, and therefore carried different weapons to fill a specific role."

The most readily seen weapon was a sword. The weapon had a narrow three-foot blade. The handle had a lengthened handle with a rounded pommel at its end. The sword proved to be light and well balanced. The fluid-like ease that the attackers handled the blade says much for their weapon smiths. It also proved to be a deadly combination when used in conjunction with their apparent agility. Brother Ruffus noted that he saw at least two

knights fall after their opponents had dodged and parried their way in close to the knight and plunged their weapons into the weak areas of the plate mail such as the armpit and vision slots of the helms.

The weapon that infused itself most vividly upon the survivors' memories was a type of battle-ax. With a long slightly curved handle and with a narrow ax head, the weapon proved devastating to the knights' plate armor. Sister Hedda noted one mounted knight, believed to be *Leutnant* Gerta Eiker, which was slain by a blow that sliced cleanly through her helm's faceplate and into her skull. Another death, witnessed by both Hedda and Ruffus, sees the long handle being used to parry blows before being planted in the chest cavity of an infantryman. Though it was not seen by any of the others, *Herr* Dieter makes mention of witnessing the battle-ax being hurled at a mounted knight, striking him solidly in the shoulder and knocking him from his saddle.

The knight that *Herr* Dieter saw dismounted by the battle-ax was finished off by another weapon. As mentioned, the attackers carried more than one weapon into battle. The one that struck down the knight was no different. He fell upon the fallen knight and finished him off with a version of a short sword, the short but thick blade being forced through the knight's eye slits. Upon further reflection most survivors recalled that most if not all of the attackers wore these short short-swords on their hips.

The attackers also utilized missile weapons. The type of crossbow they wielded differed from our own in appearance. Instead of a solid stock, it had what *Herr* Dieter described as being skeletal in appearance, a solid framework with the stock's interior cut out. This was probably done to lessen the weapon's weight. Another difference was that the weapon had a bracket of sorts attached to it to hold a half score of bolts. With projectiles close at hand, the weapon could be reloaded quickly.

The attackers utilized this weapon with a great deal of skill. *Herr* Dieter remarked seeing it being used from a distance, as well as a few feet away. This reminded Sister Hedda of the Ethengar's use of the bow as not only as long-range weapons, but also as a melee weapon. The crossbow reaped a heavy toll on the troops. Brother Ruffus, himself wounded by a bolt, noted seeing a fellow knight being surrounded by attackers. They raised their crossbows and sowed his breastplate with bolts, killing him dead. Upon reaching Sanctuary, Ruffus's wound was treated. Examination of the recovered bolt head indicated a metal of substantial quality, at least equal to most Brun nations'.

Strangely enough, some of the attackers wielded a less glamorous weapon. These were wooden staffs. Though an ancient type of weapon, usually associated with mages, the attackers used it with great proficiency. Though it was less affective against our heavy plate mail, it was used to disarm knights and trip them up. Brother Degar saw his cousin, Brother Thedrel, knocked from his horse by a staff-wielding attacker.

Another weapon that was used was the blowgun. Though the dart projectiles did not pierce the knights' plate mail, they did penetrate the leather armor of the light infantrymen. Several survivors noted the darts sticking into their shields and ricocheting off their armor. The darts themselves cause little bodily damage. But these darts had been treated with poisonous substances. Brother Terrel discovered this in his recent examinations of a dart found wedged in Brother Ruffus's shield. Handling it carelessly, he pricked his finger and perished. Examination of that dart and several others recovered showed two different substances being used. One was a fast acting poison. Another was anointed with a sleep or possibly a paralysis agent.

Even clerical magic did not win the day for our forces. When Her Grace's clerics cast their spells, they were responded to by spells from the attackers. Given that the casters were seen in armor and carrying weapons, it is believed that these are clerics. And the attackers did not fear the knights' spells. Instead it seemed to embolden them more and it drew added attacks toward the clerics that had cast spells.

These attackers are a mystery to us. *Herr* Dieter has told us that he has heard stories of the "furry-tailed devils" from the indigenous peoples. Given that these people are the same Meghaddara that desecrated Her Holiest Place, we are taking their legends with a great deal of skepticism. According to them, the *pelzschwanzteufeln* (as we have begun to call them) have been on the continent since the beginning of time. The Meghaddaran seem to view them as something akin to forest spirits that are able to meld with the land and even the air to strike at intruders as they wish. These legends could be embellished to try to strike fear in us. However, Dieter made mention that the Meghaddaran bear a great fear towards the *pelzschwanzteufeln* and will rarely venture into the areas where they are said to live.

I think we need to know more about these devils before taking any actions against them. We know far too little about them. Given recent events, I doubt that the Meghaddaran would be willing to offer too much information about

them. I also am against sending added patrols west to try to gain any. *Herr* Dieter has respectfully refused to venture back into the region. The other survivors have also stated their unwillingness to repeat such a venture.

The priests here have attempted to commune with Her Grace to gain some of Her wisdom on the matter. So far, She has not been forthcoming with any information. Perhaps She has plans of Her own. Perhaps none of us are worthy of Her guidance. Perhaps She does not want us to proceed inland. Neither I nor the castellan knows what to do. At the present, these *pelzschwanzteufeln* are far enough away from Her Abode as to not pose an immediate threat. However, with the crusades going on to the north I fear that our supply lines could be endangered should a threat present itself from the west.

EVENTS: KALDMONT

First Week

Kaldmont 1, AC 1016: The Darkest Hour...

Location: City of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Over the last week the siege engines of Manfred's army have battered the walls of the city without stop. Just as continuously, work crews within the city have repaired and buttressed the walls. At times, especially at night, the besieger's trebuchets have fired flaming pitch into Thyatis City. Bucket crews, reinforced by water elementals and other fire-suppressant magics, have put out these fires as fast as they are lit, preventing serious damage. The city seems more united than ever, morale high due to a renewed civic spirit. But exhaustion is beginning to set in.

Now, on midwinter's day, units of the rebel army form up for a renewed assault on the city. Veterans of the war against Thothia quail at the sight, as units of zombies lead the assault. All are shocked as the mantlets and galleries are pushed closer to the walls: the rebels have chained captives to their front, knowing the defenders will be reluctant to kill their hostage comrades. Thyatian clerics manage to successfully *turn* most of the undead, but the assault presses on. The battle rages into twilight.

Under cover of the battle and darkness, Heinrich dispatches select crews down a hidden tunnel and into the city. As a reward for their successes in the last battle, Hansel Oesterhaus and his closest circle of Storm Soldiers lead the attack, with them the Kerendans who managed to reach the top of the wall, re-enforced by a couple powerful Thanatons. These elite bands work their way through the tunnel, down a secret passage connecting to a sewer, then into another passage that runs right under Emperor's Hill and the imperial palace. Appearing suddenly from below they surprise the few members of the imperial guard who are on duty at the palace and overcome them. Their goal is to find Eusebius, kill him, and present his head for all to see.

The bands search the palace, fighting brief melees with guards and palace residents at every turn, but they cannot find Eusebius. They burst into the imperial chambers hoping to find him there, but with no luck. At that moment Anaxibius, Stefania and Tredorian, leading a band of Thyatians including Helena Ledamiades, charge up the stairs and into the corridor behind the invaders, and a fierce battle with no quarter shown begins. Suddenly Ledamiades separates herself from the battle and calls out in the name of Valerias and Solarios [*Solarios is the Thyatian name for Ixion. Ed.*], and a pillar of flame strikes one of the Thanatons and a cluster of Storm Soldiers, slaying them all. Helena Ledamiades herself is consumed by the powerful magics she has unleashed.

Then, Thyarius Palykratidius switches sides, driving his sword into the priest of Thanatos. Tredorian finishes off the Thanaton and most of the Kerendans follow Palykratidius's example. The Storm Soldiers are quickly cut down, till only Hansel remains. Anaxibius steps forward and engages Hansel in single combat and beheads him.

Outside the city, the assault begins to falter and the attackers retreat to their camp under the cover of darkness. (*See Ei. 22, Ei. 23; Ka. 2, Ka. 3.*)

What This Means: Heinrich's plan was brilliant. He used the assault on the walls as a diversion. Throughout most of the battle Eusebius was on the walls, fighting alongside his soldiers, exhorting them to throw back the enemy. When the sun went down, Eusebius left the walls, presumably to break and consult with his generals.

When Heinrich noticed that, he sent his assault bands into the city. They used an old tunnel dug by the Storm Soldiers to arrange secret comings and goings from Thyatis City. Following the strike force sent to the palace were regular detachments, which would use the tunnels and catacombs to circumvent the walls and take the city from inside. It was a perfect plan, but failed to take account of two factors.

First was Eusebius. When he left the walls, he did not go to the imperial palace, but rather to quarters in the Zendrolium (quite near Julinius's old archaeological dig, in fact), where he has been spending much of his time. Then

he went to see the wounded. When word reached him that a band of attackers was in the palace, he dispatched Anaxibius and his sister Stefania along with some of Thyatis's toughest fighters. They ran into Ledamiades in the palace's forecourt, and she persuaded them into letting her tag along. By morning, word of her sacrifice and the holy fire that slew the attackers will spread throughout the city, being exaggerated with each telling till it grows to legendary proportions.

The second thing Heinrich did not take into consideration was the community of wererats who live below Thyatis City. They didn't take kindly to armed bands intruding on their territory in such large numbers. The palace strike force got past them because they did not expect them, but the other units sent by Heinrich were ambushed as they passed through the tunnels. They never knew what hit them; few made it back to their encampments.

Kaldmont 1, AC 1016: Domes at the Docks.

Location: City of Aaslin, Kingdom of Notrion, NACE, Bellissaria. AS

Description: Moored at Aaslin's docks are some six small domes mounted on barges. Though completed, their delivery is postponed until after the Day of Dread. Still not completely sure in its control of the Alphatian Sea, the NACE has opted to wait until the New Year to begin towing the domes out to the construction site. (*See Fy. 27, Am. 5; Ka. 6, Ka. 28.*)

What the PCs Can Do: PCs may be tasked with guarding the domes. As the Day of Dread approaches, security will tighten. Conversely, PCs may find themselves hired by other nations to sabotage the domes.

Kaldmont 1, AC 1016: Invasion!

Location: Village of Los Peregrinos, *Baronia de Narvaez*. SC

Description: *Barón Hugo* personally leads a large force of Narvaezan troops into northern Gargoña with the intention of crushing the barony at the behest of his "immortal." As he pushes south towards Ciudad Real he meets little resistance. *Baronesa Esperanza*, warned of the advance by terrified farmers fleeing Hugo's marauding army, immediately sends for help from Saragón and Almarrón. (*See Fe. 1, Sv. 22; Ka. 4, Ka. 9.*)

What This Means: This is the result of Hugo putting into effect what he thinks is Ixion's greater plan for him and Narvaez.

What the PCs Can Do: If any PCs are in Gargoña, they can be the ones sent to Saragón for help. The mission will not be easy as *Barón Hugo* has anticipated this move and has sent a small force of Los Matones to try and ambush any messengers traveling to Saragón.

Kaldmont 2, AC 1016: ... Is Always Before the Dawn.

Location: City of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Everything is eerily calm and quiet as sun rises over Thyatis City; only the moans of the wounded can be heard. Both the attackers and the defenders are exhausted. Many in the city hope that this latest failure will cause the rebellion to collapse, or that at least they will retreat, but the besiegers show no sign of giving up.

Then, at mid morning, lookouts spot longships sailing up Vanya's Girdle from the east. A large contingent of Ostlander warriors reaches the city. Then, at noon, the lateen-rigged sails of a few ships appear far over the horizon to the west, flying above the water. Shortly afterwards more appear, in larger numbers, sailing the sea itself up the girdle from the west towards the city.

Meanwhile, in the rebel camp, Thanatons prepare their rituals. The mask is being torn away, and the true threat to Thyatis revealed is not as the rebellion of nobility, but as a threat to existence itself. (*See Ei. 23, Ka. 1; Ka. 3, Ka. 4.*)

What This Means: The reinforcements reach the city just in time to provide respite to weary defenders. The eastern force is of course from Ostland; the western fleet comes from throughout Thyatis—troops dispatched from

the Pearl Islands and Ochalea along with the returning squadron of Thyatian *skyships*, two units of Minrothaddan Home Guards sent by Vannopolus, and even a force of fierce Hinterlanders.

The priests of Thanatons are planning to revive the rebel army's dead. However, they are not contenting themselves with simple zombies this time: greater rituals and spells are being called upon.

Kaldmont 2, AC 1016: Blockade!

Location: Kingdom of Helskir, Thyatian Empire and NACE, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: The guards of Helskir's garrison are surprised this morning to see seven large warships, flying the colors of the Heldannic Order, approaching the city's harbor. Raising an alarm, the guards keep watch on the ships, which, once they enter the waters of the harbor proper, form themselves into a line, blocking further naval access to the city. The ships sit silently in the water afterwards, bristling with well-armed men.

Within an hour, while the city's leadership ponders this development, horns sound from the walls. Rushing outside to see what is going on, word spreads to them, that the city is surrounded by a large host of Heldannic Knights. People run about the streets in panic, as the news becomes exaggerated beyond all proportions. (*See Fl. 3, Fl. 17; Ka. 3, Ka. 4.*)

What This Means: The Heldannic Knights have always had their eyes on Helskir, considering it to be a natural addition to their own territories. They have tried on a few occasions to conquer it, but have never been successful. Now, it seems that the knights have come up with a well-coordinated plan; Helskir's defenders received no warning that the knights had landed elsewhere in the kingdom, so they have been caught totally unawares. This, and the rampant rumors circulating concerning what this development means, has dealt a serious blow to morale in the city.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are in the city, and are known to be heroes, they will likely be requested by the city's leadership to try to quell the disturbances and otherwise boost morale.

Kaldmont 3, AC 1016: Undead in the Tunnels.

Location: City of Thyatis, Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Not one to give up easily, Heinrich sends a few hordes of undead through secret tunnels into Thyatis City's sewers. The wererats, in the process of collapsing the vulnerable tunnels leading outside the city, find themselves knee-deep in undead, and fight like cornered rats to survive.

Eventually, the wererats destroy most of the dead, often by collapsing tunnels onto them. The Thyatians never even notice the battles under their feet. (*See Ka. 2, Ka. 3; Ka. 4, Ka. 7.*)

What This Means: Unknown to the wererats (or the Thyatians), the undead Heinrich sent are carriers of some fairly nasty diseases, some of which have been passed on to the wererats. These include "Sewers Typhoid," "Bugbear Typhus," "Griffon Pox," "Goblin Measles," and others [*details for these diseases can be found in the Eastern Trail Map. Ed.J.* The diseases will not manifest any symptoms for several weeks; by then, the plagues will have spread throughout Thyatis City and further.

Kaldmont 3, AC 1016: The Ultimatum.

Location: Kingdom of Helskir, Thyatian Empire and NACE, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: An envoy of the Heldannic Knights, under a banner of peace, arrives at the main gates of Helskir requesting an audience with the city's leadership. Quickly, he is admitted to the kingdom's main reception hall, where he presents the Heldannic Order's ultimatum to the Kingdom of Helskir.

First, Helskir is to unconditionally surrender to the massed might of the Heldannic Knights, and thus become a dominion of the Heldannic Territories. Second, the ruler of Helskir, Asteriela Torion, is to abdicate the throne of the kingdom, and renounce all claims to it. Should she do so, she will have a guarantee of free passage to the nation of

her choice. Third, all citizens of Helskir who do not wish to live under Heldannic rule may leave freely, but they must abandon any lands they own within the kingdom's borders.

Hearing these demands, yet knowing that Helskir has fought off the knights before, the city's leadership refuses these terms, and orders the envoy out of the city. (*See Fl. 17, Ka. 2; Ka. 4, Ka. 5.*)

What This Means: The Heldannic Order has decided to annex the kingdom of Helskir, but it would rather do so without expending too much of its resources. The order already has two existing fronts—one in Norwold and the other in Davania, and it is hoping this third front will be short-lived, and decisive. The senior members of the knights commanding this expedition were hoping that giving the defenders an easy way out would encourage them to take it.

Kaldmont 3, AC 1016: Approaching Huitlaktima Again.

Location: City of Huitlaktima, Azcan Empire. HW

Description: After securing the two major cities of the empire's eastern part, Otziltipac's army, much reduced in size but with high morale, finally reaches the city of Huitlaktima, the center of power for the remaining followers of Atzanteotl and their emperor, Chupicuaro. (*See Sv. 24, Ei. 2; Ka. 4, Ka. 6.*)

What This Means: The numerous towns and villages standing between Yuzihuapac and Huitlaktima were all captured on the way to Huitlaktima, with minimal losses. Otziltipac feared an ambush by the regrouped remains of Chupicuaro's army, but the attack did not come. Now it seems evident that Chupicuaro concentrated his remaining followers within his capital, letting Otziltipac take control of most of the country without any tough resistance. The next battle will be tough for the Azcan warriors, and the assault is delayed by one day to let them rest and ready themselves.

Kaldmont 3, AC 1016: A Dwarven Departure.

Location: City of Denwarf-Hurgon, Kingdom of Stoutfellow, Floating Continent of Alphatia. HW

Description: Groups of dwarves board several Alphatian *skyships* and head for Neatharum. The dwarves, numbering 500 in all, are a mixture of miners and soldiers. (*See Ka. 15.*)

What This Means: These dwarves are going to set up mines in Neatharum, near the former mining town of Dogrel. The dwarven troops are along to insure their safety. Governor Trikard will only now become aware of their impending arrival; needless to say he is not happy at not being told before.

Kaldmont 3, AC 1016: Mrikitat Gives Up on Thyatis.

Location: City of Thyatis, Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Mrikitat decides that Thyatis City is doomed, and that it is only a matter of time before hordes of undead claim the sewers from his beloved wererats. He hatches a plan to keep at least some of his worshippers alive. He visits Pandius to ask for the help of a few possibly sympathetic Immortals, such as Ka, Korotiku, Terra, and even Nyx. (*See Ka. 2, Ka. 3; Ka. 4, Ka. 7.*)

What This Means: The Big City of Wererats underneath Thyatis is going to change drastically, if not disappear altogether.

Kaldmont 4, AC 1016: Counter-Offensive Launched.

Location: Town of Vinton, City of Port Hatti, and Town of Pilion, Duchy of Hattias, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: This morning imperial *skyships* and dromonds under the command of Thyarius Palykratidius cross the short distance from Thyatis City to Port Hatti and capture the town after a short battle with its defenders. At almost

the same times ships launch from Lucinius and capture the town of Vinton, while down the western coast a squadron of ships, part of the blockade of Hattias, lands at Pilion.

Captured Storm Soldiers and Thanatons are sent back to Thyatis City and put on trial for treason. The imperial assault forces begin to converge on the capital of Hattias, joined by bands of resistance fighters. Meanwhile Thyatis City remains under siege by the rebel army. (*See Ka. 2, Ka. 3; Ka. 14, Ka. 27.*)

What This Means: With their army vastly increased in size by forces from throughout the empire and its allies, the imperial forces can now contemplate a counter offensive. Eusebius's generals advised him to strike against the besieging army. They were surprised when he declined, and instead ordered an invasion of Hattias. Eusebius further shocked them by putting Thyarius Palykratidius in command. Eusebius's reason for that was simple: if Palykratidius switched sides only to be better able to betray Eusebius later, he's now out of the city. The officers have instructions to disobey and arrest Palykratidius if he starts issuing strange orders.

As for the invasion of Hattias itself, Eusebius had several reasons for his decision. The first was that since most Hattian forces are now with the rebel army outside the city walls, Hattias is lightly defended. Taking it will be an easy, morale-boosting victory. The second was that attacking the rebel army itself might fail. If his army is defeated again, the defenders might lose heart. Making the besiegers assault the city gives the defenders a great advantage—as long as Eusebius controls the seas and can bring in supplies, the burden is on the rebels to take the city by force. Time is on Eusebius's side.

The third reason might be the most important, however: Thyarius Palykratidius has had dreams, images of the plight of Vanya's faithful in Hattias. Strange smoke pyres have been rising from the temples of Port Hatti. By closing the shrines of Thanatos and reopening the temples of Vanya and other Immortals, he hopes his army will be strengthened. Many people, including pragmatic men like Eusebius, believe that the Immortals reward those who support them.

Kaldmont 4, AC 1016: The Battle Is Joined.

Location: Kingdom of Helskir, Thyatian Empire and NACE, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: The peace of the morning is broken by a deep roar coming from the Heldannic Knights, as they advance upon the city with their siege towers. From a distance, catapults and ballistae bombard Helskir, though little damage is actually done. The city's defenders rain arrows down upon the besiegers, as well as boiling oil, thus setting fire to a large number of siege towers. In some places, the knights almost manage to scale the walls, but every time they are pushed back.

Overseeing the defense of the city, Guard Captain Ardamanian is perplexed that, although the massed force of the knights must easily number almost 1,000 men, and they possess many pieces of siege equipment, they do not seem to be doing much damage to the city itself. The walls remain intact, and many of the attacks seem almost half-hearted. Dismissing these doubts, he orders his men to defend the city with renewed vigor. (*See Ka. 2, Ka. 3; Ka. 5.*)

What This Means: There is more to the knights' strategy than is readily apparent, but none of the defenders can figure out what it is.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs on Helskir's side will likely be helping to hold off the besiegers, while those fighting for the knights may be trying to scale the walls, or engaging in covert operations against the defenders.

Kaldmont 4, AC 1016: Chupicuaró's Last Stand.

Location: City of Huitlaktima, Azcan Empire. HW

Description: Otziltipac's military launches the attack of Chupicuaró's center of power. His warriors are met by ferocious defenders, and combat is bloody. After a few hours, Otziltipac's officers order a retreat, but it takes a few more hours before all of them obey the withdrawal order. There are so many casualties on both sides, that anybody else but the Azcans would be reviled by the carnage and quit the field. (*See Ei. 2, Ka. 3; Ka. 6, Ka. 28.*)

What This Means: Both forces are much reduced in numbers after the many battles they fought, especially in Chitlacan and Yuzihuapac, but that does not stop them from being as

Kaldmont 4, AC 1016: Battle of Real.

Location: Town of Ciudad Real, *Baronia de Gargoña*. SC

Description: *Barón Hugo*'s army arrives at Ciudad Real to find the bridge over the Rio Copos manned by the Gargoñan army. The Narvaezan forces easily outnumber the Gargoñan army and with the assistance of clerical magic, a proliferation of firearms and their surprise weapon—Torreóner bombs—they crush the Gargoñan troops and rush into the town of Ciudad Real. This begins an orgy of looting and killing in the Gargoñan capital until by sunset much of the town is burning. The Narvaezan victory was so swift that *Baronesa Esperanza* was unable to escape before *Barón Hugo*'s troops overran the town. She is brought before *Barón Hugo*'s grand inquisitor who gives her the benefit of a short show trial before she is declared a heretic to be burned at the stake. (*See Sv. 22, Ka. 1; Ka. 9, Ka. 14.*)

What This Means: The Gargoñan defense forces were never going to be strong enough to defeat *Barón Hugo*'s new and improved army. But the *baronesa* was hoping to hold them off long enough for Saragóner and Almarróñan reinforcements to arrive. Now, unless there are some brave adventurers around to save her, she will be burnt at the stake in Ciudad Real at dawn tomorrow.

Kaldmont 5, AC 1016: Caught Unawares.

Location: Kingdom of Helskir, Thyatian Empire and NACE, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: After a strenuous day of fighting off the invaders, the soldiers of Helskir are surprised to see that the forces massed outside the city are much smaller than the day before. Hopes that some of the knights have given up are voiced among the defenders, and morale begins to climb once more. With fewer knights assaulting the walls, the defenders have an easier time holding them off.

These hopes are dashed quickly. Sounds of fighting rise from the area of the main gate, and it soon becomes apparent that the main gates have been opened—from the inside! As large groups of startled Helskir soldiers descend the steps to the street level, in the hopes of closing the gate once more, it soon becomes apparent that it is too late—the knights have breached the gates, and dozens stream into the city every minute. To make matters worse, many more knights erupt upwards from the sewers, slaying any guards standing in their way.

Although the defenders fight bravely, they know they cannot win. Buffeted by the knights on the one hand, and panicked civilians on the other, many guards surrender in the chaos. Even the few wizards in the city cannot lend effective aid. Within hours, the last holdouts of resistance are quelled, and the citizens are ordered to remain in their homes. By midday, a large column of knights approaches the palace, bearing the banners of the Heldannic Order. Seeing no one guarding the building, the knights enter, finding that most of the city's officials, including the rulers, are not present.

Realizing that her objective is accomplished, *Ordensgeneral Anna von Hendriks* appoints herself Governor of the Heldannic Dominion of Helskir. (*See Ka. 3, Ka. 4.*)

What This Means: The knights had help from the inside in conquering Helskir. The band of 12 “merchants” who arrived in the city several months beforehand were actually Heldannic spies, entrusted with the task of uncovering any alternative entrances to the city, and of opening the gate from the inside once the siege was into its second day. Between the time of their arrival and the invasion, they discovered the existence of a long-forgotten escape tunnel under the city walls, dug by some unknown ruler long ago. This connected to the network of sewers underneath the city.

During the night before the assault, half of the knights moved to the region of the gate, to wait for their companions to open it. While this was happening, the other half of the force attacked the city once more to occupy most of the guards' attention. Thus, the 12 infiltrators were able to overcome the gate guards, and open the city to the invaders. Additionally, a force of about 150 knights entered the tunnel to enter Helskir through its sewers.

Anna von Hendriks, in an effort to make up for losing Stonehaven in the Hollow World, volunteered to lead this expedition, knowing full well that it was dangerous. She had been told beforehand that if she succeeded, she would be allowed to govern the kingdom in the Heldannic Order's name.

Kaldmont 5, AC 1016: The Red Disease.

Location: Former Barony of Ironwood, Nordalfheim, Final Range. NW

Description: A huge bank of red fog rolling in from the Alphatian Sea engulfs the eastern coasts of Norwold, crawling over the elven lands of Ironwood like a silent and deadly lover. The elves wake up coughing and find themselves looking through a translucent veil of red fog; other elves do not wake up at all. The mists are brought westwards by strong wind currents and start to expand inland at high speed. (*See Fy. 1, Sv. 8; Ka. 16, Ka. 20.*)

What This Means: Alphaks has unleashed His final weapon upon Norwold to destroy all His enemies, both Alphatians and non-Alphatians alike. Talitha convinced Him to resort to the sick red fog produced by a special artifact She crafted and gave Him, the *Crimson Brazier*. So He placed the artifact inside Alphaks's Volcano and ordered His Black King and Black Queen to activate it, powering it through the use of the *Pouch of the Winds*, one of the so-called Alphatian Artifacts, which is steadily pushing westwards the red mists at high speed. Alphaks plans to infect the whole Norwold with the disease carried by the fog, a debilitating plague which causes a heart attack to those who inhale it and slowly drains away the strengths of those who survive but remain in contact with it. Those who die because of the Red Disease have their skin turned into crimson red and their soul is drawn into the *Crimson Brazier*, thus preventing any attempt to raise them.

Kaldmont 5, AC 1016: A Third Tragedy.

Location: Town of Hapta, Kingdom of Nithia. HW

Description: Public outcry arises today at the discovery of a scene of utter carnage. Three Nithian families in a poor neighborhood are found gutted in their beds—a sign that the murders in Swiftmont are continuing, and escalating. Within an hour, a street riot breaks out, with several Tanagoro-owned shops being looted, and lone Tanagoro being attacked—though none are killed, fortunately.

The town guard, desperate to head off widespread violence, puts its forces on alert and begins to patrol the streets in force. (*See Sv. 12, Sv. 22.*)

What This Means: The murderer appears to have struck again, though this time he (or she) has escalated the conflict further, killing more people in a gruesome manner. The town's Nithian population, frustrated over the apparent inaction on the part of the town guard, tried to take matters into their own hands and seek vengeance.

Though the guard is now in control once more, it is only managing to do so through sheer numbers, and its resources are being stretched to the limit. In the near future, attacks on the Tanagoro community are likely to increase, and the Nithian population seeks a scapegoat for their anger.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs will have a lot to do if they stay in Hapta. They could easily find themselves helping maintain order, or meeting with leaders of the Tanagoro community to obtain more information.

Kaldmont 6, AC 1016: Disappearance of a *Tlatoani*.

Location: City of Huitlaktima, Azcan Empire. HW

Description: A second assault starts on Huitlaktima, with warriors swarming the city like enraged bees. This battle is as bloody as the first one.

Then as the day passes, a rumor grows within the followers of Atzanteotl, that the priesthood of Atzanteotl withdrew to the main temple of the city to invoke the power of Atzanteotl and blast their enemy. Indeed, there are no priests of Atzanteotl fighting alongside the warriors. Slowly, Chupicuaro's followers regroup around the main plaza

and the temple to their Immortal, forming a wall of spears and blades to protect their priests against the rebels until they can complete the invocation of His wrath.

However, no sign of immortal help is coming. No pillars of fire, no lightning bolts, no rain of arrows, not even a flying viper. Increasingly in a bad position, as they cornered themselves to that small area, the defenders of the temple are starting to loose morale. A few of them decide to enter the pyramid, resolute to discover how much more time they will have to buy in that delicate position. Once inside, however, they discover no trace of any priest; the most valuable treasures and religious items have also disappeared. With the defection of the clergy apparent, morale falters and most followers of Atzanteotl surrender to Otziltipac. (*See Ka. 3, Ka. 4; Ka. 28.*)

What This Means: Sensing defeat coming, Chupicuaro decided to use the fanatic defenders as a last-ditch stand to allow him and the clergy to escape the doomed city by secret exits below the main temple.

There, the cult of Atzanteotl will go underground, and will very slowly try to regain its following. They will have a much easier time, since it is easier to do sacrifices in secret than to strongly disapprove of sacrifices in secret, and try to oppose them without giving yourself away. They are not utterly defeated though, and they remain under the leadership of Chupicuaro, who is a shadow emperor leading the underground movement to restore the worship of Atzanteotl.

Kaldmont 6, AC 1016: Necromancer News.

Location: Construction site of Torenal, Sunken Arogansa, Sunken Alphatia, NACE. AS

Description: The magist Pidimigd reports his findings in the recent troubles with undead near the dome construction site, concluding that there are basically two types of undead at work. The first are lacedons—an aquatic form of a ghoul—, the second are lightning zombies—a sentient type of zombie. He theorizes that the ghouls were drawn to the sunken continent to feed upon the abundant carrion of those slain during the sinking.

Returning to the lightning zombies, he draws upon a report of gray-skinned undead encountered in Darokin back before the Great War from which he concludes that like the Darokinian lightning zombies, the corpses were animated by immense powers, probably the expelled energies that caused the continent to sink. He adds that given the national origins of the lightning zombies, he has to conclude that they are at least semi-aware of their pasts.

He finishes his report by stating that he sees little threat from the lightning zombies. He feels that if they are left unmolested, they will likely be peaceful to the NACE's underwater interests. He actually encourages the NACE to establish contact with them to found the basis of relations to prevent any clashes.

The council takes Pidimigd's report into consideration. Until others can verify his theories, they cancel any and all expeditions into the Bluenose ruins but do not halt the ghoul-hunting parties as they do pose an evident problem. They thank Pidimigd for his efforts and inform him that he may leave. The necromancer requests to remain to further study these lightning zombies; perhaps he can even be of use in their defenses against the ghouls. The council agrees to his request. (*See Am. 5, Ka. 1; Ka. 28.*)

What This Means: Pidimigd is essentially correct in his theories. It will be but a few weeks before the council has verification and rules on how to proceed with the lightning zombies. The lacedon matter is more easily handled: with no doubt of the threat they pose, the council will intensify their efforts to eradicate them.

For his part Pidimigd is all set to remain in Torenal. Though he is to focus on countering the ghouls, his thoughts will be on the lightning zombies, the highlight of his career.

What the PCs Can Do: The lightening zombies will draw much attention and despite the NACE's decree, mages will want an example of these undead for personal study. PCs may be hired by such mages to capture a specimen. Pidimigd himself may become impatient and bypass regulations and fund his own expedition. PCs assigned to the construction effort may find themselves besieged by both undead ghouls and by adventurers.

Kaldmont 6, AC 1016: Debredladany Annexed.

Location: City of Debredladany, Protectorate of Monzag, Hulean Empire. SC

Description: The western region of Monzag is given by the Master to his Antasyrian allies. Debredladany takes back its old name of Gjitra. The Antasyrians celebrate the return of their historical capital into their homeland and praise the wisdom of the Master. (See Ya. 23, Kl. 22.)

What This Means: The Antasyrians are the Master's surest allies in the Converted Lands; Antasyn is also the gateway to the mineral-rich Bylot Hills. This administrative fusion has been thought about for a while but was not implemented for it helped the Hulean forces from loosing Monzag in its entirety. Now that two-thirds of Monzag have been liberated from the Hulean control, it is more rewarding for the Master to regroup the Antasyrians than to leave a part of Monzag in fragile situation. In fact, with this decision, the Master acknowledges that Monzag won't be retaken soon.

Kaldmont 7, AC 1016: Rats Leaving a Sinking City.

Location: City of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Mrikitat plunks down an artifact near his wererats' Big City, and tells His clerics about it. The artifact is a stone archway; the wererats are told that by walking through it, they will be transported far away from Thyatis City to a golden new homeland full of milk and honey.

This is true; the arch will transport them to either a hidden location in the Hollow Moon [*or the Hollow World, if your campaign doesn't have the Hollow Moon sub-setting. Ed.*], or to a cavern system underneath the Free City of Dunwick in the Savage Coast.

What Mrikitat does not say is that when any lycanthrope besides a greater wererat travels through the arch to the Savage Coast, they will be permanently locked into their hybrid, beast-man form. Greater wererats will also be changed, so that their "default" form becomes a man-rat, but they retain their ability to transform to giant rat or human forms. Giant rats that travel through are transformed into a new species of rodent, useful for both riding and milk. (The honey comes from the bees that pollinate the sleeping lotuses aboveground; the gold is flashy iron pyrite dust, which is common in the caves the wererats will travel to.) Anybody else who uses the gate turns into a giant rat.

Over the next few weeks, two-thirds of Thyatis's wererats funnel through the archway. Those who stay behind remain with the hope they can still save their undercity from the expected assaults. (See Ka. 3, Ka. 4; Ka. 10, Ka. 12.)

What This Means: Mrikitat is getting a little tired of his followers being killed so often. He is using this opportunity to create a new race of followers who won't necessarily be attacked on sight.

Mrikitat's Escape Arch Artifact:

Vessel(s): Several Stonehenge-like archways, which the fleeing wererats walk through. One arch is in a tunnel underneath the wererats' Big City underneath Thyatis; another somewhere in the Hollow Moon [*or the Hollow World. Ed.*]; and the final one lies in the cavern system underneath the Free City of Dunwick on the Savage Coast.

Powers: When a person walks through one arch, they walk out one of the others. Which one they walk out of is either simply random, or determined by Mrikitat.

Effects:

- 1) When a greater wererat goes through, their "default" form becomes their man-rat form; they are still as able as ever to change to human and giant-rat forms.
- 2) When any other lycanthrope goes through, they change into their beast-man form, permanently. They are still immune to other forms of lycanthropy.
- 3) When a giant rat goes through, it transforms into an even larger rodent, which the new ratling race can get milk from and ride on.
- 4) When a human, demihuman, or humanoid goes through, they are transformed into giant rats. This effect can be *dispelled* if the giant rat can find a way to make someone cast a *remove curse* or *dispel magic*. Should they try to go back through the arch, effect three will turn them into a riding beast. (This effect is from Korotiku the Trickster.)

- 5) Should any undead go through the gate, non-sentient undead are transformed into undead giant rats, while sentient undead change into undead ratlings. This does not affect any of the undead's abilities, just their appearance. (Nyx is using the gate as a way to experiment with a new shape of undead.)

Unknown to the any of the creators of the arches, Thanatos has pulled a fast one on them all. Remember the disease-ridden undead Heinrich sent into the wererat tunnels? When an infected wererat goes through the arch and is transformed, they will no longer have to worry about any of the disease's symptoms; they will be immune to whatever diseases they carry (including their original lycanthropy). They're simply going to be carriers, infecting any non-ratlings they meet.

Kaldmont 7, AC 1016: A New Order in Norwold.

Location: Barony of Wyrmhart, Wyrmsteeth Mountains. NW

Description: On the request of the three Elder Wyrms of Norwold, all the members of the Norwold Confederacy and representatives of the Heldannic Territories meet at Castle Maximilian, in the Barony of Wyrmhart, to discuss the terms of the peace with the Draconic Kingdom of Wyrmsteeth. The dragons' spokesperson is Lady Maximilian herself, who is accompanied by a *polymorphed* gold dragon emissary of the Council of Wyrms. Lady Maximilian clearly states the dragons' requests for the peace:

- the dragons claim all the Wyrmsteeth Mountains as their kingdom, including the foothills of the range;
- all human and demihuman settlements inside their territory will be considered under their protection and subject to the draconic rules. Those who do not wish to stay can leave and relocate before the end of the month;
- the Barony of Wyrmhart will be considered subject state to the Kingdom of Wyrmsteeth and will not be harmed in any way, having remained neutral during the war. It will pay homage to Renfeodagg the Doombringer and will swear an oath of allegiance to him, cutting all ties with the other human and demihuman lands. The barony will only be accessible through the Wyrm's Way, a road that links Oceansend with Lady Maximilian's dominion; all humans passing on this road will fear no harm from the dragons. Should they leave it while in the Wyrmsteeth, however, they shall expect to be hunted down as illegal trespassers unless previously authorized by the elder wyrms;
- the aerial space over the Wyrmsteeth will be considered barred to all humans and demihumans; all trespassers will be hunted down and either driven out of the Wyrmsteeth or killed;
- permission to enter and walk across or to cross the skies over the draconic kingdom must be requested each time to the elder wyrm which controls the clans living in said territory. An audience with them can be obtained only by coming to the Barony of Wyrmhart, which will host the draconic emissaries of all the dragon masters of Norwold;
- all the dragons will be subject to the Draconic Law, forbidding them to destroy or raze the settlements under the protection of the Norwold Confederacy or the Heldannic Territories. Any trespassers will be sought and judged by the Council of Wyrms. All humans and demihumans are absolutely prohibited to hunt down and kill these rogue dragons: they will have to report these wyrms' misdeeds to the Council of Wyrms and wait for the outlaws' capture without confronting them, even if they come back;
- any mortal caught killing a dragon member of the Kingdom of Wyrmsteeth will be immediately slain by the dragons. Any mortals found guilty by the Council of Wyrms of "draconicide" will have to be delivered to the elders for proper death sentence by whoever meets them. All those who will help or somehow protect the culprits will be considered their allies and will face just retribution from the dragonkind;
- the Barony of Dragonard and the Barony of Day are to be considered territories of the Kingdom of Wyrmsteeth, the first because its former ruler was a gold dragon, and the latter because it lays within the Wyrmsteeth. Baron Day is declared persona non grata by the elder wyrms and must therefore leave his dominion, possibly leaving Norwold altogether;
- all further commercial and political agreements between the Kingdom of Wyrmsteeth and the other Norwold powers (Heldannic Territories, Norwold Confederacy and independent lords) will be discussed privately at the beginning of the new year and ratified yearly.

A heated debate follows, trying to modify as much as possible the requests put forth by the dragons. At the end of the meeting, all the representatives of the confederacy and the Heldannic Territories agree to respect the draconic points with these amendments:

- King Sieger von Down, having bought Dragonard from the dragons, now controls that land, but he will make sure the Draconic Law be enforced upon his dominion as well. He has also signed a treaty of friendship and alliance with the dragons that grants him the protection of Hessuarveeum's wyrmes in case of attack by a foreign threat. The king in turn must pay the lawful dragons for their protection with a monthly tithe;

- should a rogue dragon attack the territories controlled by the Heldannic Knights, the Norwold Confederacy lords or King Sieger von Down, the inhabitants of these lands are allowed to stop the dragon without harming it, delivering it to the Council of Wyrms immediately after its capture;

- the Heldannic Knights are allowed to fly over the lower Wyrmsteeth Range (as far north as Kildorkak) in exchange for a monthly tithe paid to the Council of Wyrms. The elder wyrms reserve the right to ratify the permission monthly;

- Sieger von Down, Arcadius and Adik de Chevas are proclaimed "Friends of Dragonkind" and are granted permission to travel on their lands for an unlimited period of time (or until they trespass against the Draconic Treaty). (*See Ei. 19, Ei. 25; Ka. 12.*)

What This Means: The Draconic Treaty finally restores order in Norwold, even though the new laws imposed by the dragons seem very much restricting to both the lords of the confederacy and the Heldannic Knights. They could not refuse the main clauses of the treaty, else they would have risked a prolonged conflict with the dragons, and nobody wanted to discover how many forces the dragons could marshal. For this reason, they were grudgingly forced to sign the treaty, wrestling away only a few minor concessions from the dragons with the Caretakers' mediation.

What the PCs Can Do: Participate in the council and voice their own opinion on the matter, maybe changing some of the discussed points or raising others.

Kaldmont 9, AC 1016: Preparations.

Location: Town of Ciudad Tejillas, *Baronia de Almarrón*. SC

Description: Hearing of the sacking of Ciudad Real, Don Balthazar *teleports* Don Luis to Ciudad Tejillas to confer with *Barón Maximiliano* on how best to respond to this threat from Narvaez. The two men decide to coordinate their forces for a joint attack on Gargoña. Maximiliano will attack from the south and Don Luis will lead Saragóner forces from the west. They both set about making preparations for war—recalling troops from leave, laying on supplies and garnering support from local mages for the war effort. The preparations will be complete within a few weeks and the attack is set down for early in the new year. (*See Ka. 1, Ka. 4; Ka. 14.*)

What This Means: *Barón Hugo* is soon about to suffer the wrath of the combined Saragóner and Almarróñan armies. However, he is sure that with divine assistance he can defeat them. With a secret alliance with Torreón he knows that his northern borders are safe. Texeiras is increasingly investing their forces west of the Savage Coast and he knows that they will not attack without the support of Torreón. Meanwhile however, the people of Gargoña are suffering under Hugo. His armies are looting and burning every settlement they come across. The trickle of refugees soon becomes a flood into Almarrón, Saragón and into the hills of Sierra Borgosa. The refugees face an uncertain future as winter begins to set in—they risk starvation and disease.

Second Week

Kaldmont 10, AC 1016: Fight for the Homeland.

Location: Underneath the Free City of Dunwick. SC

Description: Mrikitat's Escape Arch underneath Dunwick is in a cave underneath the snappers' area. The ratlings started appearing there three days ago and have started exploring. They now encounter the snappers... but they have just come from a war against much tougher opponents, plus they have been promised the caves as THEIR new homeland.

Within two weeks, the thousands of rats pouring through Mrikitat's arch overpower the snappers and push them out of the tortle ruins. (*See Ka. 4, Ka. 7; Ka. 12, Ka. 14.*)

Kaldmont 12, AC 1016: Valley Closed.

Location: City of Edairo, Kingdom of Thothia, NACE, Isle of Dawn. SD

Description: A sphinx arrives in Edairo bearing a message from Haptuthep II. In it, a proclamation is issued stating that the Valley of Kings shall henceforth be closed to any Alphantian-allied Thothians, starting with *Pharaoh* Ramenhotep himself. Furthermore, all villages and towns in and around the valley, including those atop the southern portion of the Great Escarpment, are under the reign of *Pharaoh* Haptuthep II, and are no longer tied to "Alphantian Thothia." Any attempt to reclaim these territories will be met with the full force of ancient Thothian magics Haptuthep II can bring to bear.

Over the next few days, scouts working for Ramenhotep report the presence of two stone golems guarding the entrance to the valley. (*See Am. 10, Sv. 18.*)

What This Means: Haptuthep is finally making his move. His magic will enable him to hold the Valley of Kings against almost anything Ramenhotep can bring to bear. In the meanwhile, he will continue to build his forces and attempt to undermine the current *pharaoh*'s authority, even as Ramenhotep struggles against the intrigues brought on by the araneas that have infiltrated Thothia.

Ramenhotep considers mobilizing his forces against the rebels, in hopes that he can utilize the Day of Dread to his advantage—immobilizing the Thothian magics of the Valley. He decides against it at this time, feeling (rightly so) that he would not be able to stop the conflict within the 24 hour period of the Day of Dread.

Kaldmont 12, AC 1016: The Storm Gathers.

Location: Southeast of City-State of Mivosia, Meghala Kimata Plains. DV

Description: On the plains just outside of Mivosia's walls, a host of 1,500 men gathers in tight formation. Wearing scale mail armor and bearing axes, swords, and spears, the massed forces listens intently to the speech given by the ruling triumvirate standing before them on a platform. The three leaders urge the soldiers to strike at the heart of the Heldannic forces based in Polakatsikes, and to utterly raze the city-state to the ground. They exhort the warriors to increase the power of Mivosia by striking down all enemies before them, and to herald the coming of the Mivosian Empire.

The speech ends, drowned out by the raging battle-lust of 1,500 men. (*See Fl. 26, Am. 7.*)

What This Means: Mivosia's leadership has decided that the time has come to drive the Heldannic Knights out of Davania. They see the knights as a threat to their own hegemony in the region, and they know that they would be an obstacle to Mivosia's bid to dominate northern Davania. They feel that this massed force should be sufficient to defeat the knights.

Kaldmont 12, AC 1016: Ernest Day Leaves.

Location: City of Alpha, Kingdom of Alpha, NACE, Southern Bay Marches. NW

Description: During a private meeting with some of the most prominent Norwold lords, Ericall offers Sir Ernest Day, now dispossessed of his lands as a result of the Draconic Treaty, the rulership of the territory of Ossian. To everyone's surprise, Sir Day declines the offer, also rejecting the next affectionate proposal advanced by an unusually shy Lady Allisa to share with her the rulership of her dominion. When questioned about his intentions, he

declares that he has no will to remain in Norwold, where he could only be a cause for further troubles to everyone who would associate with him. Sad at the thought of all those who have so far perished because of his conduct, he announces that he is leaving Norwold with a ship that is setting sail towards the Old World in a couple of hours, trying to begin a new life there. Then, thanking everyone for their friendship and loyalty, he leaves Ericall's castle, but not before making Lord Brogahn swear in private that he will take care of Allisa.

Nobody notices the tears rolling down Allisa's cheeks while she observes the gallant knight walking away from the castle's battlements. And no one, not even Lady Allisa, spots the cloaked figure who stops Sir Day halfway from the port and leads him in a dark alleyway. Ernest Day will never reach the ship leaving for the Old World, and nobody will ever see him again in Alpha. (*See Ei. 25, Ka. 7.*)

What This Means: Ernest Day knows that the dragons hate him for his past quests against the members of their race, which he killed to protect his people from their raids. He also knows that, having associated with the Dragonslayers, he is now viewed as a dangerous enemy of all dragonkind, and the wyrms will certainly try to exact their vengeance upon him as well. He does not want to attract any other troubles in the lands of his friends and for this reason he has chosen to exile himself from his beloved Norwold and from his beloved Allisa.

However, on the path towards the ship that would have brought him out of Norwold he met Adik de Chevas, who made him a strange proposal. He offered to *teleport* him in a safe place where he would have been able to fight for a just cause together with some friends who shared his ideals and goals. Ernest Day, trusting the man, accepted the offer, and he was *teleported* away. His real destination and his current situation remain a mystery.

Kaldmont 12, AC 1016: A New Humanoid Race?

Location: Free City of Dunwick, eastern Renardie, and western Eusdria. SC

Description: People begin reporting sighting a new type of humanoid, rodent-like, often riding strange mounts. (*See Ka. 7, Ka. 10; Ka. 14, Ka. 22.*)

The statistics for the new ratling race are:

AC 7; HD 1; Mv 120'(40'); #Att 1; Dmg 1d4 or weapon; #App 1d4 (10d4); Save NM; Morale 9; TT S (C); Align C; XP 10.

Ratlings are vile humanoids that have the fur and facial features of rats. Their tiny black eyes give them infravision, which allows them to see up to 60 feet in dark areas. Ratlings defend themselves with daggers, clubs, and similar weapons, or by biting and clawing.

What This Means: Mrikitat's new race is starting to scout out their surroundings. Milk and honey are fine occasionally, but as a steady diet begin to pall after a short while. They are also beginning to suffer the effects of the Red Curse, and none have any explanation for it.

What the PCs Can Do: They might be one of the first people to meet the ratlings (or Mrikans, as they call themselves). Or, they might be hired to investigate them, to see if they pose any threat to the lupins or to Eusdria.

Kaldmont 13, AC 1016: A Governor Dies.

Location: City of Faraway, Province Verdan, Republic of Esterhold, NACE. AS

Description: During a rebel raid on the city of Faraway, "Governor" Draeh, the secessionist Jennite that declared Verdan's independence—which led to the current war—, is killed while leading a band of tribesmen on a daring attack. (*See Am. 4, Am. 14.*)

What This Means: Although he was a dangerous foe of the Alphatians, it is not certain at all that the death of Draeh will better the situation. Draeh was a famous rebel leader who, though not as charismatic as his friend Talin, was a figurehead of the Jennite rebellion in Verdan. Though he actually was very warlike and bloodthirsty, the Jennites remember him as the Jennite who gained power lawfully and helped his people emancipate from the

Alphatians' tyranny, but was overthrown by the sneaky Alphatians who would not let the Jennites govern themselves despite their promises.

Kaldmont 13, AC 1016: Justice... Alphatian Style.

Location: City of Skyreach, Kingdom of Ar, Floating Continent of Alphatia. HW

Description: Skyreach boasts the first team duel in recent memory. One team of combatants consists of the owners of the Drigallia Theater. The other team is made up of friends and family members of several patrons that lost their lives when the balcony collapsed. The duel is long, but eventually ends with the friends and family team prevailing. (*See Fl. 22.*)

What This Means: It only took a few weeks to uncover cause of the Drigallia Theater incident. However, it has taken several months to locate the owners of the theater. They were found hiding out in neighboring Ar. With their quarry within reach, the victims' families arranged for their capture and issued a challenge for a duel. Not content to take chances, the families enlisted the services of some powerful spellcasters to portray themselves as family friends and supplement their team of duelists. The outcome is obvious and justice is served.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs may be hired by the victims' families to participate in the duel. Given the reason for the duel, there is more than ample motivation for spellcasters to hire out their services.

Kaldmont 14, AC 1016: The Gown of Valerias.

Location: City of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Amid great ceremony, Helena Daphnotarthius, the most prominent priestess of Valerias in the empire, presents to the senate and people of Thyatis the gown worn by Helena Ledamiades during the battle in the imperial palace. She declares that Valerias grants this relic to Thyatis City as a symbol of Her protection. In future battles, the gown will be displayed atop the Golden Gate, the foremost entrance into the city, along with other relics. (*See Ka. 1.*)

What This Means: This is a morale boosting excursus for the people of Thyatis; for Valerias, it is a way to gain followers and support. From now on the citizens of Thyatis City will honor Valerias as the guardian of the city. They will not stop worshipping the Immortals they currently follow, but Valerias will take on the status of patroness of the city. The gown itself may be an actual relic, a magic item, or merely an inspirational emblem. If it is either of the former, then the DM should decide what powers it should have. Any powers should be associated solely with protecting Thyatis City.

In the future, out of a spirit of emulation and competition, other Thyatian cities will adopt their own patron Immortals. None of the patron Immortals will displace the worship of other Immortals, but they will have special status and be revered if not worshipped by the residents of each city. And if Eusebius's faction wins the War of the Crown Rebellion, Immortals who oppose darkness and entropy stand to gain respect throughout Thyatis. Considering the tribulations of the empire over the last decade, it should not be surprising that any Immortal that helps resist decay would find favor in Thyatis.

Kaldmont 14, AC 1016: Cimarron Refuses Assistance.

Location: Town of Smokestone City, County of Cimarron. SC

Description: Don Luis visits Smokestone City today to see if he can drum up support from Sir John for an attack on Narvaez. Sir John says that he sympathizes with the plight of Gargoña but all his available forces are tied up in the Bushwack Prairie. It seems that the goblinoids of the Badlands have been showing uncharacteristic cooperation and organization lately and Fort Whitestone has had to defuse several concerted goblinoid attacks in the last few months. (*See Fy. 21, Ka. 9.*)

What This Means: Saragón and Almarrón are becoming increasingly isolated against Narvaez. Sir John would truly have loved to send troops to support Don Luis but what he says about the goblinoids is true. Despite the joint

Cimarron-Carrascal crushing victory over the goblin horde some four months ago, some groups are still very aggressive and still raid into both countries, possibly allied with some rebel gnolls from El Grande Carrascal. They have been increasing the intensity and organization of their attacks on Cimarron—almost as if some dark force is directing their movements.

Kaldmont 14, AC 1016: The Ratling Frenzy.

Location: Underneath the Free City of Dunwick. SC

Description: The ratlings discover a facet of their reproductive system they were previously unaware of. During the three days around the full moon, unless she is already pregnant, a female ratling goes into estrus, compelling the attention of any nearby male.

The claiming of their homeland is delayed three days as most ratlings are completely distracted. (*See Ka. 10, Ka. 12; Ka. 22, Ka. 28.*)

What This Means: The ratlings' reproductive cycle is completely involuntary. Pregnancy lasts eight months; the first full moon after giving birth, a female ratling goes into estrus again, almost certainly becoming pregnant. Their population is going to explode very quickly, unless other factors (such as disease, starvation, or war) limit their numbers.

Kaldmont 14, AC 1016: Artifact Found in Buenos Viente.

Location: Town of Buenos Viente, *Baronia del Grande Carrascal*. SC

Description: The sage Mazrooth al Yedom, and the Hutaakan priests of Pflarr that help him in his archeological diggings, unearth an object that is immediately rated by Mazrooth as being of the Late Oltec period. According to the inheritor's theory, this means that this relic would be from the missing period in the Savage Coast's history, and from the same origin as the one he studied a few years ago in Almarrón [*see novel The Black Vessel. Ed.*]. This object is a simple urn with runes written in an unknown language, similar to the jackal-headed statue, and drawings of both humans and jackal-headed creatures. The Hutaakan priests hope that this item is from their civilization. The item is magical and contains unspoiled food. (*See Th. 21, Sv. 9.*)

What This Means: This item is actually a Nithian *urn of preservation* (prevents content from decaying or rotting).

Third Week

Kaldmont 15, AC 1016: End of Academic Year.

Location: Alphatian Empire, NACE and Kingdom of Karameikos. HW, AS, SD, NW, OW

Description: Today marks the day when schools close all around the Alphatian territories, both in the outer and the inner worlds, and in Karameikos.

The Alphatian Magical Training School is a mild success for its first year. Of its initial 30 students, 23 have graduated as mages and 2 as clerics, while one died in the Sundsvall Maelstrom, 6 failed to graduate in due time, but none left the island. The faculty have gained experience, though, and hope to achieve a better ratio next year, although some deaths in the Sundsvall Maelstrom are unavoidable. The faculty remains on the isle after the end of the academic year so as to work on more adapted lessons for next year while workers from the NACE erect new buildings to accommodate a hundred students next year. (*See Nu. 28, Va. 25, Th. 15.*)

Kaldmont 15, AC 1016: The Norwold Lords Meet Again.

Location: City of Alpha, Kingdom of Alpha, NACE, Southern Bay Marches. NW

Description: King Ericall summons the nobles of the confederacy to his castle to discuss the future of Norwold. After thanking all those who fought alongside Alpha during the difficult past months, he announces that they have convened there to grant awards to those who have distinguished themselves in the recent war.

In particular, the counties of Draken and Kameloth are elevated to the status of duchies, while the Free Plains become a county with the approval of the majority of the council members, due to the great merits and loyalty of their leaders. Also, the Duchy of Chitine is now renamed grand duchy, making the furmy Ney stand high above the other Norwold lords, as a sign of sincere friendship that links Ericall to the archduke. Finally Overlord h'Caramore announces that the keep of Regent's Pass is now under the dragons' control and that the dominion of Ossian has been stripped of some of its land (again by the dragons) and reduced to the status of barony. It is now up for grabs for every Norwold hero who proved his or her loyalty during the recent war. As to the former Barony of Odinia, it is now free territory and it is likely nobody will claim it (given the dragons' proximity and its current state of misery).

However, there are still troubles that plague Norwold. The overlord reminds everyone that Chitine is still under siege by the elemental forces of Duke Dahish, and a new expedition of combined forces will have to be organized to help Archduke Ney in freeing his territory. Also, the news coming from the Free Baronies of the eastern coast tells of a strange red fog that is leaving a trail of corpses behind its passage. Somebody must go there and investigate on the matter before it becomes too widespread and the dragons start blaming the humans for the phenomenon. After assigning the duties to each noble, the meeting ends with a dinner held at Ericall's castle. (*See Ka. 5, Ka. 7; Ka. 20.*)

What This Means: The Norwold lords are slowly wrapping up the loose ends, hoping to end the year with the order finally restored throughout the whole Norwold. Now the lords have to stop this new threat, the Red Fog, the last of the Crones of Crystykk's prophesied plagues, before it reaches their lands or the Wyrmsteeth, for they don't know how the dragons could react to these mists (they could be—or pretend to be—driven insane and attack the nearby settlements).

What the PCs Can Do: They can either investigate in the Red Fog's cause, trying to find a cure to its disease or simply stop it, or, if they are not yet rulers but have fought valiantly during the war, they can compete for the throne of Ossian, where they will have to work hard to lift up again the country.

Kaldmont 15, AC 1016: A Ruler Resigns.

Location: City of Haldemar, Kingdom of Alphatian Neatharum. HW

Description: After acting as military governor for several months, Commander Trikard offers his resignation. His replacement will be decided by a contest; applicants will be given their assignments that they must have completed by Nuwmont 1st of next year to meet Trikard's departure date. The empire will evaluate those completing their task and one will be appointed to be the monarch. (*See Kl. 20, Fy. 8.*)

What This Means: Trikard has not enjoyed his tenure as administrator of Neatharum. He is a military man, more at home drilling his troops than currying to political lobbyists. The final straw was the dwarven miners' arrival: as chief administrator he would have liked to have been advised, or even asked beforehand. Trikard has accepted a command in his native Theranderol, at the head of an imperial division. To fill this vacancy with a more permanent ruler, Eriadna has drawn upon the Ierendi custom of appointing a monarch by a tournament. Unlike Ierendi, the winner will have real power and the duration will depend on the quality of his or her administration.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs may find themselves entering the contest for the crown. Less ambitious PCs may find themselves hired by a contestant to aid him or her in the quest, or to thwart other contestants.

The individual DM should create a contest based more upon a quest than a tournament. Given the greater prize, the risks should be greater as well. Of course only Alphatian nationals need to apply.

Kaldmont 16, AC 1016: Alphaks's Volcano Spotted.

Location: Alphaks's Volcano. AS

Description: A small party of adventurers, sent by the NACE Council to discover the source of the mists that have been plaguing Norwold lately, discover the existence of Alphaks' Volcano. (*See Ka. 5; Ka. 20.*)

What This Means: Alphaks, the entropic Immortal whose main goal is to destroy Alphatia and the Alphatians, has been at work in the Alphatian Sea to recreate His dreadful volcano that had been destroyed prior to Alphatia's sinking. He hopes to use the tiny island as a base to bring about the doom of the Alphatians that still live in the outer world.

The mists are created by the volcano, but their effect has been enhanced by the use of the *Pouch of Winds*, an Alphatian Artifact brought by the infamous Monster after his pirate lair was overwhelmed by Broderick's army earlier this year.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs may be hired by the council to investigate the strange mists. Managing to retrieve the *Pouch of Winds* will certainly attract the attention of the Alphatian Artifact Agency unto the PCs, either to become members (Retrievers, Bearers) or tracked enemies (pursued by Retrievers). [*See module M1 for more information on Alphaks's Volcano. Ed.*]

Kaldmont 17 AC 1016: Dominions Offered.

Location: Village of Fletrip, Freelands of the northern Bylot Hills. SC

Description: The Master is calling for adventurers of the Old World and the Midlands to settle in the lands known as the Freelands of the northern Bylot Hills and is ready to grant dominions and tenures in the region. Adventurers are only required to defend the possessions given by the Master and send their surpluses to the empire. Dominions in the region are free of taxes and free of their decisions as long as nominal fealty is owed to the Hulean Empire. (*See Ei. 12.*)

What This Means: The Master thinks that the best way to develop the region and keep the Hulean control over it is to bring outsiders to it. This solution has numerous advantages: it allows the Master to spare vital troops from being sent at the farthest fringes of the empire, it will bring in the region small landlords who might not be happy with his policy but will be against the extension of the influence of the Empire of Zuyervo, and finally, it will help the orderly development of the resources of the region.

Kaldmont 19, AC 1016: Norlan Denies Norwold Involvement.

Location: Confederate capital of Ionace, NACE. AS

Description: Questioned about the Qeodharan military involvement in Norwold, which cause a lot of chaos in Norwold those last months [*Norwold was the target of a coordinated attack by the Heldannic Knights and the Qeodharans, among other wars that ravaged the region. Ed.*] Norlan denies any responsibility. Though he does not deny knowledge of the engagement of Qeodharan raiders in Norwold, he claims that they were not forces loyal to him, but certainly rebels that have been active in his kingdom too.

Further questioned about these rebels, Norlan mentions a minority who call themselves Ystmarhavners, Antalian-descended people. He presents them as revengeful natives who are unthankful for everything the Alphatians have brought to the island nation, and want independence from both Qeodhar and the NACE, to create their own nation based on the savage ways of their ancestors. Norlan adds that they have been attacking innocent, hard-working Qeodharans, and that his local militia have trouble coping with them as many of his troops are in mission in various areas of the confederacy, leaving those dangerous rebels free to harm their families back at the homeland.

Seeing the similarity between the tactics exposed by Norlan and that used by the raiders in Norwold, and seeing how they were aided by the Heldannic Knights and by Ostland raiders, the council members are convinced that it was the Ystmarhavners who raided Norwold from Qeodhar. Considering them to be a threat, they grant Norlan additional troops and ask him to put an end to that nuisance. (*See Sv. 22, Ei. 4.*)

What This Means: The Ystmarhavners are not the savage terrorists Norlan presented, and they are innocent from the attack on Norwold. But they are an annoyance to Norlan, who wants to get rid of them, and saw this as an excellent opportunity to frame the secessionists for his own actions. And if the NACE is willing to deal with the rebels for him, why should he refuse?

Kaldmont 20, 1016: A Final Tally.

Location: City of Freiburg, Heldann, Heldannic Territories. OW

Description: Senior members of the order and high-ranking bureaucrats meet in the Star Chamber to review reports from the ongoing effort of integrating the Hattian immigrants into Heldannic society. Thus far, almost 15,000 Hattians have migrated to the territories, of which 12,000 have settled in Heldland, primarily in the regions around Landfall, Seelitz, and Treptow, as well as Forton. The remaining 3,000 have settled in western Heldann, near the Mengul Mountains. Among both groups, villages have already been founded, and hundreds of farms have been claimed from the wilderness.

Considerable capital outlays were made in granting tax freedom to the new arrivals, as well as in payments to families sending their sons to the order, but it was deemed worthwhile. Many of the new settlers are quite loyal to their new rulers, and already 700 young men have been recruited. News has also filtered in of bitterness among those who have already settled in Heldland in years past, but did not receive such a generous offer. Most of those present decide to ignore this news. (*See Ei. 10, Ei. 25.*)

What This Means: Overall, the plan to incorporate the Hattian immigrants has been a success. An unprecedented number of immigrants arrived, enough to tip the balance of the overall population more in the Hattians' favor. Also, large swaths of land have been opened for settlement, and now the order's hold extends firmly up to Treptow—almost halfway between Landfall and Oceansend. The bitterness on the part of the more established settlers, however, is something that could become more troublesome later on.

Kaldmont 20, AC 1016: The Friendship Exchange Program.

Location: Kingdom of Emerond, Jungle Coast. DV

Description: After one month of meetings with various Emerondian personalities, it is clear to Ambassador Bovas that Emerond is a peaceful but reclusive nation that relies on an autarchic economic system and agriculture. It has no interest in the affairs of the Old World and does not want to be caught in the middle of the Thyatian-Hinterlander skirmishes. Apparently this fear and mistrust towards the foreigners has deep roots in the Emerondian past, although the ambassador has not discovered much about it. Ambassador Bovas proposes then to the Thyatian Senate a strange diplomatic solution to be used with Emerond: a Friendship Exchange Program. His idea is to let some Emerondians come to Thyatis to visit the empire and learn its language and customs, while some Thyatians would live among the Emerondians in the same time. The senate ponders the idea. (*See Sv. 17, Ei. 14; Ka. 27.*)

What This Means: Ambassador Bovas has understood that Emerond will not be easily drawn inside Thyatis's political chessboard. They are an alien culture as well as an alien race and it will take time to understand it completely and to communicate with it. For this reason he has proposed a simple "cultural exchange" as first step to possibly integrate Emerond in the empire, and gain its trust and allegiance, sometime in the future. What the end result will be on this experiment is unknown to everyone at this time.

Kaldmont 20, AC 1016: Showdown in Alphaks's Volcano.

Location: Alphaks's Volcano. AS

Description: An expedition of adventurers and lords from Norwold reach Alphaks's Volcano aboard the Silver Arrow II (King Sieger's *skyship*) by following eastwards the huge fog bank responsible for the disease that struck Norwold. It soon becomes clear that Alphaks the Destroyer is behind the Red Disease, and the Caretakers and King Blackblade (also on board of Sieger's *skyship*) organize an on-the-spot investigation to locate the source of this plague and destroy it. All the adventurers and lords gathered on the ship take part in the action, which leads them inside the heart of the enemy base.

After confronting dozens of undead, including a nightwalker and a nightwing, tens of cultists and other dangerous madmen, they find the chamber where the *Crimson Brazier* is guarded and are met by the Black King and Black Queen

and their golem guards, backed by none other than the mortal identity of Alphaks! A fierce and ruthless battle takes place for the conquest of the *Crimson Brazier* and the *Pouch of Winds*, and when the Norwold heroes manage to kill the Black Queen and hurt Alphaks, the Roaring Fiend goes berserk and assumes His manifestation form, unleashing His fury onto the bystanders, who nevertheless manage to hold their own with Him. This only enrages Him more, and the wizards exploit His fits of rage to their advantage: Sieger grasps the *Crimson Brazier* and manages to have Alphaks cast a spell on him while holding the artifact in his hands. The destructive spell shatters the artifact, although Sieger manages to survive the explosion thanks to the immediate cure cast by Zoltan and his own protective spells.

Out of His wits for the impudence of the mortals, Alphaks prepares to rip their souls with His own claws, not noticing that a group of strangers has appeared in the hall. When He is about to throw Himself against the Caretakers and their friends, He discovers He cannot move: somebody with a titanic force is holding His arms from behind. Turning around and cursing, He suddenly turns pale when He recognizes the strangers who are now staring at Him with an angry look. The blond muscled warrior of clear Antalian blood that is holding Alphaks's arms swiftly lifts the now screaming demon over His head and thrusts Him against the wall, which then collapses over the stunned demon. As the other strangers begin to wave a powerful spell under Alphaks's dreadful stare, the blond warrior whispers something to the Caretakers, and they immediately round up their friends and flee from the place at the highest speed possible. When they return aboard the Silver Arrow II, which is floating above the isle, they hear a loud "boom" and an inhuman cry coming from Alphaks's Volcano, and after a while the mists stop pouring out of the volcano's mouth. Then the island starts to sink, shaken by powerful earthquakes. After witnessing the complete destruction of Alphaks's Volcano, the flying ship heads back to Norwold. (*See Ka. 5, Ka. 16; Ka. 26.*)

What This Means: The events that led to this final showdown between the Norwold lords and Alphaks have been carefully planned by Talitha from the very beginning of the war. She wanted to use this plot to inflict Alphaks a major stroke, thus removing His influence from Norwold to supplant Him, and it seems She outwitted Him masterfully. She is responsible for closing Alphaks's gate in Ossian during the last battle, to prevent Him from winning that battle (although He did not discover this). Knowing that He would not have resisted to using the *Crimson Brazier*, She offered it to Him, also knowing that this would have attracted the best of Norwold heroes to Alphaks's nest like bears to honey. She hoped they would have proved so tough and skillful to upset Alphaks and enrage Him to the point of making Him assume His Manifestation Form on Mystara, something which is strictly forbidden by Immortal Laws. He did and She immediately informed the Council of Intrusion of His misdeed, so They *teleported* on the Prime Plane and punished Him for breaking the rules. With Alphaks now banished from Mystara for the following three years and His followers scattered across Norwold without a leader, She has all the time and space to extend Her influence over Norwold and the NACE.

What the PCs Can Do: What else, fight the Manslayer Himself! How many other opportunities will they have of fighting against an entropic Immortal and being rescued by a whole group of Hierarchs?

Kaldmont 21, AC 1016: Surshield Officially Dissolved.

Location: Confederate Capital of Ionace, NACE. AS

Description: The NACE Council officially announces that the Kingdom of Surshield will have its boundaries redrawn, divided into three smaller kingdoms.

The easternmost kingdom will be known as Surshield and Queen Gratia will remain its ruler.

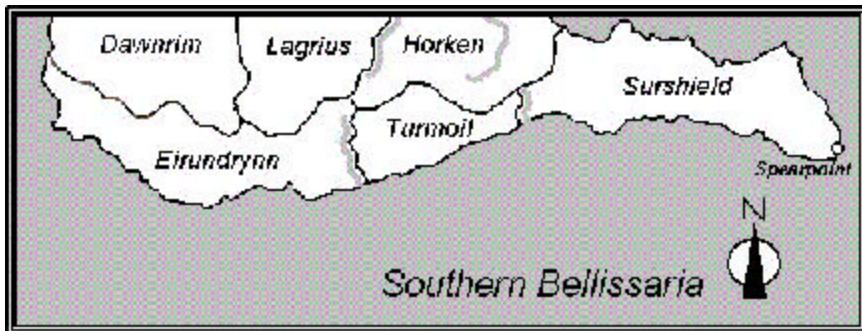
The westernmost kingdom will be known as Eirundrynn and will be administered by Jhedryll, who will act as military governor. The council explains that Jhedryll has been acting as the overall military commander of the NACE's forces there. In light of his services and his familiarity with the populace, he has been promoted to military governor immediately.

The middle kingdom will be referred to as the Turmoil Territory and for the time being will remain an anarchy. The future ruler of Turmoil will come from that kingdom. The council urges that the populace find a suitable ruler; if they do not resolve the ruler deficiency soon, then the council will do it for them.

The council also announces that the financial aid to Notrion (and Turmoil) will be cut next quarter [*i.e. the quarter starting on Alphamir (Thaumont). Ed.*] though on the other hand Eirundrynn will get a temporary reconstruction fund. (*See Am. 18, Ei. 11; Ka. 27.*)

What This Means: This announcement is just a way to make the whole thing official, since word of the planned division had already spread since the meeting on Ambrymont 18. The council had thought of leaving Turmoil as an anarchy, but since then they have had second thoughts. Most agree that an anarchy amid the heart of the NACE is ill advised; as such, they have assumed a more hard-line stance on the matter.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs have the opportunity to gain a domain of their own. If they prove themselves to the populace and the council they have a chance. Of course the locals will be more inclined to submit to the PC if he or she is from the region.



Fourth Week

Kaldmont 22, AC 1016: The Ratlings Claim Their Homeland.

Location: Underneath the Free City of Dunwick. SC

Description: The last of the snappers inhabiting the turtle ruins underneath Dunwick are either killed or have escaped... or have died of one disease or another, caught from the ratlings.

The ratlings creatively call their new city "The Bigger City." (*See Ka. 12, Ka. 14; Ka. 28.*)

What This Means: Mrikitat's new race are soon going to start exploring the tunnels leading from their new home, and will start popping up all over the Savage Coast. The inhabitants of Dunwick are going to be the first ones to meet the ratlings, with mixed reactions... especially when they start falling sick.

What the PCs Can Do: "It's a wererat! Kill it!" "No I'm not!" "Kill it anyway!"

Kaldmont 23, AC 1016: The Alphatians Return.

Location: Valley of the Kubitts. HW

Description: After a week, a *skyship* appears in the skies over the kubitts' territory. Meeting with Zoranthis, the Alphatians express Eriadna's sympathies at Zoranthis's loss. Queen Zoranthis, who has assumed rulership of the Kubitts, tells her Alphatian friends that she would like more time before opening formal relations between the Kubitts and Alphatians. The Alphatians oblige and depart; before leaving, they present the queen with a gift from Eriadna. (*See Ei. 8.*)

What This Means: Duty has won out over Zoranthis's desire to see the world. Though her first thought is to cement relations with the Alphatians, she digresses. There are still many kubitts who are wary of the Alphatians, in particular the clergy is against any relations. Zoranthis wishes to solidify her hold on power before making any

official moves towards the Alphatians. The visiting Alphatians do offer Zoranthis a magical means to contact Eriadna.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs of kubitt heritage may be called upon by either Zoranthis or the clergy of Vanya to influence the opinion of the populace. If the situation intensifies, either side may hire PCs to deal with the opposition. Non-kubitt PCs may even be hired by the clerics of Vanya, to perform acts to discredit outsiders.

Kaldmont 26, AC 1016: Norwold Purged.

Location: All throughout Norwold. NW

Description: Using powerful *weather control* spells and *dispel magic*, the Caretakers, helped by King Blackblade, Madiera, Lord Shuren, Lord Beriak, Blind Wooster, Tarn Oakleaf and High Priest Zoltan the White, are able to wash away the Red Fog from Norwold and save the sick people from sure death. Many have died in the last days, but many more have been saved thanks to the combined efforts of Norwold's most powerful spellcasters. With the Red Disease now vanished, Norwold can finally take a deep breath and look to the new year with hopeful eyes.

The recently established Norwold Confederacy and the elven kingdom of Nordalfheim have both successfully vanquished this dangerous threat to their existence. (*See Ka. 5, Ka. 20.*)

What the PCs Can Do: Take part in the greatest magical event in Norwold since the raising of the White Oak of Life.

Kaldmont 27, AC 1016: The Threat Unmasked, a Scheme Hatched.

Location: City of Thyatis City, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: In between helping fend off attacks on Thyatis City, Demetrior, the Imperial Magist, and Breindel Tzuriel, the Prefect of the Imperial Hospitaliers, have spent their time researching old texts. They hoped their searches would uncover information that would help in defending the city. What Tzuriel discovered disturbed him greatly; what Demetrior discovered kindled a new hope. They examine each other's findings, and present them to Emperor Eusebius.

Tzuriel presents his findings first. He believes that the real Heinrich Oesterhaus died long ago, while on some escapade. This means that the man known as "Heinrich Oesterhaus" is someone, or something, else. The unusual magics that allowed the Hattians to cross over into Kerendas, along with the spells at the battle of Bayville, cause Tzuriel to surmise that this Heinrich is a being of great power. The temples of Thanatos found in Hattias, and the vast numbers of undead, are not encouraging. Tzuriel is not sure, but he believes that Thyatis is facing a lich or other being of great and dark power. Eusebius takes this information silently.

Then Demetrior makes his presentation. Searching Thyatian documents from the Bright Age of Thyatis, he has uncovered information that great powers were associated with the Imperial Crown of Thyatis. He believes it is a relic of Law, and that it is capable of enhancing morale throughout the *imperium* and in the army specifically. Acquiring the crown from the rebel camp could be of great benefit to the defenders, and the empire as a whole. He has divined that the crown Manfred usually wears is not the real one, which is probably safely kept elsewhere in the enemy camp. Eusebius takes this in, and ponders. He needs a plan, and calls a meeting of his war council to discuss one.

They decide to table Tzuriel's revelation for now, and instead work on retrieving the crown. It would be difficult to snatch anything so valuable from the heavily guarded enemy camp; however, it might be possible to sneak into the camp during the Day of Dread, when magical alarms won't work. Crossing the open terrain to the enemy camp seems like a foolish project, however: the enemy has probably heavily guarded, if not filled in, the tunnel they used to break into the imperial palace. The council seems stumped. At this point Anaxibius speaks up, telling the council that the city's gladiators may be able to help here, and that he can arrange it if the emperor permits. Eusebius agrees to let Anaxibius try his idea. Anaxibius asks Yalag, a prominent orcish gladiator, to undertake the mission; he tells him it is urgent, and Yalag disappears underground. (*See Ka. 7, Ka. 14.*)

What This Means: The fact that the empire is facing a threat that is something more than merely a rebellious nobility is by now obvious to the defenders. The idea that this foe might be something of unusual power is troubling, but not surprising by now, with undead ringing Thyatis City. No one has any reason to suspect it is Thanatos Himself at this point.

Anaxibius's idea is simple, but dangerous: he knows the tale of the wererats that live in the catacombs under the city. They might know of a way into the enemy camp; if offered something in return, they might help retrieve the crown. He does not share the whole story with the council, however—as a member of the Order of the Sands he is sworn to keep this information secret. Since Anaxibius seems confident and is the only one to propose anything, Eusebius delegates the mission to him.

What the PCs Can Do: Characters who have served as gladiators and are members of the Order of the Sands may know of the catacombs and the wererats that live under Thyatis City. If so, they might be the ones dispatched to seek the aid of the wererats.

Kaldmont 27, AC 1016: Jhedryll Reinforced.

Location: Kingdom of Eirundrynn, NACE, Bellissaria. AS

Description: A group of 200 elves, a mixture of Shiye, Eadrin, and Foresthome elves, arrive in Eirundrynn to reinforce Jhedryll. Their traveling to Eirundrynn so close to the Day of Dread is risky, but they have arrived just in time. (*See Ei. 11, Ka. 21.*)

What This Means: These elves are in Eirundrynn to aid Jhedryll. Being an elf, Jhedryll has drawn much attention from the elves of the NACE, as the possibility of a new elven kingdom has not escaped their notice. This is especially so for the stranded Foresthome elves: the Shiye have settlements in Norwold, but clan members opposed to the war established those. So the more loyal Shiye have thrown their lot in with Jhedryll, probably the first of several to travel here.

What the PCs Can Do: Elven PCs may find themselves drawn to Eirundrynn. If they perform well, they may find themselves appointed to important positions. Conversely, PCs may be hired by locals to make life difficult for Jhedryll and his elves.

Kaldmont 27, AC 1016: Emerond and Thyatis Agree.

Location: Kingdom of Emerond, Jungle Coast. DV

Description: After much debating, the Thyatian Senate deliberates to accept Ambassador Bovas's proposal and officially presents the Friendship Exchange Program to Emerond. The Emerondian king and governors of the main settlements meet and agree to the proposal. Twenty people will be selected among the most "enlightened" members of each culture yearly, and will be sent to the hosting nation to learn the ways of the foreigners, in order to understand them better. The visitors will have to respect the hosting nation's laws and customs and they will decide whether to remain another year or to return home at the end of each year. The exchange program is scheduled to start on Nuwmont of AC 1017. (*See Ei. 14, Ka. 20.*)

What This Means: This proposal satisfies both Emerondians (who have avoided Thyatian intervention in their land and any formal alliance) and Thyatians (who have now a big opportunity to learn as much as they can about the Emerondians and their society, military, resources, and mysteries). The two nations think they have got the better of the deal, but only time will tell...

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs can be among those fortunate people chosen to visit Emerond (or Thyatis if they are Emerondians) for a whole year, meeting new threats and experiencing new fantastic adventures in a wild and somewhat alien land.

Day of Dread

Kaldmont 28, AC 1016: Bensarian Comatose Again.

Location: Village of Kevar, Kingdom of Wendar. OW

Description: With the Day of Dread, last year's scene repeats in Kevar when Bensarian falls into a deep coma at dawn. His assistants have been prepared to this occurrence after witnessing last year's event, and even Bensarian warned them this might happen. He has attributed this to the elven blood flowing in his veins and to his old age, so his companions are not overly worried. They watch over him for the whole day, hoping he will regain consciousness after the Day of Dread has passed, as he did last year. (*See Nu. 2.*)

What This Means: The Onyx Ring wizard possessing Bensarian's body knew that the Day of Dread would have dissolved his control over the sage and so came to this day prepared after last year's surprise. He came up with a fake explanation in order to keep suspicions low; he will have to fight with Bensarian's will once the Day of Dread passes in order to regain control of the host body.

What the PCs Can Do: Since some of the PCs might know Bensarian for quite some time, they will notice that Bensarian's explanation does not hold. He never suffered from this magical disease in the four years following the first Week of No Magic and their Days of Dread. Only last year did he pass out, and this year the event repeated, so this has obviously nothing to do with his elven blood. The PCs could discover Bensarian's secret if they connect the clues he has unwittingly left behind and if they are smart enough to see Idris's treachery in his last startling decisions concerning the Alfheim elves' future.

Kaldmont 28, AC 1016: Frockson's Revolt.

Location: Evekarr Pass, Kingdom of Rockhome. OW

Description: As magic once more fails to operate on this day, Frockson and his giantish *jarls* stationed in Evekarr Pass form a revolt. Over the past month, Frockson has managed to convince the other giants that the *spears of giant killing* are fakes, and that they have been duped by the dwarves and goblinoids. With the breaking of dawn, the giants rise up against their goblinoid oppressors.

Though outnumbering their attackers, the goblinoids are unable to stand against the more powerful giantish forces. Worse, their morale breaks when it turns out that their magical *spears of giant killing* do not appear to have any effect on the giants. They are quickly defeated, and those survivors that were unable to retreat are captured. Frockson and his *jarls* take their prisoners back to Jotunheim, abandoning their position outside of Evekarr Fort. (*See Th. 23, Ei. 27.*)

What This Means: Had the *spears of giant killing* been real artifacts, instead of poor imitations, the Day of Dread would not have affected their killing power (in fact, the sole giantish casualty, is caused by just such a spear).

The giants have contributed largely to the success of goblinoid forces in the Klintest Lowlands. The defection of Frockson and his *jarls* will quickly spread to the other bands of giants, who will also abandon the goblinoid armies and return to their home of Jotunheim.

Kaldmont 28, AC 1016: Good Spirits Send Warning.

Location: Plain of Grass, Ethengar Khanates. OW

Description: Trungpa, a shaman of the Murkit clan, receives an urgent message this morning. During her daily meditations, her spirit lord appears to her and warns her that all is not right with the Spirit World. The evil spirits have been very active recently, and have begun to make excursions into the World *Yurt* (the Prime Material Plane). Though the spirit lord is prohibited from revealing too much, he is allowed to say that the troubles revolve strongly around the person of Manghai *Khan*. The spirit lord encourages Trungpa to investigate matters and attempt to resolve them before events lead to an imbalance of power in the Spirit and World *Yurts*. (*See Fl. 16, Am. 11.*)

What This Means: Jaku the Render's possession of Manghai has indeed led to an upset in the balance of power in the Spirit World, and if left unchecked, his ambition will have enormous consequences both for the Spirit World as well as the Prime Plane. The good spirits are limited in the aid they can give to their shamans on the Prime Plane, for reasons of balance, but they have decided to send warnings such as this one to their shamans, in hopes that the situation can be rectified.

What the PCs Can Do: If there is a shaman PC in the party, he or she can be the recipient of this warning, rather than Trungpa. At that point, the means they choose to investigate matters is in their hands, but should eventually lead to the revelation that Manghai is in the possession of an evil spirit.

Kaldmont 28, AC 1016: A New Feature.

Location: City of the Stars, Shadow Elves Territories. OW

Description: In the City of the Stars the shamans experiment with the *Chamber of the Spheres* and the *radiant soul crystals*, discovering that they can cast spells as usual when they are near the temple, despite today being the Day of Dread [see Kaldmont 28, AC 1015. Ed.], but not elsewhere... unless they happen to own one of the *radiant soul crystals*. (See Fl. 28, Fy. 26.)

What This Means: This is a new feature of the *Chamber of the Spheres*. Using the *radiant soul crystals* the shamans can cast their spells on the Day of Dread also far from the Temple of Rafiel, i.e. also on the surface.

What else will the *Chamber of the Spheres* do?

Kaldmont 28, AC 1016: Torenal Under Siege.

Location: Construction site of Torenal, Sunken Arogansa, Sunken Alphatia, NACE. AS

Description: With work halted, most of their *submersibles* grounded, and the bulk of the mages on sabbatical, the construction crews wait out the Day of Dread inside their sealed barracks. As they idly pass the time, the relative peace is broken by the sounds of battle and rushing water.

Ghouls have assaulted the construction site and overwhelmed the outlying defense lines, and have since smashed through a series of airlocks and gained entrance into the barracks. The battles are waged throughout the day as guards try to hold back the ghouls and allow the workers time to seal the breached airlocks.

Aided greatly by the efforts of mercenary tritons and merrow the ghouls are eventually driven off. The rest of the day is spent securing the barracks and sealing the airlocks. The merrow and tritons venture out and inspect the damage to the outlying defense posts, which are discovered in shambles and their assigned sentries gone or torn to shreds. The barracks themselves are partially flooded but thankfully the domes themselves are undamaged. (See Ka. I, Ka. 6.)

What This Means: Without magic, the defenses of Torenal are severely weakened. Unable to venture out into the sea, the sentry stations are of little use, so the ghouls simply overwhelm these posts or bypass them. The patrols of merrow and tritons are too busily engaged with one group of ghouls to counter the others so the defenders can only really engage the ghouls once they are inside the barracks complex wreaking havoc.

It is mainly due to the eventual arrival of merrow and triton troops that the ghouls are routed. By attacking them at their entrance points, the ghouls were forced to fight on two fronts and were hampered their efforts to reinforce their fellows already inside.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs assigned to the construction effort may very well find themselves embroiled in the battle with the ghouls. With magic absent, the PCs will have to depend upon their wits and skills to survive.

Kaldmont 28, AC 1016: The One *Tlatoani*.

Location: City of Chitlacan, Azcan Empire. HW

Description: In the capital of Chitlacan, exactly one year after the Return of Quetzalcoatl, Otziltipac is acknowledged as the one true *tlatoani* of the Azcans, and the cult of Atzanteotl is declared illegal. A warrant is issued against Chupicuaro.

The new *tlatoani* elevates the Way of Quetzalcoatl as the new official religion, and forbids human sacrifices as Papalotl's final *chalchiuatl* quenched the sun's thirst for blood. Instead, prisoners will be turned to slavery, and animals—especially flying vipers—will be sacrificed instead. To give further weight to this new way he spares the lives of all the followers of Atzanteotl that were captured during the attack on Huitlakima, and they will live a life of slavery instead of being sacrificed on the altar. Likewise, the *tlachtli* teams will no more be sacrificed.

Otziltipac then lets his wife Malinalxoch, the *ometochtzin* (head of all cults save Atzanteotl), further explain to the gathered crowd of priests, nobles and commoners alike what the new spirituality will be like.

Quetzalcoatl is to replace Atzanteotl as the main Immortal of the Azcan pantheon. The worship of other Immortals, like Otzitiotl and Kalaktatla, will be allowed, though the worship of Atzanteotl is now illegal and His name cannot be said loud anymore—He should from now on be known as the Evil Twin. As a consequence, the first day of the calendar will be known as “Evil Twin” (or Nameless), and the second day as Quetzalcoatl. The *calendar stone* will be replaced by the old one, which is said in legend to have been crafted by Otzitiotl Himself, as soon as true followers find it. (See *Ka. 4, Ka. 6.*)

What This Means: A new Azcan Empire has emerged from the ashes of the old, one in which there is no ritual bloodshed and Atruatzin, Kalaktatla and Otzitiotl are worshipped once more. Quetzalcoatl is the main Immortal, but Otzitiotl and Kalaktatla start to slowly come back to prominence too thanks to the lack of oppression from Atruatzin's more open-minded followers.

Atruatzin and Papalotl are the same person to the Azcans, worshipped as different facets of a same Immortal, Quetzalcoatl. In the legends, and in prophecies come true, Quetzalcoatl is referred to as the twin, so the Azcans could easily be tempted to effectively worship each of the two twins. Atruatzin is the first twin, the father, the wise ruler, death (heroic death) and the dead; Papalotl is the second twin, the son, the moving sun and changing seasons, the feathered serpent, reincarnation/rebirth/renewal, self-sacrifice. Both are worshipped as Quetzalcoatl in the temples who are dedicated to Him and purged from any elements of Atzanteotl influence. The underground followers of Atzanteotl will continue sacrificing humans though.

As the clergy of Atzanteotl has gone underground, a new nobility will likely arise, elected leaders will rise to renewed prominence, and the country will probably be at peace for some time. The Azcans will always remain a violent, cruel, passionate and ultimately warlike people; though they will become less cruel and less willing to sacrifice sentient beings, they will not simply cease all of the behavior that other peoples see as barbaric.

Kaldmont 28, AC 1016: The First-Born Ratlings.

Location: Underneath the Free City of Dunwick. SC

Description: A few of the female lesser wererat who went through Mrikitat's arch were already pregnant, and were not affected when the other females went into estrus. Just before midnight, the furthest-along of them gives birth to a pair of twin ratlings. Which is a little odd, since she was not carrying twins before she went through the gate. (See *Ka. 14, Ka. 22.*)

What This Means: Ratlings will nearly always give birth to twins, and occasionally triplets. Just another little bonus from Mrikitat to ensure a massive population boom.

Kaldmont 28, AC 1016: Truly Dreadful.

Location: City of Thyatis, Thyatian Empire. OW

Description: Today, magic fails, and units of Manfred's army form up to assault Thyatis City. The remaining human troops, with Storm Soldiers in the fore, lead the way, backed by undead who are not badly affected by light. They swarm towards the walls under the cover of siege engines, now operated by skeleton crews (literally)

supervised by otherwise impotent mages and priests. Wave after wave of attackers break against the city's stout defenses, only to rally and return to the attack again. A band of Storm Soldiers find a gate left inexplicably unbarred, and burst into the gatehouse. Justin Karameikos, at the head of a band of Karameikans, leads a counterattack that drives them back, but he is badly wounded. His men urge him to withdraw to their ships, since no healing magic is available today, but he refuses. His courage invigorates his men; they seal the gate and repel the attack. As darkness falls, hordes of undead, ghouls and worse creatures shamble towards the city. The priestly orders of Thyatis call on the powers of their Immortals to turn back many, destroying some. But more take their place, and the attacks grow fiercer if less well-coordinated as the human assailants fall and are replaced by the undead.

While this is going on, Yalag is meeting with the wererats. He is told of their previous efforts in repelling an invasion of their tunnels by the attackers. But they are reluctant to involve themselves further, preferring to defend their own home and, as a last resort, using the secret escape, so Yalag tries a desperate ploy: he tells them the senate will make them all Thyatian citizens if they help recover the crown and save the city. The wererat leaders find this hard to believe, but after Mrikitat's priests tell the leaders that He supports Yalag, decide to permit Yalag and any of their number who volunteer to help him to use their tunnels to sneak into the enemy camp. They succeed in entering the near-deserted camp close to the 11th hour of night. They first search Manfred's tent, but with no luck. They find Heinrich's tent, its entrance guarded by two black knights. Yalag and three wererats attack the knights, distracting them, while two wererats slit the rear of the tent and search it. Picking the lock of a chest under Heinrich's bed, they find the crown. The black knights kill two wererats during the scuffle and wound Yalag, but he and the remaining wererat destroy the knights, revealing gaunt, skeletal creatures. They retreat to the catacombs, racing towards the city as midnight approaches. The year ends with Thyatis City under attack. (*See Ka. 14, Ka. 27.*)

What This Means: Mrikitat loves the idea of his wererats being accepted into Thyatian society and secretly turns off the Escape Arch, planning on re-activating it should Thyatis topple.

The year ends with the outcome of the War of the Crown still in doubt.

PREDICTIONS AND PRONOSTICATIONS

The editors of the Mystaran Almanac make no claim as to these predictions' origin, even less their accuracy.

Seers and Diviners

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 country 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

“Sickness, disease, and death!
The New Ones are to blame, yet are not to blame.
War and famine follow,
But the final peace is not the peace of the dead.”

ballad

“It is not dead that
which can eternal lie
And when the stars are right
even the sun will cry”

ballad

“Oh empire thou hast no true emperor
An’ thy core of ol’ is lost forever
Yet soon ya’ll have a new an’ ol’ leader
As ol’ man’s the best impersonator.”

ballad

“The lion rears its mighty head
And rends with claw and steel
‘Til fields run red.

Advance it will,
Yet never still
Shall stand the doughty
Warriors tall,
Who guard the south
From beast's advance.”

ballad

“The Gateway to the West throws its doors wide, paving the way for two nations to unite against a distant threat.”

rumor

“From soaring skies to the bowels of the earth; the forgotten shall take their vengeance.”

rumor

“Faces from the past shall resurface
Aye but wary should be the curious
Both friend, foe, and legend will manifest
From their forgotten places of rest”

as told by Madame Thressias

“Once again attentions turn across the sea
A former home kindles hopes for prosperity
From whence they came, now they go
Across fierce seas and winds that blow
Like a canvas blank awaiting the artist’s brush
The old continent beckons a land rush
Care must be taken by those who venture there
For the blank canvas is not exactly bare
Previous artists have left their marks
Their artistry forgotten by their earlier starts
What may be new land is old to them
New arrivals shall find few friends
Nothing ventured is nothing gained
Peace and prosperity the ultimate aim
Like everything in life, nothing is truly free
The ultimate cost may be dreadful to thee.”

as told by Madame Thressias

“A child was born twenty years past
Amid humble environs his childhood passed
Yet adulthood would offer a different life
No simple farm, no children, no wife.
Spurred by enemies and allies unknown
The lad be hastened from his adopted home.
A life of adventure will be introduced
To the previously unwilling youth
Hardened by adversity and pursuit
The man will become quite astute
To martial skills of his forefathers
Enemies and allies he doth meet
To those malicious death does greet
Along the way the truths will come forth
And points to a birthright to the north
There he will meet his unknown kin
A clan divided, some rally to him
To face the sibling that wished so ill
To deny a heritage and even kill
Whether the hero battles to end the chase
Or to assert his own authority into place
The battles be harsh and not easily won
And the adventure and dangers hath just begun.
For one chase may end
To allow another to begin”

as told by Madame Thressias

“A man, a symbol of his nation’s strength and ways
Takes a grievous wound in defending the day.
For this sacrifice, his enemies doth raise questions
About his noble, social, and professional positions.
A stern man of tradition and national belief
He forgoes forbidden remedies that offer relief.
In his troubles, allies scramble to his side

To offer support, defense, and time to bide.
Until a remedy can be found for the problem
One that will preserve the national emblem.
From a friend, salvation will come and go
With metal to replace the flesh and bone.
Though it functions it is still metal nonetheless
And cannot compare to lost bone and flesh.”

as told by Madame Thressias

“Darkness crawls across the land
Night’s revenge is close at hand.

When all the men will cease to breathe
The time will come to beg and plead.

What Night has done to men and life
Will be undone through lies and strife.

And when the sun will shine again
You’ll see the Master o’ blood and pain.”

ballad

